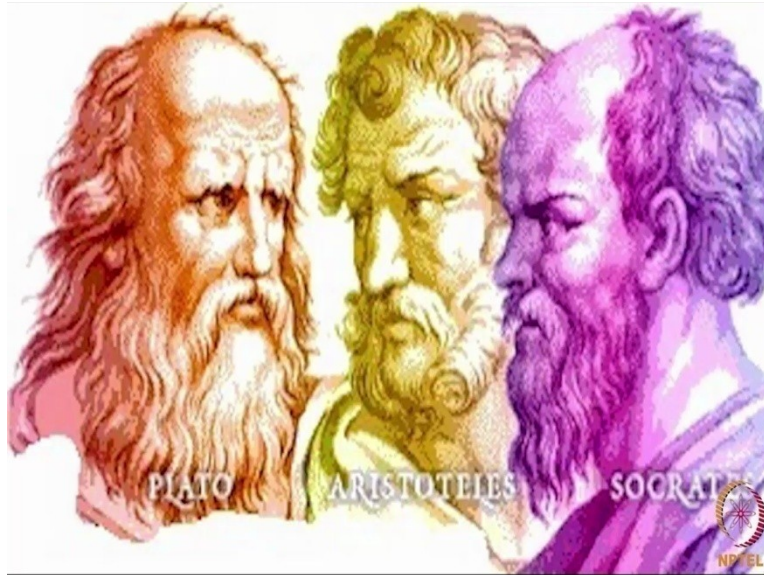


Ethics
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Module No 2
Lecture 06
Eudaimonism to Divine Command

Welcome to this lecture series on ethics. This is the 6th lecture. The previous lectures we have been examining some important ethical frameworks, particularly the last lecture, we have focused Eudaimonism, the kind of history of Eudaimonism or how it has evolved and its various formulations. Today also we will do that, we will start with that and then try to understand another very important theoretical framework which is called divine command theory. There is a certain continuity, historically as well as conceptually from Eudaimonism divine command theory because of the peculiar history of Europe.

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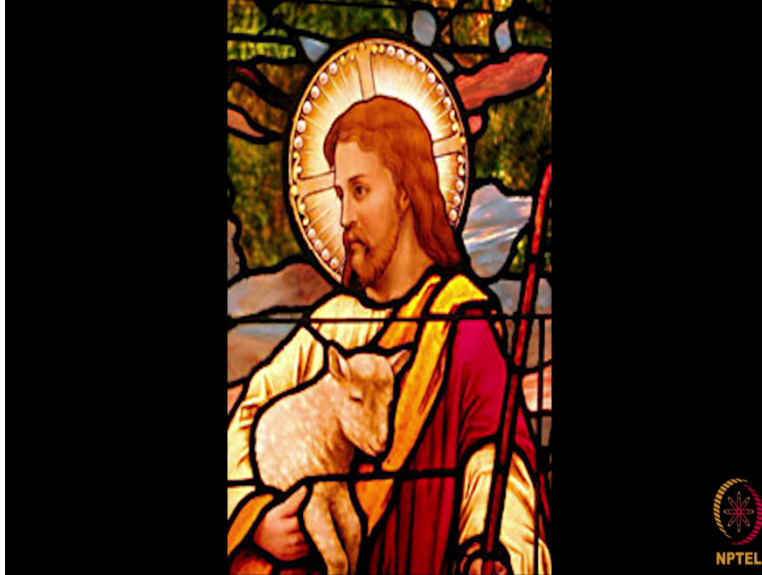


As all of us know, the civilization, the intellectual civilisation in Europe owes a lot to the Greeks. And the philosophical schools have got introduced particularly, the 3 great philosophers, system builders, the 2 system builders of Plato and Aristotle and of course Socrates, the towering influence of Socrates, all these people appeared during the Greeks era and all of them but like to propose one or other form of Eudaimonism.

We can broadly call all their approaches Eudaimonist because all of them talk about human good, all of them consider goodness or the human good as an ultimate summum bonum and in one sense they were all trying to connect the human good or ethical problematic with knowledge with epistemology. So ethics with epistemology was interconnected which somehow we will find in the modern age is lost. That is something which we are going to see in the future lectures.

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And after the Greek era, we see a kind of change that is happening due to certain historical factors particularly with the emergence of Christianity, this also we have very briefly touched upon in the previous lecture. With the emergence of Christianity, the kind of rationalism which the Greeks were preoccupied with was sort of lost and in-place of that, the Christian Scriptures, the belief in the Christian Scriptures gained prominence.

