



*Briefing note:*

# Atheism, Agnosticism & Theisms

Atheists are people who do not believe that god or gods (or other supernatural beings) exist but that they are man-made constructs, myths and legends. Atheists say that human beings can devise suitable moral codes to live by without the aid of Gods or scriptures.

## Reason for non-belief

People are atheist for many reasons, among them:

- There's insufficient evidence to support any religion.
- Religion is nonsensical.
- Once had a religion and have lost faith in it.
- They live in a non-religious culture.
- Religion doesn't interest them.
- Religion doesn't seem relevant to their lives.
- Religions seem to have done a lot of harm in the world.

Many atheists are also secularist (secularists are not against the right of individuals to have a religious faith. What they oppose is special treatment for religious beliefs and organisations).

## Morality

Atheists are as moral (or immoral) as religious people. In practical terms atheists often follow the same moral code as religious people, but they arrive at the decision of what is good or bad without any help from the idea of God.

## Agnosticism

An agnostic is someone who neither believes nor disbelieves in the existence of a God or Gods, whereas a **theist** (in the broadest sense, is the belief that at least one God exists) and an **atheist** believe and disbelieve, respectively.

## Theism

**Theism**, in the broadest sense, is the belief that at least one God exists. In a more specific sense, *theism* is commonly a monotheistic doctrine concerning the nature of a God, and that God's relationship to the universe. *Theism*, in this specific sense, conceives of God as personal, present and active in the governance and organisation of the world and the universe.

## Monotheism

Is the belief in theology that only one deity exists. Some modern day monotheistic religions include Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Baha'i Faith, Sikhism, and some forms of Hinduism.