CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introductory

The history of mankind abounds with the names of the celebrities who, whenever there is decadence in any sphere of human activity, take upon themselves the task of setting things aright. They distinguish themselves from the multitude and often achieve their mission singlehanded. Take Kant, for instance, in the field of philosophy. When Hume's scepticism had a stultifying effect on the whole range of creative philosophy and threatened to stall its future development, Kant appeared in the scene and philosophy got a new lease of life.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented rise of science. Never before had man so much information about himself and the world around him. This was bound to have some destructive sequence: there could be new order only at the cost of old ones. And the first casualty was religion. Men, by and large, lost faith in religion as it did not conform to their rationalistic and naturalistic standards of truth. Ascendancy of naturalism had struck at the foundations of religion. At such a juncture there appeared Rudolf Otto in the scene. By interpreting religion as an outcome of the a priori numinous feelings Otto put religion on a secure pedestal. The real cannot be irrational, but it can be non-rational in the sense that the puny human understanding
cannot comprehend it fully. At the same time, human understanding cannot claim that there are no ways other than reason to comprehend everything real. The net thrown wide by Otto, fortunately, gathered significant informations about the Reality. They gave new assurance to the believers and cautioned the disbelievers that they might, after all, be mistaken.

1.1.1. Life of Otto

Rudolf Otto was born to a Protestant family at Peine, 20 miles away from Hanover, on 25th of September, 1869. He got his education at the universities of Erlangen and Gottingen. He began his career as a Private-doenct for Systematic Theology at Gottingen (1898). At the same university he became the Extra-ordinary Professor of Theology (1906). Then he joined the Faculty of Theology at Breslaw (1914). Subsequently (1917) he was appointed as the Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Marburg. There itself he became Professor Emeritus (1929). He had lectured in the United States and England. He was a member of the Prussian Parliament for some years (1913-18). He had toured extensively. Besides European countries, he had travelled in North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, India, China and Japan (1910-11, 1925, 1927-28). He remained a life-long bachelor. He was to have delivered a course of Gifford Lectures. But unfortunately he died on March 6, 1937, due to a tragic accident.
A fairly good information about the kind of man Otto was given by John Harvey in his 'Translator's Preface' to the Idea of the Holy and Joachim Wach in his Types of Religious Experience. "Otto's figure was tall and erect and suggested the soldier rather than the scholar, with his Kaiser moustaches and his tight, light, military-looking jacket fastened high at the neck." He was a good host and enjoyed walking. Students used to attend his lectures tensely. They used to call him 'the Saint' (Der Heilige (Gr.), being an allusion to his masterpiece (Das Heilige.) His face wore a rigidity and it would appear that he was seeing something, as he spoke, to which the interlocutor had no access.

Otto died in 1937, and C.A. Campbell delivering the Gifford Lectures in 1953-55 said that to him Otto was "by a wide margin, the most illuminating religious thinker of modern times." Speaking with reference to The Idea of the Holy he said that first-hand acquaintance with Otto was "among the most rewarding experiences that anyone with a concern for religious understanding is likely to enjoy in a life-time." He is similarly appreciated by, among others, John Macquarrie, J.M. Moore, Ninian Smart, Husserl and Malcolm L. Diamond. In this connexion Bennett's remark that Otto's is indeed the "most striking and original attempt to distill the essence of religion" naturally comes to mind.

1.1.2. The Times of Otto

Rudolf Otto was born in Bismarck's Germany and died three years after Hitler had come to power. He lived in a period of the emergence of modern Germany (undivided) as a nation.
Though there were occasional economic depression and political instability, on the whole this period had been congenial to academic achievements. Particularly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, Otto's formative period, Germany made notable achievements in science and technology. In commerce and industry it started vying with the other prosperous nations. It made colonies in Africa and Far East.

The comforts of prosperity and the pride in new nationhood persisted in buoying up materialism and militant naturalism. Among some groups this led to a boisterous social Darwinism in which racialism, nihilism, "action for action's sake" combined into a powerful ethos.

Materialism was in the ascendency. Veit Valentin observes that the impulses of history were "saeer vitality, instinct, the primitive, self-preservation, blind and unreasoning physical power, the dynamic, the radically evil." The cause of the industrial upheaval of Germany in this period can be attributed to people's favourable reaction to the materialistic trend. The German middle class threw itself into economic work with redoubled zeal. The result was a mature capitalism in Germany too. We are talking of Germany before the Great Wars.

