

Apparent Doctrinal Disagreements Between Different Forms of Religion

(See Keith E. Yandell, *Philosophy of Religion: A Contemporary Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2002, Chapter 5.)

Key beliefs of Jainism:

—There are (and always have been) persons. Persons are enduring, incomposite, self-conscious substances, retaining numerical identity over time and retaining identity as individual persons in their enlightened state.

—There are (and always have been) the physical elements of which observable physical things are composed.

—There is no deity on which persons or things depend for their existence.

Key beliefs of Theravada Buddhism:

—Everything is radically impermanent, transitory.

—Nothing exists independently of other things.

—There is no substantial self (persons are composite “bundles” of simultaneously existing elements).

—What exists are momentary states, some mental and some physical.

Key beliefs of Advaita (non-dual)Vedanta Hinduism:

—All that exists is qualityless Brahman.

—There is one thing, not many (physical objects, persons, and gods only *appear* to exist).

—Atman (the self) is Brahman.

We can represent what **must exist** if the above accounts are correct as follows:

—Generic philosophical monotheism: God, persons created by God.

—Jainism: independently existing persons (i.e., persons that don't depend for their existence on anything).

—Theravada Buddhism: only transitory states.

—Advaita Vedanta Hinduism: only qualityless Brahman.

According to Yandell: What is interesting about this way of analysing the religious traditions is that we can see that if any one of the accounts is true the others must be false.