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## WHAT OMNISM MEANS TO ME

In order to understand where I'm coming from, a brief overview of my religious journey would be beneficial.

My father was [Lutheran](#) and my mother Methodist when they met and tied the knot. For the earliest years of my life I was brought up in a good Christian home without the burden of putting on fancy clothes and attending services on Sunday or any other day of the week. Some where around my seventh year of life, after attending some seminars on prophecy, my parents became [Seventh-day Adventists](#). So for the next five or six years I was indoctrinated into that form of religion. When it comes to Daniel and Revelation, I pretty much have it down pat. But, I can not say that I was spiritually comfortable.

Some will say that the next event in my life has led me to the state I am currently in, but it was just the tip of the iceberg whose majority lies several hundred feet below the surface. Between the ages of 12 and 13, my father passed away and left a many faceted void in my life. In trying to fill this void, I began to look around at what the world had to offer in the realm of religion.

### Exploration

My earliest explorations off the beaten path were down the roads marked Levey and Crowley, as these were as far away from what my parents had believed as possible, especially Anton Levey. Soon after that, I discovered girls and decided to explore what ever religion they were in. Needless to say, I think I've attended every denomination of Christianity under the sun. From Catholics to Jehovah's Witnesses and none of them felt right.

When I married for the first time, it was to a gal that had no foundation in Christian dogma. She was more of a thinker and believed in a Cosmic Collective Consciousness. This gave me time to read and look around some more. I discovered Cunningham and Buckland then. Read as much as I could on Wicca and Paganism. While looking at these, I branched out into the teachings of Buddha, Krishna, and Joseph Smith. I also explored Shinto and other Eastern religions. I read the Koran and the Book of Mormon. It was a time of exploration.

### Epiphany

Finally, after taking a journey to California and the rest of the West Coast of America, I came to one conclusion: All faiths have seeds of truth but none hold all truth. So, for the last six years, I've been quantifying that thought by attempting to compile a list of truths that are gleaned from all over the world. Not surprisingly, most faiths agree on the basic principles and only differ when it comes to the name of the Deity or Deities to honor.

### Final Thoughts

[Omnism](#), to me, means that you don't have to limit yourself to one dogmatic formula to come closer to the Divine. You can be spiritual without having a religion. And you can have faith without structure. I firmly believe, when it boils right down to it, all the Gods are One in the End.



Lake and Grain Elevators (Photo credit: [J. Stephen Conn](#))

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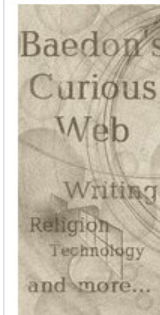
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# How to Understand the Difference Between Theism and Atheism

Throughout human history, there have been people of faith, and people who do not believe in any supreme being. Problems occur when one side misunderstands the other. This article will help you avoid those problems.

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**1 Understand what the terms *theist*, *atheist*, and *agnostic* mean.** The theist believes in a god or gods while the atheist denies this belief and all others like it. An agnostic is one who believes that there is currently insufficient evidence to determine the existence of any deity. It is possible for one to be an agnostic theist if one believes that a god/gods exist but acknowledges an inability to prove it. Likewise, one can be an agnostic atheist if one believes that there is no god/gods but also acknowledges a lack of sufficient evidence. In a strict philosophical sense, some scholars would argue that we are all agnostics about everything (*epistemology*) because we can never truly know anything, including our own existence.

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**2 Understand the difference between monotheism, polytheism, pantheism and omnism.** Monotheists believe in only one God or divinity and reject any other form of deity. Polytheists believe in a set of many gods. Pantheists believe that everything in the universe is divine. Omnists (omnitheists) accept all gods and religions as equal. Of course, these statements may over-simplify for the sake of being concise.

**3 Notice that proponents of each ideology hold their beliefs strongly.** Theists may view atheists as immoral because they do not believe in a god/gods, while atheists may view theists as deluded for believing in a god/gods. Both parties hold their beliefs strongly and necessarily make sacrifices by subscribing to one over the other. Understanding this intensity will lead to more productive and personable debate that will further human understanding and community.