In the field of science Germany was advancing rapidly. The names of Rudolf Virchow, the pathologist; Gustav Kirchhoff, Hermann Von Helmholtz, Robert Mayer, Robert W. Bunsen, — the physicists; Fechner and Wundt — the psychologists, to name but a few leading figures, flourished in the Pre-War Germany.
philosophers, Lotze, Hartman, Nietzsche, Eucken, Liebmann were internationally known.

After Germany's awakening to materialism, as the years went on, an opposition to the preponderance of the naturalistic and empirico-sceptical tendency of the day, and in its place an idealistic counter-movement, made itself increasingly felt. This idealistic counter-movement came more from the theological circle than from any other. And Germany produced a galaxy of eminent theologians. The dominance of Germany in theology is felt even now.

Among theologians, Troeltsch was Otto's proper contemporary. Among his older contemporaries were Ritschel and Eucken. His younger contemporaries include: Rudolf Bultman, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Emil Brunner, Paul Von Buren etc.

The most difficult period of Germany Otto had had to witness was the First World War (1914-1918) and the consequent economic depression. In the last part of his life he saw the rise of the Nazis to power but did not live to see the Second World War (1939-45). Incidentally, the German original of 'The Idea of the Holy (Das Heilige)' appeared during the First World War — in 1917.

Otto was a product of his time, not in the sense that he floated himself in the tides of his time, but in the sense that he took up, and ably executed, the task of defending spiritualism in the face of naturalism, and restored to religion its due glory.
Otto's important works are translated into English.
Still, there are some minor works which are yet to be translated.

Book by Otto:

(1) *The Idea of the Holy*, Tr. John W. Harvey - 1923
(German Original - 1917)

(2) *The Philosophy of Religion* (Based on Kant and Fries),
Tr. E.B. Dicker - 1931, (German Original - 1904)

(3) *Naturalism and Religion*, Tr. J. Arthur Thomson
and Margaret R. Thomson, Ed. Rev. W.D. Morrison - 1913 (German Original - 1904)

(4) *Mysticism East and West*, Tr. Bartha L. Bracey
and Richenda G. Payne - 1932
(German Original - 1926)

(5) *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Men*
(A study in the History of Religion)
Tr. Floyd V. Filson and Bertram Lee Wolf - 1938
(German Original - 1934)

(6) *The Original Gita* (The Song of the Supreme Exalted One) Tr. J.E. Turner - 1939
(German Original in parts: 1933, 1934 & 1935)
(7) Christianity and the Indian Religion of Grace - 1930

(8) India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and contrasted
Tr. F.G. Foster - 1930 (German Original - 1930)

(9) Religious Essays, (A Supplement to the Idea of the Holy)
Tr. Brian Lunn - 1931

(10) Siddanta Des Ramanuja, (Ein Text Zur Indischen Gottemystik Aus Dem Sanskrit) - 1923

(11) Visuounu Narayana
(Texte Zur Indischen Gottemystik) - 1923

(12) Life and Ministry of Jesus - 1908

(13) Dipika des Nivasa - 1916

(14) Gottskeit and Gottskeiten der Arier - 1932

(15) Rabindranath Tagore's Bekenntnis - 1934

(16) Die Katha Upanisad - 1936

1.2.2. Works on Otto

The number of works in English exclusively on Otto is less, though almost all books on Philosophy of Religion refer to Otto and any anthology or readings in Philosophy of Religion contains portions from "The Idea of the Holy". In the list
below a few prominent works on Otto are given. While (A) shows works exclusively on Otto, (B) shows the ones having at least either one chapter or quite a few pages on him and (C) shows some periodicals.

(A) 1. Rudolf Otto's Interpretation of Religion
   - Robert F. Davidson

   2. Rudolf Otto and Hinduism
      - Dr Sri Prakash Dubey

   3. Rudolf Otto's Analysis of Religious consciousness
      - Dr Sudha Srivastava

(B) 4. Theories of Religious Experience
   (With special reference to James, Otto and Bergson)
   - J.M. Moore

   5. The Modern Predicament - H.J. Paton

   6. On selfhood and Godhood - C.A. Campbell

   7. Types of Religious Experience.
      Christian and Non-Christian
      - Joachim Wach

   8. New Essays in Philosophical Theology.
      (Ed.) Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre.

* There is a Bibliography at the end of this work.

10. Philosophers and Religious Truth
   - Ninian Smart

11. The Concept of Holiness - C.R. Jones


13. The Natural and the Supernatural
   - John Oman (Does not have a detailed discussion on Otto, but is famous for its caustic criticism of aim)

14. Twentieth Century Religions Thought
   - John Macquarrie.

15. The Philosophy of Religion
   - D. Miall Edwards

16. A Philosophical Approach to Religion
   - Donald Hudson.

17. The Philosophical Theology Vol.I
   - F.R. Tennant.

   - Archibald Allan Bowman.

