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Title: *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*

Author: Rudolf Otto

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In an age characterised by scientific reductionism, Rudolf Otto, a German theologian, challenges the notion that religious experience can be conceptualised through ethical or rational frameworks. He argues that religious experience possesses an a priori, non-rational dimension, which he terms the 'numinous,' which constitutes the essence of religious consciousness. His magnum opus, *The Idea of the Holy* (1958), trans. of the German text *Das Heilige* stands as a seminal work in religious studies. Otto's central question is: through which language can this numinous be grasped by the human intellect, and how is it unique from other states of human experience? This review analyses Otto's experiential approach to the 'sacred' as an autonomous, non-rational category, tracing his argument through key concepts such as the numinous, creature-consciousness, and *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, while situating his work within phenomenological and theological discourse.

Otto begins by proposing two categories about the nature of the numinous, which he categorises into rational and non-rational. He maintains that essential attributes of God, like spirit, reason, unity, etc., that can be entirely grasped by the intellect, lead to a one-sided interpretation of religion. As he notes that the "expositions of religious truth in language inevitably tend to stress the 'rational' attributes of God."¹ He refers to these attributes as synthetic attributes, which require a subject to whom they may qualify. But through these attributes, one cannot comprehend the ultimate reality. For Otto, a different mode of understanding is required to comprehend the holy: "it must be in some way or other within our grasp."²