

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 100 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 2012 and Spring 2013 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

Upcoming presentations of “Hidden Voices”

Colorado College * Armstrong Atlantic State University * Kansas State University

Faisal has presented at more than 100 colleges and universities!

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 is a former member of the national advisory board for Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) and currently serves as a member of the national advisory committee of the LGBT Program at Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Awards & Recognitions

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

Contact Information

Email: booking@hiddenvoices.info
Website: <http://www.hiddenvoices.info>
Telephone: (404) 702-9772



Faisal was invited to the White House to attend an *Iftaar* dinner (breaking of the fast) with President Barack Obama in August 2011. -
- cropped picture courtesy of the White House