   (For C.A.Bennet's 'Religion and the Idea of the Holy')

20. The Philosophical Quarterly Vol.XXI.No.2.
   (For M.Yamunacharya's 'Prof.Rudolf Otto's concept of the Numinous and its relation to Indian Thought')

Religion is one of the vital concerns of mankind down the ages. At the same time it is one of the few highly misunderstood human pursuits. It has somehow eluded proper understanding largely due to the use of wrong methodology of enquiry. Attempt at understanding religion as a kind of philosophy or science or art or morality can hardly be expected to succeed - for religion is not something which could be completely brought under any of these. Endeavour to understand religion as religion is not old.

"......... The enterprise initiated by Schleiermacher to rescue religion from obscurity and to isolate what is unique in it by approaching it psychologicaally, dominates our thinking to-day..."12 Otto followed Schleiermacher's method in this respect. Religion is self-certifying.13 It does not have to lean on non-religious things, however important they may be in themselves and apparently however coexistent they may be with religion. Similarly, autonomy of religion is the main concern of Otto's religious philosophy.

Though religion is intimately connected with many disciplines, here we take up only morality and anthropology for
discussion from Otto's standpoint for special reasons. Morality is taken up because of its unique relation to religion and because of its occasional claim for superiority to religion. Otto never agrees to such a claim. We take up anthropology because of its important relation to philosophy of religion. Its enquiries into some forms of primitive religions supply some valuable data on religion. However, its claim to have explained the origin of religion naturalistically and its insistence on the truth of these theories has sometimes stood on the way of understanding religion properly. Otto makes important observations on the origin of religion. He points out some defects in the anthropological approach. This is another reason for taking up the relationship between anthropology and religion for discussion.

1.3.1. Anthropology and Religion

Anthropology claims itself to be a complete science of man as a social animal. It studies man from various angles - starting from his physical features, relation to lower animals, to the origin and development of races and societies. As religion is almost an inseparable aspect of man's life, particularly primitive, anthropology enquires into its nature from its own standpoint. As a positive science it can only draw conclusions basing on the different religious beliefs and practices, rites and rituals, traditions and customs of various races. And this is its limitation also. For only observable data are collected and processed. Each and every
aspect of religion is not perceived. Religious behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals does not exhaust religion. But anthropology does not or cannot go beyond these external manifestations of religion. That is how anthropologists have jumped to the conclusion that Animism, Totemism, Fetishism, Manaism etc. are the origins of religion. Here we give a brief summary of Otto's reaction to these theories.

According to Otto anthropologists have confused between the earliest manifestation of the numinous feelings in human behaviour and the beginning of religion. Religion begins the moment man has the numinous feelings, but the feelings might be expressed in some forms of religious behaviour which the anthropologists take for the origin of religion. 'Origin' and 'Expression' are quite different things and may take place millions of years apart. And yet the anthropologists have identified the two. Some of the earliest expressions of religion were so crude that when religion in general is judged from that angle it loses much of its grandeur.

Anthropological theories about the origin of religion generally believe that primitive man thought that the whole of nature was animated with spirit like his own self and on the basis of this used to practise magic i.e. to force the spirit outside to yield to his desire. Now this assumption of "animatedness" of nature (i.e. the theory of animism) is not a rudimentary religion, but a rudimentary philosophy.
Otto begins by distinguishing between 'sundry curious phenomena preliminary to religion' and 'religion proper'. The stage anterior to religion proper is full of crude religious beliefs and practices, fairy tales and myths, worship of animals and plants, fetishism and totemism. Religion proper is that where there is an adequate blending of the rational and the non-rational and where both the elements have significant roles to play and as such superstition etc. are eliminated.

Magic is a unique anthropological concept in explaining the origin of religion. In this context, magic is the name given to the attempt by the primitive men at exploiting the mysterious, wonderful working powers of the universe, by way of compulsion. Anthropologists have different views regarding magic and religion as to which of the two is earlier. However they are unanimous in believing that the primitive men ascribed 'supernatural power', 'spirit power' 'soul power' to the objects of nature and coerced them to yield some specific results. But according to Otto anything supernatural is not involved in magic situation. The concept of supernatural power is so much an abstract thought that it was not possible for the naive primitive mind to have it. Otto explains this with the help of the example of a jackpot gambler who, after throwing his ball, behaves queerly as if his various gesticulations and unconscious mutterings will change the course of the ball. Similarly the primitive people practised magic to force different natural phenomena to do some good to them and for this it was not necessary for them to think that the natural
objects were having souls or supernatural power. Otto explains
magic and such other concepts with the help of the 'daemonic
quality' to which we come a short while later.

