

# Are you a **BUDDHIST?**



You may *also* be a  
**HUMANIST!**

**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.



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*“I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good.”* –BUDDHA

**SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA** lived from about 563 BCE to 483 BCE. According to Buddhist tradition, he was born a prince. Shielded from knowledge of human suffering his entire life, one night he left his palace in curiosity. Far away from home, he encountered disease, death and poverty. Seeing this, he learned that sickness, age, and death are inevitable. Afterwards, he sought a life as a monk to help him seek answers to human suffering.

Traveling over India, he met with monks and holy men and led a life of austerity. After nearly drowning from hunger and weakness, he contemplated his path under the Bodhi Tree. Meditating for over 40 days, he was said to have reached enlightenment. For the rest of his life, he traveled to teach others of his knowledge and path.

#### **Through his lessons, Buddha taught his students:**

- the impermanence of existence
- respect and reverence for humans and the web of life
- a faith grounded on our common human capacities, not in a god or those who claim to speak for a god
- the interdependence of humanity
- the will to put an end to human suffering

Today, there are over 400 million practicing Buddhists around the world, with over 1 million in the US alone, making it the sixth largest religious tradition.

**HUMANISM** is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

“We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature’s resources...so that as many as possible can enjoy the good life.”

—**Humanism and Its Aspirations**,  
Humanist Manifesto III, 2003

“I will not be jealous of others or envy their possessions. I will not be selfish either in mind or property. I will try to make poor people happy with the things I receive and will not hoard for myself.”

—**Buddha**

“I believe there’s nothing we can know except that we should be kind to each other and do what we can for other people.”

—**Katharine Hepburn**,  
1985 Humanist Arts Award

“My religion is very simple.  
My religion is kindness.”

—**The Dalai Lama**

## But *how* can I be a **BUDDHIST** and a **HUMANIST**?

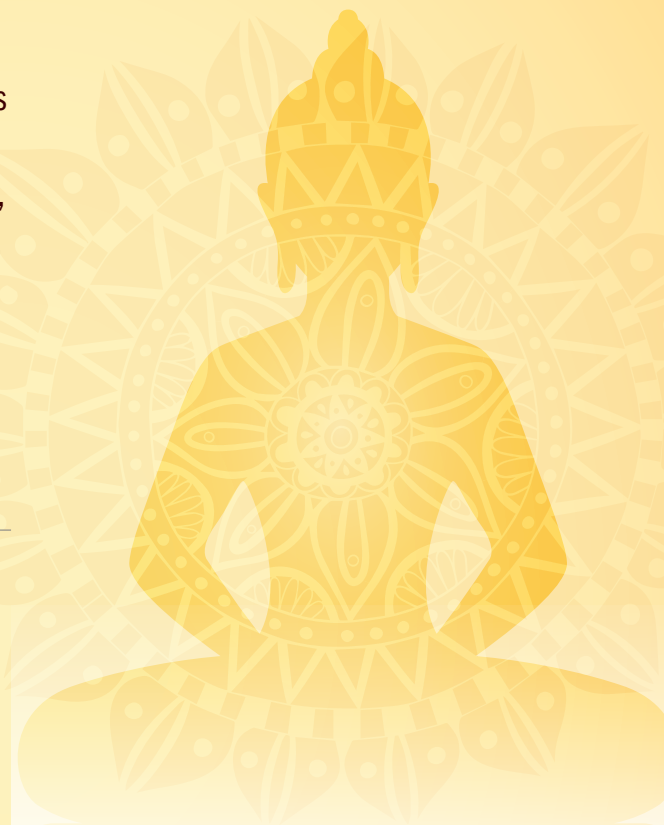
Buddhists, like nontheists, are diverse. Not all Buddhists believe in reincarnation. Likewise, humanists have different political and economic leanings. According to a 2008 survey from the Pew Foundation, two-thirds of Buddhists either don’t believe in a god, or believe that God is an impersonal force.

What’s more important, however, is that we strive to do good deeds, regardless of our creed! Doing good—that’s why you’re a humanist!

**HUMANISTS | BUDDHISTS** affirm the dignity of every human being and assert that humanity is responsible for its own destiny, having within itself all that is needed to improve the conditions of life.

**HUMANISM | BUDDHISM** is a philosophy of avid service for the greater good of humanity. It provides that happiness is attained by harmoniously combining personal development with work that contributes to the welfare of the community.

**HUMANISM | BUDDHISM** is guided by reason, inspired by compassion, informed by experience.



“Rich, poor, believer,  
non-believer—  
no difference.  
We are all the same.”

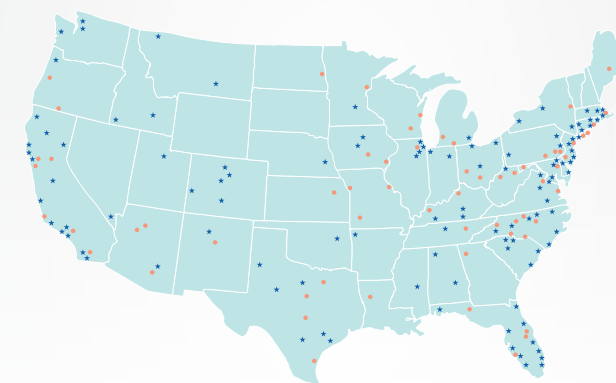
—**The Dalai Lama**

Be a part of the *growing*  
**HUMANIST**  
**MOVEMENT!**

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

**Membership:** New members receive a free book about humanism. All members receive voting privileges, the *Humanist* magazine, and discounts on AHA conferences, seminars, books, literature, and more!

**Local Communities:** Start or join a local AHA Chapter or Affiliate to connect with humanists in your area and build the humanist community.



Local AHA communities: ★ Chapter ● Affiliate

**Education:** Enjoy our Center for Education’s innovative online and in-person resources designed for individuals, professionals, and groups across the humanist spectrum.

**Advocacy:** Help us protect the separation of church and state and advocate for social justice and universal human rights.

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See more at [www.americanhumanist.org/paths](http://www.americanhumanist.org/paths)