So the reason was in one sense replaced by faith and your submission to the Scriptures, the biblical Scriptures. So naturally, the ethical frameworks, the moral Outlook of the Christian world was very different from significantly different from that of the Greeks. The diversity of the

Greek tradition was lost. There is sufficient diversity within that tradition itself but we are not bothered about the diversity now.

What we are trying to understand this not these developments from a purely historical perspective but we are trying to capture the very concept of divine command theory and trying to situate it in a particular context in human history. So in one sense, we can say that Eudaimonism subscribed to certain important things like for example, virtue of wisdom and happiness, that is something which is unparalleled, which is unquestioning.


Other goods are not good in themselves without wisdom. This from the Socratic era onwards, this has been the case. Then when wisdom use them, they become better.

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Virtue of Wisdom and Happiness

- Other goods are not goods in themselves without wisdom.
- When wisdom uses them they become better.
- Wisdom is the only good.
- If wisdom is the only good, and happiness is a good, wisdom is identical to happiness.
- Happiness does not result from a life of wisdom.
- Happiness consists in the guidance by wisdom

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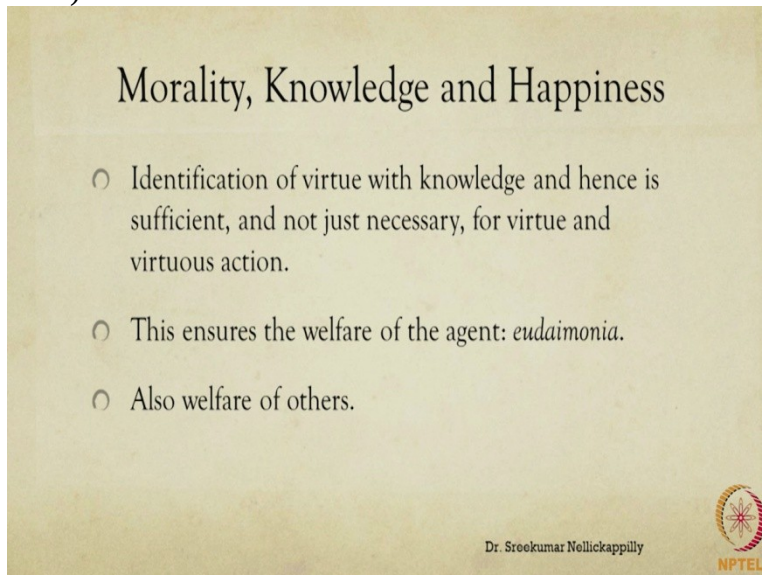
So the very idea of Cardinal virtues lie in this concept. Wisdom is the only good is a view subscribed to by Socrates and Plato and to some extent Aristotle modifies this. If wisdom is the only good and happiness is a good, wisdom is identical to happiness. So this identification of wisdom, I do not want to call it knowledge, wisdom is different from knowledge. I do not want to go to the nitty-gritties of these 2 concepts.

But again, this has a very unique identification, wisdom with happiness. Happiness does not result from a life of wisdom but happiness consists in the guidance by wisdom. So this is the important point. It is not the consequence but rather it consists in that. In Aristotle we would

see that totality of your life when you try to understand the concept of Eudaimonia what matters is the totality of your life.

It is not just happiness in Aristotle, you have to see that in total, your life gives you satisfaction, you feel that. It is not the feeling but at the same time, you can also associate a kind of feeling with that. You are convinced about the fact that there is a strong conviction that you have nothing to regret, you are happy. So these are all what consists in the idea of Eudaimonia.


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Morality, Knowledge and Happiness

- Identification of virtue with knowledge and hence is sufficient, and not just necessary, for virtue and virtuous action.
- This ensures the welfare of the agent: *eudaimonia*.
- Also welfare of others.

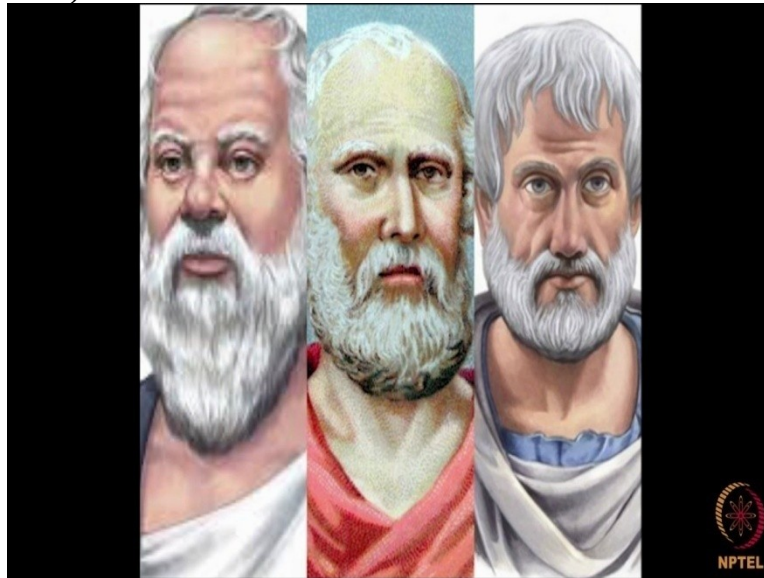
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Again, identification of virtue with knowledge and hence is sufficient and not necessary for virtue and virtuous action. This ensures the welfare of the agent Eudaimonia and also the welfare of others. This is something which I have examined in the previous lecture where I tried to show that you know there is a very important connection between one's own welfare and the welfare of other people.

