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Hello, I'm Glen. And in this ethics tutorial, we will be looking at support for virtue-based ethics. Some things to keep in mind as we go through this tutorial are the definition of virtue-based ethics, of virtues and vices, and then also that, given virtue-based ethics, we focus on the question of how we want to be rather than what I should do.

In this tutorial, we will be looking at some of the historical development of virtue-based ethics and then various forms of support that are present for virtue-based ethics. Regarding the historical development of virtue-based ethics, we can say this. Of all the ethical theories that we look at and that we've considered in this overall study of an introduction to ethics-- is that virtue based ethics is probably the oldest normative theory. It certainly was the first one written down.

It is present in both Western and Eastern ancient traditions. It's found in ancient Greece. It's found in India, in Hinduism and Buddhism. For us, we derive our understanding of it primarily from the Western tradition, which has its origins in ancient Greece.

And it comes, first and foremost-- again, the first person to really write it down-- was Aristotle, who was in the fourth century CE. So he was the first one to articulate it. And so oftentimes, for us, virtue-based ethics, which is also called character ethics-- it's also called Aristotelian ethics. All of these things really refer to the same thing.

So Aristotle articulated it. First, it comes through a book of his called the *Nicomachean Ethics*, named after his father, Nichomachus. And then later on, over 1,000 years later, in the 13th century, we get it indoctrinated into Christian theology by Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas was one of the foremost, if not the all time number one medieval philosopher-- medieval theologian. His work is foundational for Christian doctrine. So it started with Aristotle and then was solidified for us through Thomas Aquinas.

Now one of the significant things that Aristotle did in his formulation of character ethics is to tie a virtue, such as goodness, to the function involved. So, for example, a good hammer-- we know it is a good hammer instead of a bad hammer, because a good hammer is able to be used to pound a nail accurately. A bad hammer will not be able to do this.

So the goodness of something-- that which it exhibits-- comes through its ability to be used properly. This is an intuitive connection that Aristotle founded for us-- something doing what it is supposed to be doing and doing it well.

There are several very persuasive supports for virtue-based ethics. One is that, overall, it's an intuitive ethical

theory, because it focuses on the kind of person that we each want to be. And this is something that we ask of ourselves often.

Who do I want to be today? What kind of a person do I wish to be and wish to be perceived as? I naturally think about this, and maybe you do as well.

Virtue-based ethics fuels this kind of thinking, as opposed to an action-based ethics like consequentialism or utilitarianism, which would address this, but only indirectly. Because first, these theories would focus on the consequences of actions.

Second, virtue-based ethics is a continuous, lifelong project. It aims at the overall project we have of living a good life-- not just for today, but over the entire span of our lives. We want to be able to look back upon our lives and say, you know, I did well. I tried really hard, and I lived a good life.

Aristotle actually has a word for this, which you can look up. But I'll help you out with it right now. It's pronounced eudaimonia. And it translates directly as happiness, but it's not happy like, you know, happy birthday or happy because, you know, I won a prize. Eudaimonia is the pleasure you feel as doing your life the best that you could do given your circumstances and saying, you know, did a good job.

Virtue-based ethics also connects us with a reliable, consistent sense of action over time. Aristotle was very big on reinforcing the importance of habits. And the cultivation of virtues and being an ethically good person is the cultivation of repeatedly doing what reinforces who we are and who we want to be.

We are what we do. This was one of Aristotle's sayings. And specifically, we are what we habitually do.

And then, virtue-based ethics is better able to address the common question of, what is a good life-- again, not just for today, but overall, what does it mean to have a good life? This is more fundamental, a more basic philosophical question, than what is the right action at this particular time? All of these come together to form a lot of appealing features for virtue-based ethics.

In summary, we have in this session looked at both the historical development of virtue-based ethics and then several forms of support for seeing virtue-based ethics as a beneficial ethical theory.