**Find a common ground.** Notice that if you remove the supernatural elements of most

**4** religions, their moral code is very similar to that of atheists and other religions. Most ethical elements of many religions are agreeable to theists and atheists alike, e.g. the golden rule of Jesus: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," or as Rabbi Hillel put it, "Don't do to others what you wouldn't want done to you." Most people agree with such a statement, and recognizing this common ground provides a buffer for the emotional issues surrounding belief vs. disbelief.

**5** **Study your "opponent".** Most atheists were once theists (or were raised in a theist tradition), but those who were not should consider the ideas of various forms of theism before discounting such ideas, and those who were raised as theists should study theist ideas with which they are unfamiliar. Many theists have been theists for their entire lives. Before satisfying debate can occur, both parties must understand their opponent by critically examining their ideas.

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### Tips

- Some people promote the idea that atheism is a religion. It is not. It is simply the absence of belief in any god or gods.
- To come to a broader understanding of human beliefs and understanding of life through folklore and religion, read Joseph Campbell's works, including *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, and his series on Primitive, Creative, Occidental, and Oriental Mythologies. Whether theist or atheist, these works will help you recognize the common human experience, and the similar ways mankind has developed for understanding it across ages and cultures.

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### Warnings

- Likewise remember that just because someone in a certain religious group did something awful does not mean it's the religion's fault.

People are individually responsible for their actions (and inaction), and many are inspired by their faith and courage into amazing acts of self-sacrifice and love.

- Anytime you come to a balanced view on such issues, there will be people who try to put you back on an imbalanced path, e.g. "But what about all the horrible things (theists/atheists) have done?!" Just counter with the fact that throughout history people have done wonderful and horrible things regardless of belief or ethnicity, so there seems to be no correlation.

### Article Info

Categories: [Atheism](#) | [Religion](#)

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# Omnism

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**Omnism** is the belief in all religions; those who hold this belief are called *omnists* (or *Omnists*). The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) quotes as the term's earliest usage the 1839 long poem "Festus" by English poet Philip J. Bailey: "I am an omnist, and believe in all religions". In recent years, the term has been emerging anew, due to the interest of modern day self-described omnists who have rediscovered and begun to redefine the term. It is best thought of as Syncretism taken to its logical extreme.

## Contemporary usage

Contemporary usage has modified "belief in all religions" to refer more to an acceptance of the legitimacy of all religions. The OED elaborates that an omnist believes "in a single transcendent purpose or cause uniting all things or people". That is not necessarily the conclusion of those who describe themselves as omnists. Some omnists interpret this to mean that all religions contain varying elements of a common truth, or place omnism in opposition to dogmatism, in that omnists are open to potential truths from all religions. However, as with modern physics, this does not mean that there is a single transcendent purpose or cause that unites. There may indeed be an infinite number of possibilities, or a deeper form of uncertainty in reality. There may be an influence more akin to existentialism in which consciousness is a power or force that helps determine the reality, yet is not a divine influence.

In this regard, omnism does not appear to be a form of theology, as it neither espouses nor opposes particular beliefs about God. Instead, it affirms the necessity of one arriving at an understanding of reality based on personal experience, engagement, and inquiry, and an acceptance of the validity and legitimacy of the differing understandings of others. In this, there is, however, an implied system of values or ethics.

It is a belief in equality. Not one religion or the other should be superior. Everyone has their own ways of thinking and believing. There are many aspects to religion that not everyone agrees on. Therefore, omnism is just a religion that agrees to never judge against other beliefs. It is possible for one to be a Christian Omnist, or a Jewish Omnist. How omnism is seen can vary from person to person.

The number of omnists is unknown since there is currently no formal organization.

## Notable omnists

- Chris Martin, who referred to himself as an "all-theist", a term of his own coining referring to omnism

## References

- "Omnist", *Oxford English Dictionary*, draft revision June 2004 (accessed from oed.com (<http://www.oed.com>) October 6, 2005).

## External links

- Omnism.com (<http://www.omnism.com/>), a site dedicated to Omnism
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