So in one sense, Eudaimonia is not a kind of selfish pursuit to one's own happiness but it is also, it also consists in the kind of welfare for other people. It involves that. That is why the whole idea of wisdom coming into picture. A person who is so selfish and so self-centred cannot be termed as wise. He or she is not a wise person. A wise person is reasonably interested in his or her welfare, at the same time in the welfare of other people. In Aristotle, we will see a balance.

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Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

- The three phases of *eudaimonism*.
- Political and ethical considerations are entangled.
- The agent-centric perspective is common.
- The question of the good is at the center of philosophy.

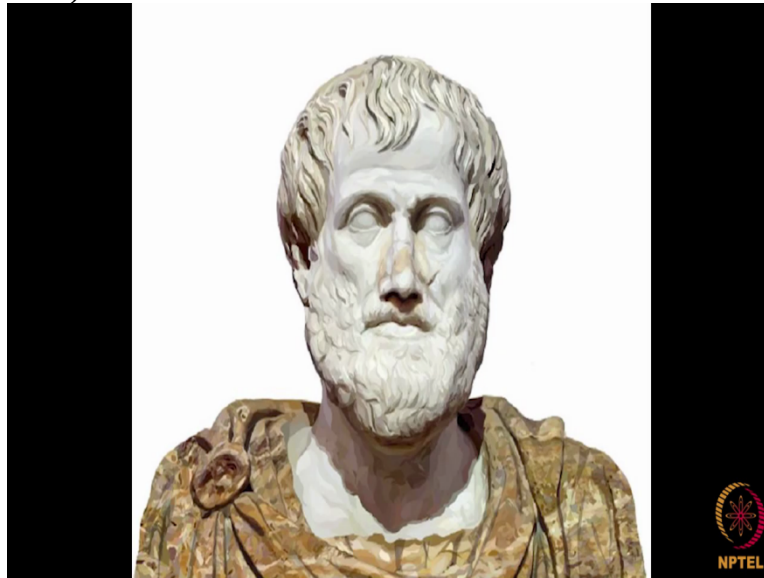
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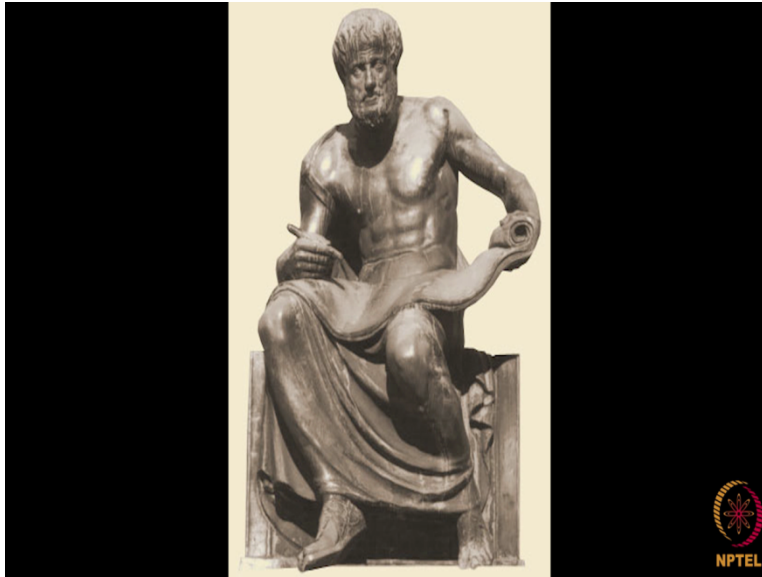


And the 3 important people, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, all the 3 of them, they represent 3 important phases in the history of Eudaimonism. And the political and ethical considerations are entangled in all the screen. That is why the question of good, the question of justice, the question of happiness, individual happiness, the question of welfare, everything is interconnected in their frameworks. And the agent centric perspective is common in all the 3 of them and again the question of good is at the centre of philosophy.

