HUMANISTS believe in GOOD.

THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION provides a humanist perspective in strong support of separation of religion from government, preservation and restoration of the environment, protection of civil rights and liberties, and promotion of personal choice regarding introduction of new life, family structure, and death with dignity. Though humanists are not monolithic on every issue—this is a community that encourages tolerance and nurtures diversity—we directly challenge human rights violations and discrimination.

You may also be a HUMANIST!

ISLAM was founded by the prophet Muhammad, who was born in Mecca around 570 CE. According to Muslim belief, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in a mountain cave and delivered a message. The Prophet Muhammad dedicated the remainder of his life to spreading a message of monotheism in a polytheistic world.

Muslims believe Muhammed was the last and most important in a series of prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. His life’s work is recorded in the Qur’an, the sacred text of Islam. Islamic practices center on the Five Pillars of Islam: confession of faith, daily prayer, fasting during Ramadan, pilgrimage, and charity.

Dr. John L. Esposito, professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, wrote in The Oxford Dictionary of Islam (2003) that “Some modern Muslim scholars argue that the core values emphasized by humanism, such as the dignity of each human being, individual liberty, freedom of choice consistent with the collective good, participatory democracy, human rights, social justice, and rational inquiry, are all compatible with the Islamic worldview.”

Today, over a billion people worldwide are Muslims and the Islamic traditions they follow are as varied as the nations where they live. Even if there are more ex-Muslims than active ones who currently identify with humanism, there are many more humanistic Muslims who are just learning of the opportunity of identifying with both.

Are you a MUSLIM?
But *how can I be a Muslim and a Humanist?*

While the humanist worldview does not agree with all of the Five Pillars of Islam, the humanist lifestyle surely is consistent with one of them, Zakat, the practice of charitable giving. It is considered to be a personal responsibility to ease economic hardship and eliminate inequality.

Muhammad said: “Charity is a necessity for every Muslim.” He was asked: “What if a person has nothing?” The Prophet replied: “He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity.” The Companions asked: “What if he is not able to work?” The Prophet said: “He should help poor and needy persons.” The Companions further asked “What if he cannot do even that?” The Prophet said: “He should urge others to do good.” The Companions said: “What if he lacks that also?” The Prophet said: “He should check himself from doing evil. That is also charity.”

A person who takes this step surely has taken a step toward humanism—no matter what his or her tradition may be.

### The following passage appears in many descriptions of Islam:

The teachings of Islam concerning social responsibilities are based on kindness and consideration of others. Since a broad injunction to be kind is likely to be ignored in specific situations, Islam lays emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights of various relationships. In a widening circle of relationship, then, our first obligation is to our immediate family-parents, husband or wife and children, then to other relatives, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, orphans and widows, the needy of the community, our fellow Muslims, all our fellow human beings and animals.

Similarly, the following is a recurring statement in the description of humanism.

**HUMANISM** insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility.

**HUMANISM** ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognizes our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world.

— Amsterdam Declaration 2002, International Humanist and Ethical Union

Islam and humanism are connected in recognizing that humans are responsible for the well-being of other humans and for the planet on which we live—together.

— Dr. Muzaffar, President of International Movement for a Just World and Professor at the Center for Civilizational Dialogue at the University of Malaysia