Worship of the dead also cannot be attributed to the primitive
man's belief in the soul as animism would have it. Otto brushes
this theory aside with the help of the twin reaction possible
regarding the dead: (1) "the experient feels disgust at the
corpse's putrefaction, stench, revoltingness" and (2) "he feels his
own will to life disturbed and checked .... Both those sorts of
feeling response, viz. disgust and startled fright, are already
found manifested among animals. 19 And natural feeling of disgust
or fear cannot evoke religious feelings. If the sight of the dead
could have evoked religious awe leading to the worship of the dead
that was possible according to Otto, in one circumstance only (and
that at once shifts the qualitative importance from the dead to
the perceiver of the dead) - that the perceiver was endowed with
special propensity in this direction. 20

The Melanesian word 'Mana' or its corresponding words
of the North American Indians: Manitou, Orenda, Wakonda have
become famous in anthropological terminology to-day. "Mana is
an all-pervading super-natural power or influence that operates
in unexpected ways ..... It is a mysterious quality.... more
psychical than physical in character. All-omnipresent success is
a proof that a man has mana..." 21 The totem animal has power or
cumming and is sacred because it has mana and men eat the totem
animal sacramentally in order to obtain mana. 22 Now, in Otto's
view maniaism cannot be the most rudimentary form of religion. To observe power in different natural objects and to appropriate it by possessing them, "to eat the heart or liver of an animal or a man in order to make his power and strength one's own - this is not religion but science." Otto appears to have hit anthropology hard here.

The ideas of souls and spirits in connexion with the origin of religion are not explainable in themselves. Otto does not deny there being the ideas of the soul or spirit among the primitive men. Animism is right in holding that such ideas of invisible entities are there, but "They are the source from which springs, not religion, but the rationalisation of religion, which often ends by constructing such a massive structure of theory and such a plausible fabric of interpretation, that the mystery is frankly excluded." The essence of souls and spirits does not lie in the conceptual expression of them but in the fact of their being fearful spectres arousing dread and awe. These fearful spectres, though originally shunned, are loved and honoured in course of time as their numinosity becomes more evident, as "heroes, pitris, daemons, holy or sacred ones and Gods." In the similar fashion objects like volcanoes, mountain peaks, moon, sun and clouds become divine and worshippable "when the category of the numinous is applied to them" magically in the sense of a daemonic quality. In yet another place Otto has denied that 'spirit' representations are the lowest level of religious development; it is rather the stupor before something 'wholly other' which may be given any name.
In this way, Otto has attempted to defy the naturalistic explanations of the origin of religion. He accuses them of not being able to explain the 'why' of religion. Religion must already be something if it is to become anything. Germs of religion are in the making of man.

All the particular theories of animism etc. can be meaningful in the context of 'daemonic' feeling. Daemonic feeling is non-rational-in the sense of surpassing all conceptions, understanding and apprehensibility. "The most authentic form of the 'daemon' may be seen in those strange deities of ancient Arabic, which are properly nothing but wandering demonstrative pronouns, neither 'given shape and feature by means of myth; .... nor 'evolved out of nature-deities' nor grown out of 'souls' or 'spirits' but none the less felt as deities of mighty efficacy who are the objects of very living veneration". In Indian context the terms asura or adbhuta stood for ghostly and daemonic—though their meanings were later on sublimated.

But the daemonic feeling is only one aspect of the central core of religion, namely, the numinous feeling. Otto speaks about the first stirrings of this feeling also.

The feeling of the numinous is sui generis and self-explanatory. It is a unique and primal element of man's psychical nature. Like other fundamental psychical elements it too emerges when certain conditions are fulfilled. Conditions, in Otto's words, are "proper development of the bodily organs and the other powers of mental and emotional life in general, a due
growth in suggestibility and spontaneity and responsiveness to external impressions and internal experiences.  

The first significant stirring of the numinous is the daemonic feeling which leads the person having it to behave in peculiar manners which are interpreted to give rise to the different anthropological theories of the origin of religion. Not the external behaviours but the psychic propensities responsible for them should be the real origin of religion. This is what exactly Otto claims.

