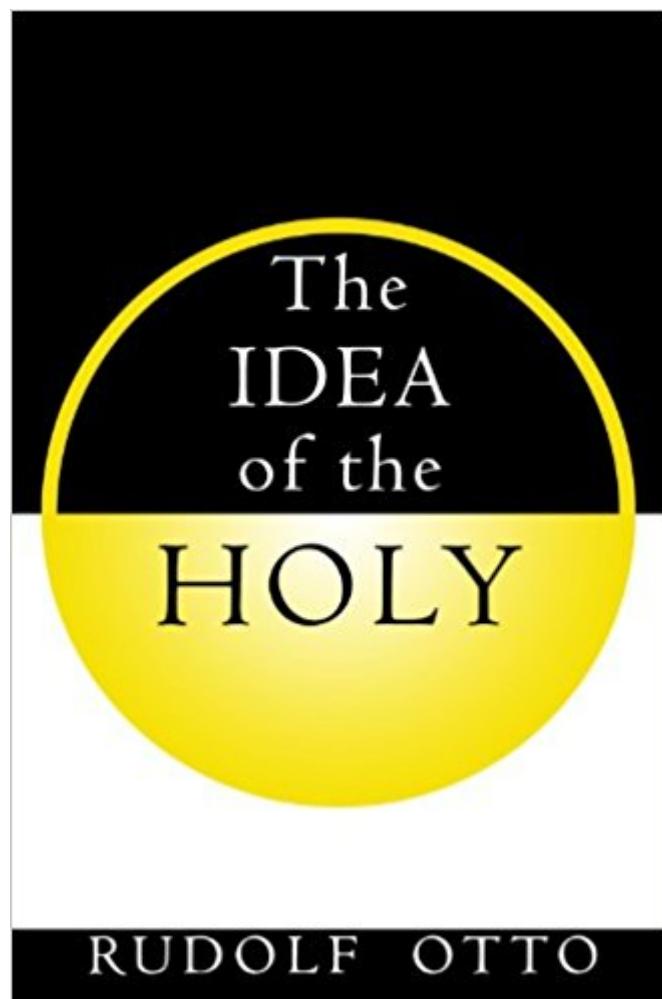


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The Idea Of The Holy



Synopsis

Since the English translation first appeared in 1923, Rudolf Otto's volume has established itself as a classic in the field of religious philosophy. It offers an in-depth inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This translation has firmly established its position as an authoritative and lucid representation of an acknowledged classic of religious thought."--London Quarterly Review

I first read "The Idea of the Holy" while I was in college in the mid sixties. While preparing an essay on religious experience recently, I re-ordered this book and, on re-reading it, found there was far more to it than my twenty-year-old mind could grasp back then. Anchored in nineteenth century German theological and philosophical discussions, this book still has much to say to us today. What does it mean when we speak of the holy or speak of God? In the irrational feelings that accompany the experience of the numinous Rudolf Otto finds answers and questions. How do these relate to the rational in religion and to ethical choices? In our age, which tends to dissociate subjective feelings and the possibility of objective truth, this book may help challenge us to find ways to unify both.

Difficult reading but it makes me think. I like that. If you want a better understanding of God, this will

help.

This is at least a must-read-twice book, preferably with a span of years in between as the reader's experience will enhance a second reading. Read it and you will quickly see why it is a classic.

Anyone serious about The Holy has to have this book as a guide for reading any other theological writings.

Much of the discourse on religion and spirituality that I hear around congregations and in reading groups is grounded in concepts and meanings articulated in this classic text. The translation is clear and concise without being shallow. While I do not identify as "Christian" I respect the author's commitment and perspective. I danced over some the promotional sections, while reading others to get his insights and clarify my own rebuttal to his theology. I found much to learn from without having to subscribe to his theological position. This is a stimulating foundation for exploring the meaning of 'holy' and clarifying where I stand in relation to it. I will be reading Varieties of Religious Experience by William James next.

Many of the ideas in this book, such as the difference between terror and horror, are seminal and cannot be overlooked by anyone interested in the deep things of God. However, the strangeness of our Father is the focus of this work, so if you are more interested in a loving God and not the aspect of God which seems weird and untouchable, approach this classic with some caution. I am not saying don't read it, I am saying it is a strange read--something akin to the feeling one gets when reading M. R. James, perhaps.

Excellent text and service

This is more of the more important books for those who wish to understand the universal human longing for the transcendent. A must read, just as William James' Varieties of Religious Experience is a must read for the same reason.

Living as we do in an age where religion in general (and Christianity specifically) has been largely co-opted by those who consider it to be "morality touched with emotion", "The Idea of the Holy" offers an alternative view towards religion and spirituality. Otto introduces a way of approaching the subject that avoids the twin traps of emotion and intellect, allowing us to understand "religious

feeling" as a phenomenon all it's own, as a "sense' with its own attributes. For those who can (through scholarship or patience) penetrate the sometimes dense and dated prose, this book has the potential to remove the debris of thousands of years of so-called theology and philosophy and to find the experience of God without intermediaries. It is indeed, a revelation.

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