

# Review of: "Either you know or you've gotta believe"

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This paper aims at showing that belief and knowledge are of a different nature, that knowledge does not imply belief, and that belief is in some way “superior” to knowledge. To do so it presents a number of arguments of disparate nature from various authors.

This paper is quite poorly organized and, as pointed out by another reviewer, essentially consists in a number of quotes from other authors mixed with dubious claims that are based on very little argumentation, if any. And when arguments are provided, they tend to be rather unconvincing.

Probably the problem lies partly in the fact that nothing is being defined properly and we move in great confusion between a number of different notions all being called the same: from formal notions of knowledge or belief as used in epistemology, to their usual meaning in everyday life, or how they were used centuries ago.

Below I will raise a number of points that are particularly problematic to me.

1. “ For Thomas knowledge comes from perception, but I think it is safe to say that it could also come from memory or induction. “

So you think that it is safe to say it. But do you know it? Or believe it?

At any rate I would tend to agree with you on this, but two lines below you seem to have forgotten about induction, when you say “If I don't see or remember it, I cannot know it, but I can believe it.” With induction you could very well know something as a result of a complex reasoning based on other facts that you know.

2. “Hence, Aquinas' interpretation, although for different reasons, attributes additional powers to belief over knowledge”

In what sense? What would these powers be?

3. “It's easy to know”

I do not see anything here to sustain this claim.

4. “ If we interpret knowledge and belief as separate and mutually exclusive notions, the entailment thesis controversy ceases to exist. “

Yes, and this consideration may give you a motive to like the idea that they are indeed mutually exclusive, but by no

means does it give any credit to this thesis.

5. "Hence, I think rather that to believe is to decide."

I could argue the contrary : if I believe something but I don't know it for sure, then I will probably withhold any decision or judgement until I get confirmation of this belief (unless forced to take a decision now).

6. "To believe is to think, to know does not actively involve thinking or deciding. It is stating a fact it does not involve a process of intellectual activity, it is only stating that such and such is the case."

On the basis of what do you make such claims? Saying that "knowing" is only "stating that such and such is the case" seems to go completely against all possible intuitions of what knowledge is, as well as usual definitions of knowledge in epistemology.

7. " That's why belief is the more complex concept requiring further conditions: mental assent, feeling of conviction, full awareness or consciousness. That's why believing something requires more than simply knowing it."

One could as easily argue that knowledge goes with feeling of conviction, while partial belief rarely does. When I am accessing a piece of knowledge that I know for certain is true, I will surely feel more convinced than if I am using a belief of which I am unsure.

8. "Believing is often understood as thinking, and the act of thinking is clearly an action."

I believe many things in the same way as I know others, i.e. without having to think about them constantly. Belief does not require thinking any more than knowledge does. However I indeed think when I am accessing this belief, gain awareness of it and/or act on it, but not any more than I do when I do the same thing for a piece of knowledge.

9. "A belief, on the other hand, is a belief only if we act on it at some point."

Why? I may very well believe that uncle Joey died when he was 66 when actually he was 67, and never act on this. I may have a whole body of completely useless beliefs that I will never act on because the occasion will simply never arise.

10. "knowledge and belief are diametrically opposed"

In what sense? Do you really mean that one is the opposite of the other?

11. "I cannot believe something which I already know"

Why? I know that 2+2 make 4, and I am pretty sure that I also believe it.

Finally I also wonder why this title? Nowhere do you say that absence of knowledge should imply belief.