Otto's theory distinguishes itself by shifting the centre of discussion from natural to the spiritual sphere of man's being. His life-long mission, indeed, has been to interpret the universe religiously - the religious conception of it being "essentially a belief in spirit, its worth and pre-eminence. It does not even seek to compare the reality and origin of spirit with anything else whatever .... Spirit alone has truth and reality and ..... everything else is derived from it."  

1.3.2. Morality and Religion

Religion is more intimately connected with morality than with any other thing. Though thinkers are unanimous about the intimate relation between morality and religion; there is a difference of opinion among them about the 'nature' or 'type' of this relation. Some think that religion is the ground of moral life. Religion precedes and produces morality. Another
view is that morality precedes and leads on to religion. Yet another view is that morality and religion are of different origin and are accidentally combined in course of their development. Interesting discussions are possible on these views. But let us not indulge in this elaboration and straightaway take up Otto’s views on the relation between morality and religion.

Otto’s central thesis regarding this relation is that though morality and religion go almost together — it is possible to have pure religion without morality. The idea of the holy has its moral ingredients, but the feeling of the 'Numen' is free from these. Otto tries to make a distinction between numinous value and other values like moral value, aesthetic value etc. The Numen is sacred and its sacredness is different from moral value — goodness, even though this sacredness can be understood in terms of moral and aesthetic values. The Numen is 'sanotus' in its absolute sense and it is the positive numinous value or worth to which "corresponds on the side of the creature a numinous disvalue or unworth."34 This is the ground of the creature’s being 'the profane' in contrast with the Numen’s sacredness and perfection in all respects.

Otto always agrees that highly developed religions have the sense of appreciation of and obligation to God. But then, it need not be a general rule. A heartfelt recognition of 'the holy' "may occur in particular experiences without being always or definitely charged or infused with the sense of moral obligation."35 Hence, numinous feelings are not only non-moral, but they do not always arouse moral obligation towards the Numen
also Whereas numinous feelings are necessarily non-moral, their volitional consequences may or may not be non-moral. The Idea of the Holy has many chapters highlighting many aspects of man's religious life. In some of them extremely subtle arguments are put forward to make his point. One such chapter is The Holy as Category of Value from which we have drawn our material for this section. This chapter, like some other chapters of the book, is full of religious semasiology.

Religious man feels the urge to serve, to praise, the object of his religious experience. The feeling that Numen is to be served and it is good to serve it - is not a moral feeling in Otto's view. The sense of service etc. has come from the sense of Sanotus and "sanotus is not originally a moral category at all". Otto has rendered sanotus into "Augustus", the august. 'August' the objective valuation of the religious object that claims our homage.

Thus Otto has distinguished between moral and moral-type compulsions. Even though there is the feeling that it is worthwhile to serve and unworthy not to serve the 'Numen' - which is a moral feeling in ordinary sense, Otto explains it as a direct outcome of the numinous feeling and not as a moral feeling.

Some philosophers have explained the origin of religion from morality (e.g. Martineau) and some have put forward morality as an argument for God's existence overpassing all other arguments (e.g. Kant). Otto has disfavoured any such view in clear
terms. Religious concepts like Sin, Redemption, Atonement etc. cannot be derived from or explained in 'natural' or 'moral' terms. As an example he cites the case of certain dogmatists' theory that the demand of morality as such urged man to inner collapse and then obliged him to look round for deliverance. The "morally robust older rationalism" that recognized moral law and was desirous of conforming to it, had well-developed concepts of right and wrong, do's and don'ts and yet no concept of "downfall", "collapse" and 'need of redemption'. It was so because it "lacked understanding of what 'sin' is. More morality is not the soil from which grows either the need of redemption and deliverance or the need for that other unique good which is likewise altogether and specially numinous in character, 'covering' our 'atonement'.

Otto has taken pains to describe numinous feelings with the help of analogous natural feelings. He illustrates numinous feelings with the help of analogous moral feelings. At the same time he cautions us to keep the religious feelings distinct and separate from their analogue. Moral transgression arouses a sense of guiltiness in us. We become remorseful and accuse ourselves. But the analogous religious feeling pollutes us; we do not accuse ourselves, we are defiled in our eyes. The characteristic form of emotional reaction is no longer remorse but loathing. The person concerned becomes aware of his profanity. Need to sanctify, wash and atone the soul arises.
Now, this theory of Otto becomes more acceptable provided this feeling is universally present among the followers of different religions. The feeling of 'dust and ashes' of the finite before the infinite is evident enough in the Semitic religions viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam. But it is not limited to the followers of these religions only. The criticism against semitic religions that they debase and demoralise Man before God whereas essentially Man and God are identical - is off-hand. The fact that from the ultimate standpoint the finite and the infinite are one does not affect Otto's position. The question of 'ultimate' and 'relative or empirical' standpoints must not be overlooked. Even the highest form of Vedanta cannot deny the difference between jiva and Isvara though they, as Brahman, are identical. On the phenomenal plane man's profanity and God's holiness are unquestionable. Just before the grand Theophany in the Bhagavadgita — Arjuna, conscious of his limitedness and Krishna's 'aisvaryam' (numinosity) asks if he can see the Cosmic Form (manyase yadi taачshakaya maha draстum --- (B.G.XI.4.) Krishna, though gracious enough to reveal Himself to Arjuna — confirm's the latter's limitedness:

