

# Are you a **SIKH?**



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

**SIKHISM**, founded by Guru Nanak in the 16th century in the Punjab district of what is now India and Pakistan, is based on his teaching and those of the nine Gurus who followed him. The voice of Guru Nanak was a voice of compassion and courage and a plea for peace and unity. Wherever he traveled, Guru Nanak spoke out against what appeared to him as empty religious rituals such as idol worship and pilgrimages as well as the caste system and the sacrifice of widows. His followers became known as the Guru's disciples, or Sikhs.

The word “guru” is derived from the root words “gu” which means darkness or ignorance and “ru” which means light or knowledge. Each one of the ten Gurus who established Sikhism over the centuries represented an attribute: humility, obedience, equality, service, self-sacrifice, justice, mercy, purity, tranquility, and royal courage. The followers of Sikhism are instructed to follow the teachings of the ten Gurus as well as the scriptures, *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which include selected works of philosophers from diverse religious backgrounds.

Guru Nanak is often described in humanistic terms. The Institute of Sikh Studies has stated that “a Sikh is pious in his religiosity, active in social life, aware of justice, and is responsive to any injustice done to anyone. It is this supreme ideal, which the Sikh Gurus in all their humanistic zeal have given to their Sikhs.”

The Sikh religion today has a following of over 20 million people and is ranked as the fifth-largest religion in the world.

Like humanists, Sikh's view non-Sikhs and Sikhs as equals, accepting all as human beings.

**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.

“Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living.”

—Guru Nanak

“(Humanism is) the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood... (and) a rationale for living life joyously and an overall sense of purpose.”

—Fred Edwards, 1986 AHA Humanist Pioneer, in “What Is Humanism?”

“Sikhism consists of practical living in rendering service to humanity and brotherly love toward all. Sikhism does not accept the ideology of pessimism. It advocates optimism and hope.”

—P.S. Prakasa Rao, in the *Sikhnet News*, November 2005

“We believe in optimism rather than pessimism, hope rather than despair, learning in the place of dogma, truth instead of ignorance, joy rather than guilt or sin, tolerance in the place of fear, love instead of hatred, compassion over selfishness, beauty instead of ugliness, and reason rather than blind faith or irrationality.”

—Dr. Paul Kurtz, AHA 2008 Lifetime Humanist Achievement Award Winner

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

Which of the following lifestances apply to both Sikhism and humanism?

- Promoting a life of peace, equality, and positive actions.
- Rejecting discrimination of all kinds.
- Living according to individual and shared ethical commitments.
- Promoting liberty, justice, tolerance, and non-violence.
- Treating all races and classes equally.
- Stressing the full equality of men and women.
- Rendering service to humanity and compassion toward all.

If you answered, “All of them!” you are absolutely correct.

“Life’s fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals. We aim for our fullest possible development and animate our lives with a deep sense of purpose, finding wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence, its challenges and tragedies, and even in the inevitability and finality of death. Humanists rely on the rich heritage of human culture and the lifestance of humanism to provide comfort in times of want and encouragement in times of plenty.”

—Humanism and Its Aspirations,  
Humanist Manifesto III, 2003

Adapted from the Amsterdam Declaration 2002 of the International Humanist and Ethical Union: “Humanism is the outcome of a long tradition of freethought that has inspired many of the world’s great thinkers...”

**HUMANISM** is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others.

**HUMANISM** supports democracy and human rights. (It) aims at the fullest possible development of every human being.

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

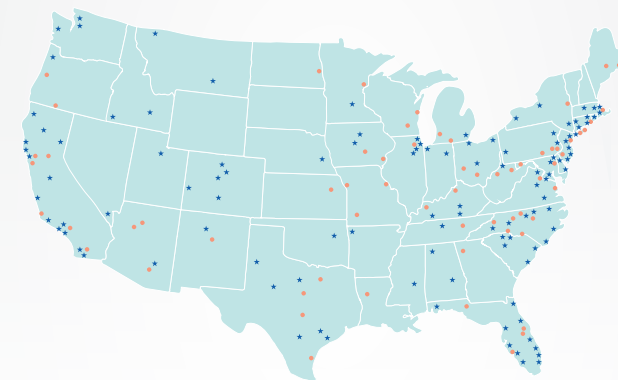
**HUMANISM** is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfillment through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times.

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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