

# Today's Lecture

- Admin stuff
- Continuing Jainism
- What we will cover today
  - *Some* basics concerning Jain epistemology
  - *Some* basics concerning Jain moral philosophy

# Admin stuff

- Remember that your second assignments are officially due today.
- Remember to submit an electronic copy to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) (no grade is official [read final] until they are so submitted).
- I will mark them during the exam period and have them available for pick-up in the **first week of January**. I will post your overall grades for the term, including the grade for your second assignment, by **December 23rd**.

# Jainism: *Karma, samsara and moksha*

- Where we left off:
- **Shedding of *karma*** refers to the *expending* of *karma* (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.34).
- ***Moksha*** refers to the *final release* of the *jiva* from karmic influences and, so, embodiment (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.36).
- Remember that you need to differentiate *moksha* so understood from the *enlightenment* achieved at the thirteenth stage of purification where the *jiva* realizes its essential nature (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.36).
- ***Moksha*** is achieved through the ‘three jewels’ of Jainism: **right faith, right knowledge and right conduct** (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.28, 32, 36).

# Jainism: The three jewels

- **Right faith** refers to the view (or *darshana*) of reality which reveals our true natures and the nature of samsaric existence, motivating in turn the pursuit of *moksha*. This view or vision is first ‘awakened’ (occurs for the first time, though only briefly) at the **fourth** of the fourteen stages towards *moksha* (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.35, 38-39).
- Note this is a significantly different sense of the term ‘faith’ than is used in the Abrahamic Traditions (i.e. the Judaic, Christian and Islamic Traditions).

- **Right knowledge** includes an awareness of the nature of reality and the limitations imposed upon us (as *jivas*) by our embodiment.
- Our dependency on the commonly recognized sources of knowledge (e.g. perception, reason, the testimony of others, *et cetera*) limits that which can be comprehended or understood. This is due to the many-sidedness (or complexity) of that which constitutes reality AND our inability, while enclosed by karmic matter, to adopt an unlimited (omniscient) perspective (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.36-37).
- The seven-mode doctrine (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.37-38) is offered as a template for making claims about objects or individuals in the world when speaking from a non-omniscient perspective. We'll return to this shortly.

# Jainism: The three jewels

- **Right conduct** can be divided into the practice of **primary** and **secondary virtues**.
- The five **primary virtues** are *ahimsa*, truthfulness, nonstealing, sexual purity and nongrasping (this should sound familiar - think of the basic moral requirements of Hinduism [or *sadharana dharma*]) (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.39-40)
- **Secondary virtues** include the curtailment of travel, not drinking unfiltered water, almsgiving, and death through meditation and fasting (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.41).

# Jainism: Epistemology and a pluralistic view of the universe

- The Jain view of knowledge (i.e. their epistemology) arises out of **BOTH** their view of our essential characteristics as *jivas*, **AND** the adverse effects of embodiment on these characteristics (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.31-33, 36-37).
- Remember that we, as *jivas*, are *essentially* omniscient (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.32).
- Our natural omniscience is currently limited by our physical form, which includes our minds (i.e. mental capacities) and sense faculties (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.31-32)

# Jainism: Epistemology and a pluralistic view of the universe

- The knowledge we can acquire is constrained by the limited capacities we enjoy in whatever physical form we take ... we may have only two or three senses from which to form knowledge of the world and ourselves (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.31).
- Because of **BOTH** the **rich diversity** of the cosmos around us, **AND** our limited cognitive capacities (in any given embodiment), we can only form very limited perspectives on the world and ourselves (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.36-37).



# Jainism: Epistemology and a pluralistic view of the universe

- What is true, or known, then, is **relative to** our embodiment (our physical limitations), the proper functioning of the capacities with which we have been ‘endowed’, and the circumstances of the relevant experience (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.37).
- There is a many-sidedness to our knowledge. That is, there is more than one *legitimate* perspective of any given object of knowledge (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.37). (Think of the story of the elephant on page 37 of your *Asian Philosophies*.)
- Do note, this **DOES NOT** mean that anything goes ... or that whatever is true for you may not be true for me.

# Jainism: Epistemology and a pluralistic view of the universe

- Note that there are at least three ways to talk of our limited view of Reality while embodied:
- (1) Each object has an infinite number of modifications or properties (and so there is an infinite number of ways we can describe it). We have statements that pick out properties it possesses, and also statements that tell us of those properties it does not possess (*Course Pack*, pp.64, 66).
- We can only **talk of a finite number** of these modifications or properties at one time, or in each context within which we find ourselves (*Course Pack*, p.64).
- (2) We must **emphasis or prioritize one set of properties** over others when **describing** an object. This, however, does not exclude other approaches to knowing these objects (*Course Pack*, pp.64, 66).

## Jainism: Epistemology and a pluralistic view of the universe

- (3) We cannot provide a non-contextual description of an object. We have no words for how objects are in themselves *independent of all experiential contexts* (*Course Pack*, p.64).
- So, we must recognize that there is only so much that can be properly inferred from our respective perspectives.
- No one's limited perspective takes priority.
- Is there a tension here between their epistemic pluralism and their commitment to a particular metaphysics and soteriology (where soteriology refers to a theory of salvation [broadly construed])?

# Jainism: Moral philosophy

- Jains are most known for their principle of *ahimsa* and the extent to which they go to live in accord with it.
- Since according to Jain metaphysics there are beings within and without the various ‘elements’ and objects around them, Jain monks must go *to great lengths* to avoid causing *any of them* harm (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.41).

# Jainism: Moral philosophy

- The concern to avoid hurting others so characteristic of Jainism is fundamentally grounded in *the avoidance of any* actions, desires or passions which will continue the cycle of birth and death, generation or decay (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.39).
- As I have already said, this will eventually lead one who is spiritually advanced to avoid *all* activity (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.36).
- That violence against other, nonhuman, beings would attract bad karma is explained by (i) their capacity to be harmed (often talked of as an ability to suffer) and (ii) the karmic (or moral) significance of such harm or suffering (much the same can be said of course for violence against human beings) (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.33, 39).

# Jainism: Moral philosophy

- We can gain knowledge about the moral significance of harm (and anything else for that matter), and thus it's connection to *karma*, *by reflecting on its moral significance in our own lives.*
- Consider the following passage from the *Acaranga Sutra* (1.1):
- “He who knows what is bad for himself knows what is bad for others, and he who knows what is bad for others knows what is bad for himself. The reciprocity should always be borne in mind.”
- This reflects, at least in part, a universalizing of, for want of a better word, self-interest. It should look familiar.

# Jainism: Moral philosophy

- That other entities suffer is explained, in Jainism, by the presence of a *jiva*.
- That all beings possess a *jiva* grounds the Jain attitude that all beings, be they human or nonhuman, are **moral equals** (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.34, 39-40).
- IF *A* and *B* are **moral equals**, THEN *A*'s interests *cannot be* prioritized over the relevantly similar interests of *B* (UNLESS *A* has a special claim based upon the relevant circumstances).
- *A* and *B* will be moral equals if they are not relevantly dissimilar (**in morally significant ways**).