So philosophy, what is the aim of philosophy? In nutshell, we can say that philosophy's aim is to identify or to understand what is good. So the ethical problematic is at the very core of philosophical enterprises, here in this framework. It is a beautiful philosophical concept in that way.

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And Aristotelian morality when you focus because I have already explained this in terms of the concept of virtue and other things and for Aristotle, virtue is a disposition, a habitual disposition of action, a certain way in which people behave and is also for Aristotle consist in avoiding the extremes, always being moderate in your action and this is Aristotelian virtue. And by being moderate, you also justify your rational nature.

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Aristotelian Morality

○ Aristotelian morality is:

TELEOLOGICAL	EUDAIMONIST	NATURALIST
There is an ultimate goal	Ultimate goal is happiness	Fulfillment of rational human nature



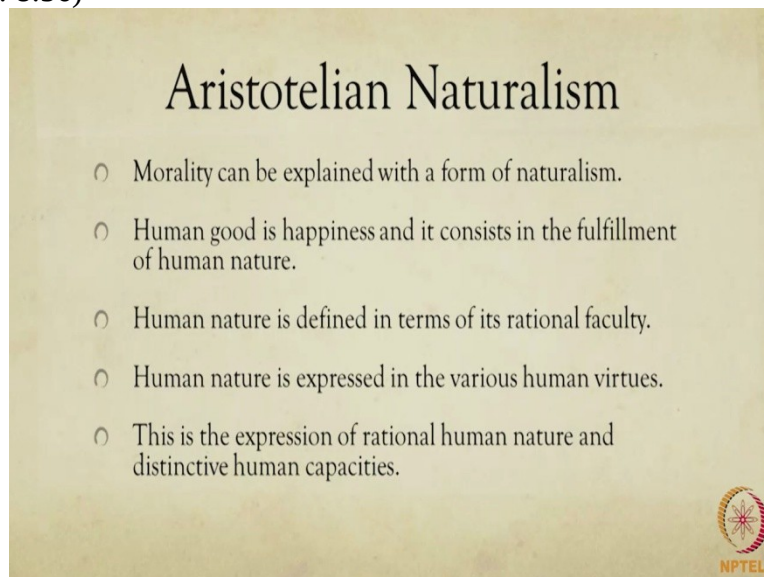
It has got, in Aristotelian framework, it has got certain teleological orientation. There is an ultimate goal. So the ultimate goal or which is Eudaimonia would guide all your actions all your life in one sense. So Aristotelian morality is the core, teleological. And another very important

aspect of Aristotelian morality is it is Eudaimonist because that is the summum bonum, that is the ultimate goal of happiness. And the 3rd one is, it is natural is.

This is another very important aspect of Aristotelian morality because it derives from the fulfilment of rational human nature. So human beings are rational and nature. So when you try to understand, distribution human beings from other creatures, this is one particular faculty which stands out, which distinguishes man from other creatures, the rational faculty.

So man is not just reproductive, man is not just vegetative but also rational. Animals are reproductive and vegetative but in the case of human beings, they are vegetative, reproductive and also very important thing that they are rational. The rationality aspect stands out in the case of man. And human being, the meaning of human life, Aristotle says is associated with that distinguishing quality of man. It should be with the nature of man. It should be intimately linked with the very nature of man according to Aristotle.

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The slide features a title 'Aristotelian Naturalism' at the top center. Below the title are five bullet points, each preceded by a small circle. The text of the bullet points is as follows:

- Morality can be explained with a form of naturalism.
- Human good is happiness and it consists in the fulfillment of human nature.
- Human nature is defined in terms of its rational faculty.
- Human nature is expressed in the various human virtues.
- This is the expression of rational human nature and distinctive human capacities.

In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a circular logo with a stylized sun or starburst design, and the text 'NPTEL' below it.

So this can be termed as Aristotelian naturalism. Morality can be explained with a form of naturalism where human good is happiness and it consists in the fulfilment of human nature. What is the fulfilment of human nature? Human nature is rationality, defined in terms of personality. And what brings a rational happiness to human life is what matters. So that is why it is not just sensual pleasure.

Sensual pleasure, we derive from certain things like good food and various other kinds of sensual experiences might give a sensual pleasure. This is certain kind of happiness which we also share with animals but our kind of happiness is even more intellectual, more rational. We derive from our rational nature. Human nature is defined in terms of rational faculty and it is expressed in various human virtues. So how does this rationality or rational faculty find expression in human life?