Na tu maṁ sakyate draśṭumanaśya evacaksusa,
Divyam dadámite oaksuḥ pasya me yogamaśvaram

(BG.XI.8)

(But thy bodily eye is too feeble to behold Me thus; the divine eye I give thee. Behold Me thus in My wondrous Power as the LORD)\(^{39}\)
Otto is criticized for having violently separated religion from ethics; because the original datum of religion contains both religious and moral elements. Bennet holds that the numinous evidently implies some constraint, however mysterious, upon the conduct of the natural man. To that extent the numinous was to be moral. But at least on this ground Otto need not be criticized. He admits that restraints are there—but they are non-moral.

Bennet has made a significant point in saying that the numinous or any original datum of religion can also serve as the origin of morality. Otto is possibly obsessed by the idea of keeping the numinous absolutely free from other human activities except religious. As a result of this he is at pains to connect religion with morality and reason in developed religions. It is not that his fears are unfounded. There have been attempts on the part of morality to usurp the autonomy of religion. There are some who go to the extent of extolling morality at the cost of religion. For them a belief in God is not necessary for making life significant. It makes sense in a Godless world. But this is only an extreme viewpoint. Their denial of God is dogmatic and has the same uncertainty which they allege against the believers' assertion of God's existence.

One can relate morality with religion without subordinating one to the other. Both may be taken to be the expression of man's deeply felt aspiration for realising 'infinitude' intuitively experienced. Capable of reasoning and intuiting,
Man is the meeting-point of time and eternity, of the finite and the infinite.

Man's awareness of infinity produces in him propensities to realise this infinity fully in his life. This aspiration flowers into religion. At the same time the same awareness of infinity becomes a standard for judging the worth of actions. Selfless actions which are in conformity with the infinite standpoint are regarded as good and the actions not so conforming are said to be not-good. Conscience which plays a vital role in morality is explainable as the human reason playing the role of the arbiter of actions. Man's deep-rooted awareness of what is good is disturbed when something is done which is not in conformity with our sense of infinity. This is what is commonly called the moral-prick.

Hence, there need not be any conflict between religion and morality. A broad-based theory of the morals and religion can explain both of them to have grown from the same root without any opposition. Any attempt to usurp the root for religion alone and to find a different root for morality is multiplying entities beyond necessity. The root is neutral and the fruits are distinct (though co-existent). In religion holiness is the standard and in morality goodness — there is no scope for confusing between the two or attempting to derive one from the other.
1.4 General Position of Otto's Religious Philosophy

Otto has taken religion seriously. For him religion has an autonomy of its own. No extraneous help can be of any use. Hence, religious autonomy is the one single point around which the whole texture of Otto's religious philosophy is woven. His lifelong task has been to "show that religion maintains its validity and freedom because of the truth and independence of spirit and its superiority to nature." As Davidson puts it: "Otto's work as a whole, whether practical or theoretical, devotional or theological, historical or philosophical is dominated by one unifying principle -- an almost passionate insistence upon the autonomy of religion." Work for consolidating the foundation of religion started by Schleiermacher and Fries was taken to its religious extremity by Otto. In him Religion is independent of Philosophy and Ethics i.e. of Reason and Morality. It has found out for itself new roots - deeper, so far religion is concerned, than either reason or morality. So, religion need not rise or fall with philosophy or ethics. Deep in the making of human mind itself, lies the unique source of religion. Reason is useful to begin with, but it has limitations. Otto's is a two-pronged approach: That the spirit which is the foundation of the universe is not erratic or irrational, to that extent reason is not only not missing from, but is a sine qua non of the ultimate reality. But at the same time: that with the help of human reason it is difficult to reach the reality.
Otto sharply reacts to the naturalistic explanation of the universe. Such explanations hold rationality to be only a product of matter. Where matter is taken to be more fundamental than reason - a telos of the world cannot be conceived. In such a scheme of things the question of God does not arise. Otto is hard to be satisfied with such views. "It is a prime concern of religion that the world and history shall be capable of being understood and interpreted in terms of the rational ideas of a purposive ordering of the world. To meet a naturalistic view of the universe, which denies reason in the scheme of things, we require an apologetic based upon reason." This apologetic Otto develops in one of his earliest works - Naturalism and Religion. Here, in contradistinction with naturalistic explanation Otto gives a religious explanation of the world and this is what he means by an apologetic based on reason.

