

FAISAL ALAM

b. June 21, 1977, Frankfurt, Germany

LGBT MUSLIM ACTIVIST

“Our mission is to try to help Muslims to reconcile two identities.”

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Alam created
the Al-Fatiha
Foundation for
LGBT Muslims.**

Born to Pakistani parents and raised in Connecticut, queer Muslim activist Faisal Alam has navigated the precarious terrain of clashing identities. From an early age Alam felt a strong connection to his Islamic faith. He was an active member of Muslim youth groups as a way of engaging with his faith and his community; he became a model of Islam's focus on goodwill and strong communal ties.

When Alam first recognized his queer identity, the seemingly irreconcilable disparity between being Muslim and being queer was devastating. Homosexuality is perceived as contemptuous, even criminal, in many Islamic societies. Alam said, “We really felt caught in between. The last thing you could do was call the mosque for help.”

From this inner conflict emerged Alam's vow to help other struggling LGBT Muslims. “This level of schism in one's life can only last for so long until it takes a toll on your body, your soul, your psyche,” he said. “The promise I made to God, to my creator, is that I would never let what happened to me ever happen again.”

At age 19, Alam created the Al-Fatiha Foundation for LGBT Muslims. Al-Fatiha—literally “the opening”—offered new possibilities for people who live at the intersection of Islam and queerness. What started as a tiny e-mail listserve blossomed into an international organization that held regular conferences and engagements for LGBT Muslims.

By striving to embrace these two identities and encouraging other to do the same, Faisal Alam challenges notions of identity and reflects the positive attributes of his communities.



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