



16 August 2012

Interfaith Panel Convenes to Discuss Faith in Economics and Politics

San Antonio, TX—The 2012 Infinite Wisdom Day, an annual gathering of the interfaith community in San Antonio and conducted during Sikh Research Institute's annual Sidak leadership program, [opened with a sabad](#) honoring the victims of the attack on the Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Afterward, Inderpreet Singh, chair of SikhRI's board of directors, welcomed each of the eight panelists to the stage to address this year's topic, "Occupy: Interplay of Faith in Economics and Politics." The session was held at the Concept Therapy Institute, and was live streamed and [live tweeted @SikhRI](#). You can now [access a video recording of the session here](#).



2012 Panel (L to R): Inder Jit Singh, Lopita Nath, Jim Parker, Omar Shakir, Kiley Jon Clark, Barbie Gorlick, Tom Keene, Waris Faridi.

Panelists took a variety of approaches to the broad topic, sharing ways in which their faith tradition encourages care and support for the impoverished through distribution and contribution of their time, earnings, and energy, or the vision of the role of political and legal structure in relation to specific beliefs and theological institutions.

For example, Tom Keene, Catholic and former professor at Our Lady of the Lake University, brought in history—theological and political—to reflect on the way the nuns, priests and saints have devoted their lives to the protection and care of others. Jim Parker of the Freethinkers Association of Central Texas brought energy and enthusiasm to the panel, raising the question of the tax breaks for churches provided in the United States and the ways in which these privileges may have unfairly or unreasonably imbued disproportionate political power and influence in the hands of faith based organizations, thus weakening the separation of church and state which is critical to maintain.

Dr. IJ Singh, a Sikh, addressed the roll of inequality in economic and political movements—in the current occupy movement and the tea party, and the ways in which the principle of Miri Piri marries the spiritual and the political as cornerstones of Sikhi, moving them into central positions, and the equalizing actions, economically, socially and politically which defines the history of Sikhi. Imam Omar Shakir similarly spoke to the vision of the political, legal, and theological as inseparable in Islam, and the way that this empowers and shapes the leadership style of Muslims.

SikhRI wishes to thank all the panelists for their time and effort in preparing remarks and attending the event, as well as all those from the local community who came out to join in, bringing their passion and their curiosity to bear. Also thanks to the Concept Therapy Institute for opening the facilities to the public and for their invaluable help in setting up the auditorium.

Contact: Sara Stroo
sara.stroo@sikhri.org | 210.757.4555