Through virtuous behaviour. And what is virtuous behaviour? Virtuous behaviour is not just follow your instinct. Say for example, you have good, very tasty food kept in front of you, you have the temptation to have it, to eat it. But there are occasions when you may have to restrain yourself, you may have to restrain yourself from such involvement and indulging in sensual pleasures for the sake of higher purposes.

So this is possible, this kind of restrain is possible only in the case of man because man can think what is good for him. Whether to get indulged into the sensual immediate pleasure or future happiness which is more lasting or other even everlasting. What is more important? So this decision is a rational decision which only human beings can take.

And Aristotle is the man of the mean that avoiding the extremes and adopting the mean, the middle path which is the wisest path for him. So between rashness and cowardice, there is bravery for Aristotle. So a coward would run away from everything, a rash person would jump into everything and get into trouble but a brave person, a courageous person would think about everything, the whole aspect of the situation, the consequences and will not jump into it, will not run away from it, will face it with courage, with intelligence, with a plan.

So that is a courageous man. And then this is the expression of rational human nature and distinctive human capacities. These are capacities which only human beings have. So expressing these capacities of restrain, of analysing, of the power of analysis, everything is involves in that power. And when you exercise that power when before you take a decision and act, that becomes your conduct, your behaviour, your habitual behaviour or conduct, then you become a virtuous person.

Now, when you come to the Christian belief, I am not getting into scholasticism here, too much into scholasticism but a very broad view about the Christian belief which we have been introduced to like Christianity as a popular religion.

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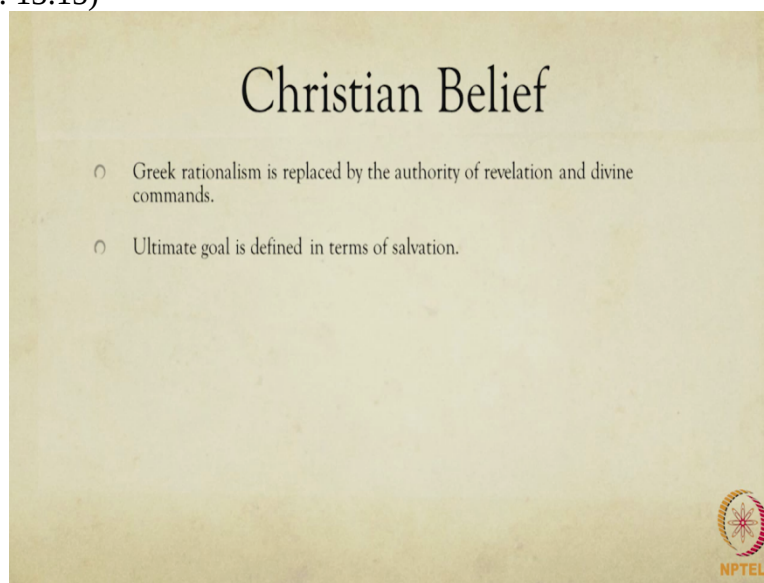


In Christian belief, we end up with we rather come from a Greek rationalism which is replaced by the authority of Revelation and divine command. What is more important as far as Christianity as a religion is concerned is the authority of the Scriptures because the Scriptures are not written by man according to Christianity. They are directly revealed by God. So all the 3

Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, they believe that their Scriptures, their respective Scriptures are not written by man because if they are written by human beings, they will be subject to the whims and fancies of human beings who have written them.

They are rather considered as direct revelations of God. So there cannot be any mistakes. So these Christian Scriptures are authority of fundamental authority, final authority for the Christians. And all assumptions, all beliefs about morality and good you are derived from them. So what is stated in the Scriptures are good and what the Scriptures prevent from doing are bad.

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Ultimate goal is defined in terms of salvation. So Christianity believes that the final goal of human being, the ultimate good of human beings consist in salvation which happens not in this world which is essentially otherworldly. So it is a paradise, regaining of the paradise, returning to the paradise, that is the ultimate goal of Christianity. To achieve salvation, one need not necessarily be virtuous.

That is again a very dilemmatic situation because there is a certain ambiguity about the concept of virtue here which we would try to expose with the next position of the divine command theory. Of course, there are replies to that, there are criticisms and replies to that and rebuttals and all that. I am not getting into the vastness of that debates here. I am just trying to provide an overview of the situation.

Those who are interested can refer to more materials that are, there are immense material both in the libraries and online. So one needs to obey God. What is, because of obeying God means obeying the Scriptures because the Scriptures are direct revelations of God. One need not think about the consequences, one need not think about other aspects whether it is what is good, what is evil, all these are not matters of concern because as far as a believer is concerned, what is stated by God, what is stated in the Scriptures are unconditionally good.

