

Hidden Voices: The Lives of LGBT Muslims

Presented by queer Muslim activist Faisal Alam



Faisal Alam is a queer-identified Muslim activist of Pakistani descent. At age 19, while trying to reconcile his sexuality with his faith, Faisal organized the first-ever gathering of LGBT Muslims, which led to the founding of Al-Fatiha, an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex & questioning (LGBTIQ) Muslims, and their allies. Faisal led the organization from its inception in 1998 to 2004 as its volunteer director. Today, Al-Fatiha has sister organizations around the world including Canada, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine & Indonesia.

Since founding Al-Fatiha, Faisal has traveled across the country and around the world to meet with LGBTIQ Muslims to build a global queer Muslim movement. Faisal's queer Muslim activism has been featured in LGBT and mainstream media including the *New York Times*, *BBC World News*, *Al-Hayat*, *NPR*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Washington Post*.

Faisal was one of the first LGBT leaders to speak out against the US-led war in Afghanistan and the US-led invasion of Iraq. His protests against the rising Islamophobia and the assault on civil liberties and civil rights in the United States led conservative elements within the gay community to call for his deportation to Guantanamo Bay; while some conservative gay journalists called him "weak" and "cowardly," for his opposition to the so-called "war on terror."

Faisal has received many recognitions and awards for his activism on behalf of queer Muslims. He was selected as an "Innovator" by the *Advocate* Magazine, a "Founding Father" by *Genre* Magazine, and as one of 30 "Young Visionaries Under 30" by the *Utne Reader*. In 2005 the Equality Forum honored Faisal as one of "40 Heroes" who have "made a defining difference in LGBT civil rights over the last forty years." In 2008 Faisal received an award from Pride Toronto for his "outstanding contribution in the area of spirituality that positively impacts LGBT communities."

"Hidden Voices" has been featured at more than sixty-five universities and colleges including: Brown University, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Texas, University of Michigan, Bates College, New York University, Oberlin College, Williams College, University of Louisville, University of Colorado, Middlebury College, Grinnell College, University of Minnesota, Colgate University, Suffolk University, Emory University, Boston College, Duke University, Dartmouth College & Vassar College.

Dates are being booked for Fall 2010 & Spring 2011. For more information on bringing Faisal to your college or university please email booking@hiddenvoices.info or visit "Hidden Voices: The Lives of LGBT Muslims" at <http://www.hiddenvoices.info>.

"Hidden Voices: The Lives of LGBT Muslims" aims to highlight the many struggles and challenges facing sexual and gender minorities within the Muslim world and to examine the complex intersection of Islam, sexuality and gender. With more than 1.5 billion followers Islam is considered to be the fastest growing religion in the world today, yet the Western world continues to view Muslims with skepticism and fear. While aiming to dispel common stereotypes and myths about Islam, this presentation will also explore the history of the queer Muslim movement in the United States and the suppression of LGBT rights around the world under the guise of the so-called "war on terror. Using his own life experience and by exploring the complex history of the Islamic world, Faisal Alam strives to bring new light onto the lives of an often invisible and silent community: Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning.

Faisal Alam, queer Muslim activist, writer & speaker



Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Faisal Alam at the Metropolitan Community Church's "Circle of Hope" Gala in November 2002, San Francisco, California.

Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Community Church

National LGBT Activism

Faisal has represented Al-Fatiha on a number of advisory boards. From 1998-2000 he was the youngest member of the National Religious Leadership Roundtable (NRLR), an interfaith network of more than fifty lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faith-leaders in the United States. During his tenure as volunteer director of Al-Fatiha, Faisal served on the national advisory boards of: the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, PFLAG National's Family of Color Network and the Fellowship for Reconciliation's LGBT Network. Faisal currently serves as an advisor to Al-Fatiha and he is a member of the national advisory committee of the LGBT Program at Human Rights Watch.

Upcoming presentations of "Hidden Voices"

Carleton College - Northfield, MN - October 5, 2010
Macalester University - St. Paul, MN - October 11, 2010
Broward College - Davie, FL - October 13, 2010
New York University - New York, NY - October 18, 2010
Widener University - Chester, PA - October 19, 2010
University of Connecticut - Storrs, CT - March 16, 2011

Future Keynote Speeches by Faisal Alam

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color Conference - San Diego, CA - December 2, 2010

True Colors Conference (Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services) University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT - March 11 & 12, 2011

Awards & Recognitions

- "Innovator" - Advocate Magazine (2001)
- "Founding Father" - Genre Magazine (2002)
- 30 Young Visionaries Under 30 - Utne Reader (2002)
- "Faith in Action" award - Metropolitan Community Church of New York City (2003)
- Legion of Honor award - American University LGBT and Ally Resource Center (2003)
- "40 Heroes who have made a defining difference in LGBT civil rights over the last forty years" - Equality Forum (2005)
- "Outstanding contribution in the area of spirituality that positively impacts LGBT communities" - Pride Toronto (2008)

Contact Information

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