Otto has due respect for reason - but, unlike Kierkegaard, he has not limited knowledge to 'knowability by reason' alone. There are things beyond reason, but they are not unknowable.

This is where Otto leaves reason behind and goes forward to produce a religious philosophy based on the non-rationality of the religious phenomena. There is no better introduction to this than the significant lines of W. James whom Otto holds in high esteem: what religion reports... always purports to be a fact of experience: the divine is actually present, religion says, and between it and ourselves
relations of give and take are actual. If definitive perceptions of fact like this cannot stand upon their own feet, surely abstract reasoning cannot give them the support they are in need of. Conceptual processes can class facts, define them, interpret them; but they do not produce them, nor can they reproduce their individuality. There is always a plus, a thickness which feeling alone can answer for. Philosophy in this sphere is thus a secondary function, unable to warrant faith's veracity. This 'plus', 'thickness' - is what Otto has called the Numinous "Das Numinose" which term since has become a part and parcel of the modern religious philosophical vocabulary.

The sustained failure of reason to comprehend God and the proclivity of some philosophers towards looking down upon religions due to this, on the one hand, and the almost unavoidably religious nature of mankind, on the other, must have given Otto the cue to search for a source deeper than the analytical understanding of man. If man is religious by nature, if a man's personality is more complete (i.e. he is personally and socially better and happier) when he has some religion, if sceptical and agnostic theories have failed to dissuade man from having faith in God and yet if God cannot be explained without the help of human reason; then feeling rather than reasoning has to be the proper source of religion. Man's religion is not a product of his intellect, though it can, on the intellectual plane, serve as a good tool for expressing, as far as practicable, man's religious feelings. Religion does not lose its significance
when reason fails to account for it properly. It, basically, is a matter of feeling, not of understanding. Commenting on how Otto impressed the English theologians, B.H. Streeter writes, "English theologians have been impressed, not by his philosophical, but by his historical and psychological arguments for connecting the concept of "the Holy" with a peculiar quality in the feeling of religious awe - that reaction of the soul to a mysterium tremendum fascinans which he aptly names 'numinous'.

Otto's primary concern is a religion vital and inspiring rather than a religious theory more logical and consistent, hence he adopts a phenomenological method with a constructive approach. C.A. Campbell puts it thus: The historical manifestations of all the great religions bear constant witness, and careful introspection of one's own most deeply felt religious experiences abundantly confirms, that there is something more in the specifically religious valuation of the Holy Being than appreciation of powers and excellences of which we can form definite rational concepts. What is this 'something more' - the 'over-plus of meaning' essentially ingredient in the Holy for any experience that is truly religious? The answer of Das Heilige is that it is what its author calls, the numinous. There may be dispute over philosophical ideas; there cannot be any dispute over man's deeply felt moments of religious experience as a phenomenon. Truly, .... to interpret religion one must in the end look at the immediate content of the religious consciousness. Religious consciousness is the primary datum of Otto's religious philosophy. He begins with this - he does not prove this. Otto asks his readers...
In this way Otto makes a forceful case for the primacy of feeling-element in religious experience. He sets forth a theory of religion based on 'religious feeling' — it is not an abstract philosophy of religion but a philosophy of religion drawing its life-breath from the actual religious experiences of man. He does not argue for or against God, but analyses the God-experiences. As an adept psychologist of religion he swiftly cuts across the God-experiences and discovers there some such feeling aspects which are not exhausted by mere rational and moral concepts. This way he reaches the most primary datum of religion — the numinous feelings.