And what matters in morality is human relation with God and not necessarily man's relation with other men, the human beings. So you can have a hierarchical pyramid. There is God on the top of it. And then human beings below. At each human being's fundamental responsibility is towards God. So it is all towards God, human relationship with God is what matters and among themselves, even that relationship is mediated through their relationship with God.

It is not direct okay. And then again, effects of observance of violation of moral principles on one's own happiness is also of course as far as observing or violating moral principles are concerned, in Christianity's framework, are stated by the Scriptures. And now, the problem is that, every moral framework would require to provide certain reasons for observing moral principles.

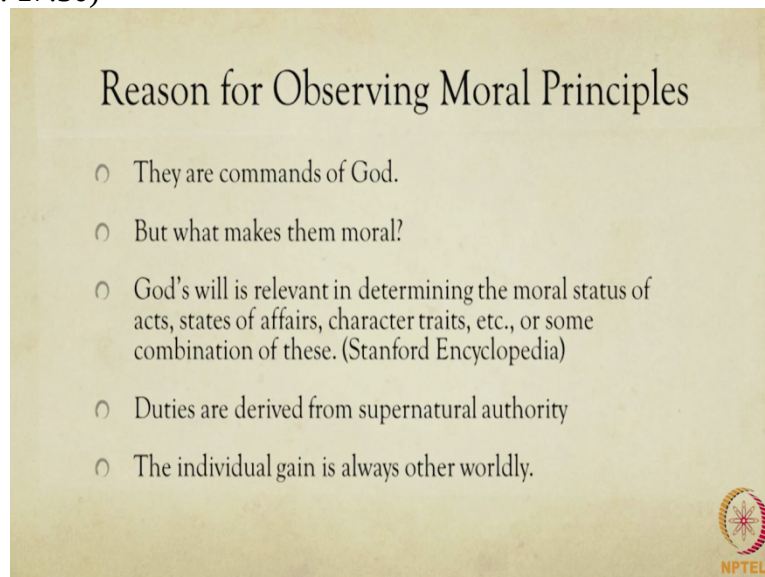
Otherwise as I mentioned in the beginning of this lecture series itself, ethics consists in rationalising, in finding out justifications, providing certain justifications for being moral. Or rather, it is a rational analysis of morality. Just morality is not ethics. Morals are there in every society but when you have a reflective approach to morality that is practised in a society, then it becomes ethics.

And there you also have to provide justifications, why certain practices have to be followed? Why certain things are considered as fundamental moral principles? Why certain principles are treated as good and certain other treated as bad? All these things need justification, rational justification. So as an ethical theory, divine command theory would also require to find justifications for the very idea of being good or the very idea of the sanctity and validity of certain principles having a moral status over others.

So this we have to provide. And we have already seen this. If the framework of Eudaimonism, the Greek Eudaimonism, there is a very strong reason why one should observe moral principles because this would give you happiness. This would ultimately benefit the Observer and also would benefit other people in the society. So it is a win-win situation. Everybody wins, everybody gains from that situation.

So observing moral principles would ultimately result in everyone's gain. But when you are a divine command theorist, for you the principles, the moral principles derive their significance and their legitimacy and meaning from the commands of God.

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Reason for Observing Moral Principles

- They are commands of God.
- But what makes them moral?
- God's will is relevant in determining the moral status of acts, states of affairs, character traits, etc., or some combination of these. (Stanford Encyclopedia)
- Duties are derived from supernatural authority
- The individual gain is always other worldly.

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They are commands of God and but what makes them moral? God's will is relevant in determining the moral status of acts, states of affairs, character traits, et cetera or some combination of these. This is Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy online. So it says that God's will is very central to this in determining the moral status of all these things. Now but just because God's will, God's will cannot be cited as a reason.

Now you have to take the question to the next level. What makes God's will good? Okay? What is that gives? What makes it really, on what basis can you understand the very goodness of God's will? Duties are derived from a supernatural authority here which is God and the individual gain

is always otherworldly. All these things we have seen what we have to fundamentally answer the question, how can we explain the goodness of God's will, the moral relevance of God's will.

Now, there are different formulations of divine command theory. We will just try to understand 3 of them in this context, in context of our understanding our lecture series.

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The slide is titled "Divine Command Theory: Formulations". It contains three numbered points in a list, followed by a concluding statement in a separate box. The slide also features an NPTEL logo in the bottom right corner.

Divine Command Theory: Formulations

Provides reasons for obeying divine commands

1. God is good and wise and knows what is good and principles that promote these goods and commands them to us.
2. God's commandments constitute moral rightness hence we have to obey them.
3. God's commandments come with punishments and rewards and hence we have to obey them.

