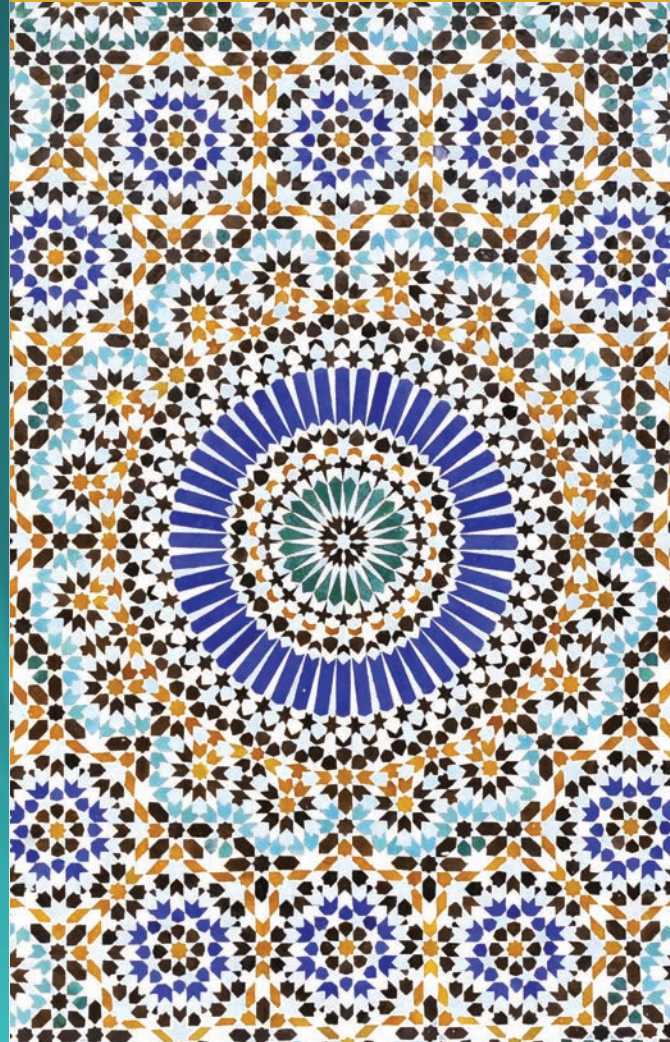


Are *you* a  
**MUSLIM?**



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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**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.

**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 must work for global solidarity, and struggle against injustice and for the protection of human rights. Global solidarity is necessary for the protection of the environment, to respond to natural calamities and to tackle poverty.”

—**Dr. Ahmet Akgunduz**, Rector of the Islamic University of Rotterdam, on “Norms And Values In Islam”

“Globalization should help us see that potency of ‘humankind’, the largest domain we can envisage.... Constructive alliances for humanist causes...should dominate our agenda.”

—**Dr. Robert B. Tapp**, the AHA’s 2005 Horace Mann Awardee, on “Globalization Theory and Humanism”

“Ramadan is made the month of empathy for the Muslims. It is not the hunger and thirst with which a Muslim spends his day. It’s the feeling of being hungry and thirsty like the poor that he observes by practically going through this himself.”

—Cited by **The Muslim Academy** (<http://muslim-academy.com/ramadan-themonth-of-empathy>)

“We human beings are capable of empathy, the ability to understand and enter imaginatively into another living being’s feelings...”

—**The American Humanist Association’s Ten Commitments:**  
*Guiding Principles For Teaching Values In America’s Public Schools*

## 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 lifstance 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.

“How would you sum up your vision of Islam as a spirituality, a way of life, culture and possibly a renewed civilization?” In answering this question, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar wrote: “The essence of Islam’s mission, as I see it as an individual Muslim, is to elevate our humanity, to make us more conscious of justice, to make us more conscious of the unity and the brotherhood and sisterhood of the human family. This, I think, is the mission of Islam: to restore to humanity that principle that is repeated over and over again in the Qur’an, to believe in God and to do good...the strength of Islam lies in this—in making us more human.”

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

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

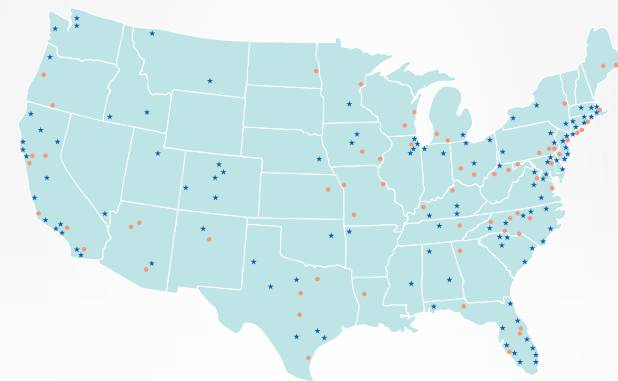
Islam and humanism are connected in recognizing that humans are responsible for the well-being of other humans and for the planet on which we live—together.

## 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.

Visit us at [AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG](http://AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG) for details.

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