Otto connects the numinous feeling with the idea of the holy. Holiness is the mark of religion. The most exclusive characteristic of a religious object is that it is holy. Holiness is "a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion." Holiness in itself may stand for religion. Followers of religion without a concept of God have the idea of holiness in their mind as they understand and practise their religion. History of religion shows that mana and taboo were based on a concept of holiness. Thus holiness is inseparable from the religious experiences of mankind. Otto is aware of this character of religion and for him the analysis of religious experience is the analysis of the idea of the Holy. He does
not say that he is analysing the idea of God. And in the idea of the Holy, which for him is as certain as anything, he has discovered a profounder aspect of the Holy, bereft of its rational and moral aspects, the 'numinous' state of mind. It is this numinous state of mind or better the numinous feeling which is the central core of religion according to Otto. Because this state is produced not by reason - but is self-produced (sui generis) - religion carries with itself unquestionable certainty. Jung has beautifully expressed it when he says that some ideas are universal and eternal in existence and force themselves upon the individual's consciousness. Basic religious ideas are such. Numinous experience "is a dynamic energy or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary it seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator."  

Otto works out religious autonomy from an 'absolutely religious and only religious' numinous feeling which, when rationality and morality are added to it, explain for all the different religions of the world. Thomas McPherson has put it like this: "Could two religions have broadly similar moral policies but widely different belief elements? Answer: Yes; in the case of Christianity and Buddhism. Could two religions have the same kind of religious experience as their basis but have widely different belief elements? Answer: If Otto is right then this is the case with practically any two religions... ..." At the deeper level all religions meet together - it is at the surface that they differ. But the differences are no doubt
real, for we understand by a particular religion not only its
deeper aspect but its surface aspects too.

References and Notes

2. Waoh, J.: Types of Religious Experience Christian and
Non-Christian, P.210
4. Ibid, P.331
   Moore, J.M.: Theories of Religious Experience, P.75
   Smart, N.(Ed.) Historical Selections in the Philosophy
   of Religion, P.421
   Macquarrie, J.: op.cit., P.211
   Diamond, M.L.: Contemporary Philosophy and Religious
   Thought, P.79
8. Valentin, B., The German People, P.439
9. Ibid, P.440
10. Falckenberg, R., History of Modern Philosophy, P.622
11. In German, however, there has been so much of work on Otto.
    Hans-Walter Schutte: Religion und Charismatik in der
    Theologie Rudolf Ottos, Walter de Gruyter Verlag, Berlin 1969,
    shows as many as 116 works on Otto. It shows only two English
    works, those of Davidson and J.M. Moore, both of which
    we have consulted. The rest of the long list of writers
    includes Rudolf Bultman, Friedrich Feigel, Heinrich Frick(by is
    the maximum number of works, 9), Paul Tillich, Joachim
    Wach, Van der Leeuw, Theodor Siegfried, Friedrich Heiler etc.
13. The Idea of the Holy, p.130
15. The Idea of the Holy, p.116
16. Loc.cit.
17. Edwards, D.M., op.cit., P.52
18. The Idea of the Holy, P.118
19. Ibid, P.119
20. Ibid, P.120
21. Codrington quoted by D.M.Edwards,op.cit., P.45
22. Edwards, D.M., op.cit, P.45
23. The Idea of the Holy, P.121
24. Ibid, P.26-27
25. Ibid, p.920
27. Ibid, P.118 and P.121, when read together.
28. Ibid, P.27
29. Ibid, P.178
30. Ibid, P.122
31. Ibid, P.128
32. Ibid, P.124
33. Otto, Naturalism and Religion, P.280
34. The Idea of the Holy, p.51
35. Loc.cit.
36. Ibid, p.52
37. Ibid, Pp.52-53
38. Ibid, P.55
39. Otto. The Original Gita- P.28
   Incidentally, Otto has referred to this Theophany of the
   B.G.XI many a time .
40. Bennet, C.A., op.cit., P.465
41. Loc.cit.
42. Nielsen, K., Contemporary Critics of Religion, P.136
43. Cf. Our destiny,our being's heart and home,
    Is with infinitude, and only there ;
    With hope it is, hope that can never die,
    Effort, and expectation, and desire,
    And something evermore about to be.
    (Wordsworth,'Prelude' IV)
44. Otto, Naturalism and Religion, p. 282
45. Davidson, R.F. Rudolf Otto's Interpretation of Religion, p. 11
46. Otto. Religious Essays, P. 121
47. James, W. The Varieties of Religious Experience, P. 445
48. Streeter, B.H. The Buddha and the Christ, Pp. 312-3
49. Davidson, R.F., op. cit., pp. 5-6
50. Campbell, C.A., op. cit., P. 328
51. James, W., op. cit., P. 13
52. The Idea of the Holy, P. 8
53. Ibid, P. 5
54. Ibid, P. 7
56. McPherson T., Philosophy and Religious Belief, p. 3.