This raises the philosophical problem raised by Socrates to Euthyphro.

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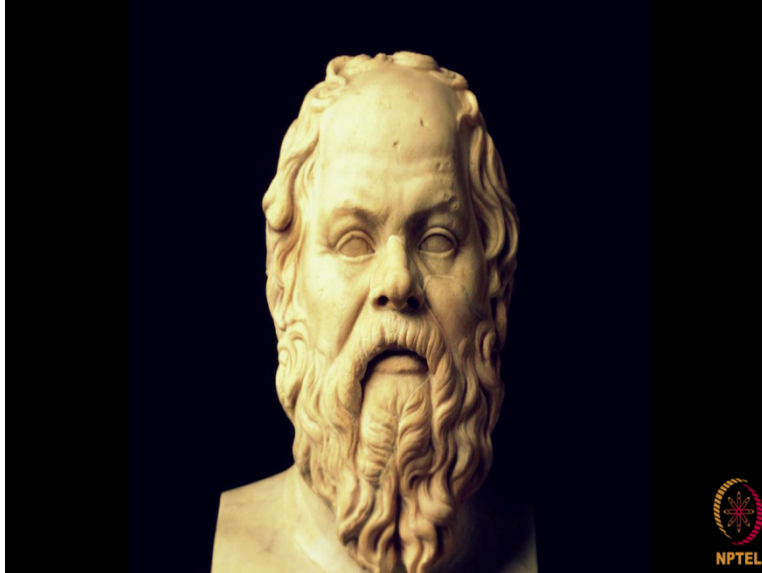
It provides reason for obeying divine commands. Of course, that is from the very outset. The 1st one is, God is good and wise and knows what is good and principles that promote these goods and commands them to us. So that is the 1st formulations. I repeat, what is good advice and God knows what is good and the principles that promote these goods and commands them to us. So this assumption is that God is already good.

He knows what is good for us. The 2nd one is, God's commandments constitute moral rightness hence we have to obey them. That 3rd one is God's commandments come with punishments and rewards and hence we have to obey them. So the 3rd one looks too simplistic, too legal because certain legality of certain principles which we follow in our society, the legality of certain principles or certain practices are beyond their morality.

We do not really need to find out what makes this, such principles or practices moral because they are beyond their morality. Legality and morality are not necessarily always interrelated. Sometimes, certain things which are legal, need not have any moral content. They are just legal.

And if you do not perform them, if you do not observe them, you will attract violation and punishment.

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So this raises the philosophical problem raised by Socrates Euthyphro. So this is a very interesting dialogue, Socrates dialogue, Plato's Euthyphro where Socrates and Euthyphro come into a conversation, a dialogue. I am not getting into the details of this dialogue but it is a very interesting debate between the 2 thinkers.

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Plato: Euthyphro

- Whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the Gods.
- **REALISM**: God loves them because they are holy: ethical propositions reflect how things are in reality independent of what attitudes anyone has towards them.
- **VOLUNTARISM**: Holy because it is beloved of the Gods- Voluntarism from the Latin *voluntas*, which means inclination or will.

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The fundamental question Euthyphro raises is the following. Whether the pious or holy is beloved by the Gods because it is holy or they are holy because it is beloved by the Gods. That is a dilemma that consists in a very important question where it raises a extremely important dilemma which undercuts the very roots, the very validity of the divine command theory in significant manner.

So, there are 2 positions which we can derive from the answers, the possible answers given to this because the question itself gives you only 2 options because the way in which Socrates has posited the question gives you the answer. There are either this answer or that answer. You have to give either this answer or that answer. There is not a possibility here. So the 1st possibility leads to kind of realistic position which says that God loves them God loves these so-called moral principles because they are holy, they are already holy.

So they are not made holy by God but they already are pre-existingly holy. Ethical positions reflect how things are in reality independent of what attitudes anyone has towards them, even God has towards them. So there are certain ethical facts preexistent, even before they were approved by anyone including God. So these moral facts are already existent even before God you can say. So that is a dilemma, that is a that is a irony.

Even before God, they exist. Then what is God's role? God's role probably is reduced to understand them and tell us that okay, these are good, so you have to obey them. So you realistic position as far as divine command theory seems to be advocating is undermining the very sovereignty of God in significant ways. Then, there is another possibility, voluntarism. Voluntarism says that they are holy because their beloved of the Gods.

Voluntarism from the Latin word, the word voluntarism comes from the Latin word, voluntas which means inclination or will. So what is focused upon is the will of God, inclination of God. So, God loves them, God made them holy. They are holy because made them holy or God said that they are holy. The worst position, they are already good and God said them, holy.

So what makes them holy is not that God has made them holy but they are already holy and God pronounced them, God tells that okay, since they are holy, you have to perform them, since they are good, there are already preexistent moral facts, you have to obey them. So God's role seems

to be becoming a kind of moral governor there. But in the case of voluntarism, what happens is it is God is the one who decides whether a particular action is good or bad and God's decision makes a particular action good.

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The slide has a light beige background. At the top, the title 'Ethical Voluntarism: Philosophical Problem' is written in a dark serif font. Below the title are two bullet points, each starting with a small circle. The first bullet point reads 'God's inclination and will give things their moral status.' The second bullet point reads 'Ultimate foundation for morality is the revealed will of God.' In the center of the slide is a white rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, containing the text 'Then either God is not good, or He's not sovereign. That's the dilemma.' in a bold, black serif font. At the bottom right of the slide, there is a small circular logo with a red and white design, and the text 'Dr. Sroekumar Nellickappilly' and 'NPTEL' are printed in a small font.

So the problem with ethical voluntarism is that God's inclination and will give things their moral status. As I already mentioned, the mere will of God would make any action good or right. The ultimate foundation for morality is the relative will of God. So God's will which is revealed through the Scriptures is the foundation. You do not have to look for any other foundations. So the what is stated by God as is good because constituted it.

They are not preexistantly good or that question is very, totally irrelevant. What matters is, they are good because God stated them as good. Then either God is not good or He is not sovereign. That is the dilemma. So if you accept the 1st possibility of realism then then what happens is God is not good or He is not sovereign. So, then God is not sovereign there. The 1st possibility suggests that God is not sovereign because what is good is already existing and God has not role in creating it, God has just stated it, that is all.


But the 2nd possibility, voluntarism that God makes certain actions good would make the entire thing quite arbitrary. So this is the dilemma. So I would explain the dilemma a little more.

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The Dilemma

- Either God is good simply means that He is capable of enforcing His commands and hence He need not be necessarily good.
- Or, God cannot violate the moral law and do wrong as He is not free to call what is wrong right, and what is right wrong and hence he is below the moral law and is not sovereign.

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Either God is good simply means that He is capable of enforcing His commands and hence He need not be necessarily good. Or God cannot violate the moral law and wrong as He is not free to call what is wrong right and what is right wrong and hence he is below the moral law and He is not sovereign. The 2nd one is realism. He is not sovereign because what is good and what is right are already existent prior to Him.

He just tell that they are, that is it, they are so. And the 2nd possibility is voluntarism, Either God is good simply means that He is capable of enforcing His commands and hence He need not be necessarily good. He just enforces them. He has the role of a moral governor. He just enforces the moral principles, that is all. So He is not necessarily good in that sense. He is below that.

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The Euthyphro Dilemma


If divine command theory is true then either

- (i) morally good acts are willed by God because they are morally good

or

- (ii) morally good acts are morally good because they are willed by God.

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Now again, if divine command theory is true, then either one, morally good acts are willed by God because they are morally good or morally good acts are morally good because they are willed by God. So these are the 2 possibilities.

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The Euthyphro Dilemma

- The two options are logically exhaustive.
- If divine command theory is true then one of the options must be the case.
- The divine command theorist is therefore forced to choose one of the options to affirm.
- Both options ironically deny DCT's validity.

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And the two options are logically exhaustive. So you have to choose one of them. If divine command theory is true, then one of the options must be the case and the divine command theorist is forced to choose one of them but both options ironically deny the very validity of divine command theory.

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The Euthyphro Dilemma

Morally good acts are willed by God because they are morally good, then they are morally good independent of God's will.

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So this is the situation, this is the kind of dilemma which Platos or Socratic Euthyphro dialogue has exposed to. Morally good acts are willed by God because they are morally good, then they are morally good independent of God's will.

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The Euthyphro Dilemma

- The Independence Problem: Moral facts hold independent of God's will.
- Divine command theory denies this.
- According to it all of morality is dependent upon God.

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This leads to the problem of independence, independence problem. Moral facts for independent of God's will. Divine command theory denies this. Divine command theory cannot accept the independence problem, the independence surely. And according to it, all of morality is dependent

upon God. So it both options ironically deny divine command theorists validity. So we will just continue with this discussion very briefly.

Again I am going to slightly elaborate two possibilities more in the next lecture. So the because to that would show the implications of this Euthyphro dilemma which would also pose a very serious threat to the very framework proposed by divine command theorists. For the time being, we will wind up here, thank you.