

15. The sacred and sacrilege—ethics not metaphysics

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When I tell my colleagues in both the School of Philosophy and the School of Government that I am writing on blasphemy and sacrilege most of them meet me with blank stares and I have a distinct feeling that they think I have crawled out of the seventeenth century. And yet, in this world beset more each day with religious tension between faiths and between adherents of the same faith it becomes increasingly more urgent to find an adequate cross-cultural, multi-faith way of addressing questions of blasphemy and sacrilege. I haven't crawled out of the seventeenth century so there must be another explanation for this dichotomy of attitude. My teenage son has found the perfect explanation for any disputes or dichotomies which occur between us. He has learned some of the language of my world view so instead of shouting 'you don't understand me' and slamming out of the room he fixes me with his big brown eyes and says, 'either our paradigms are different, or *you* have made a category error'. Perhaps this is the explanation here. Either my paradigms are different from those of my colleagues or *they* have made a category error.

In discussing the issues of blasphemy and sacrilege perhaps a good place to start is with some definitions. The Australian edition of the *Collins Concise Dictionary* tells us that something is blasphemous if it 'involves impiety or gross irreverence towards God or something sacred'. It defines blasphemy narrowly as 'the crime which is committed if a person insults, offends, or vilifies the deity, Christ or the Christian religion'. *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* provides a broader definition, namely 'profane talk of something supposed to be sacred'. To blaspheme is 'to show contempt or disrespect for (God or sacred things)'. Sacrilege it defines as 'originally the crime of stealing or misappropriating a sacred object or objects especially from the church. Later any offence against a consecrated person, or violation or misuse of whatever is recognised as sacred or under Church protection'. *Collins*, on the other hand, says that sacrilege is 'the misuse or desecration of anything regarded as sacred or as worthy of extreme respect' or an 'instance of taking anything sacred for secular use'. Whatever the variations in definition it is plain that both blasphemy and sacrilege involve the giving of offence to others, and they are, therefore, public as opposed to private or personal issues.

In a pluralistic society the idea of the sacred is one which appears to be fraught with difficulties. What is sacred to an indigenous person will not, on the face

of it, be sacred to a Muslim, Jew or Christian, and obviously what is sacred to any of them will not be sacred to a person of no faith.

Immediately we can see two possible questions. Firstly, is it acceptable in a secular state to have as crimes behaviours towards God and matters related to God? In other words, is there a role for the expression of religious views or even the protection of religious views in public policy debate and formulation in a pluralistic liberal democracy? The second question is whether it is appropriate in a multicultural or pluralistic society to have state policy on matters which are so specifically focused on religion at all, but especially on one religion.

Liberal thought has tended to maintain that religion is too divisive to provide a constructive voice in public policy debates within democratic pluralistic societies. It is argued that the beliefs of various religious traditions are intimately bound up with views of the good, of right and wrong, which are not shared by others. Additionally, the argument goes, because such beliefs are not supported by publicly and universally accessible reasoning, they are likely to conflict with one another and with secular thought, thus threatening social stability.

Richard Rorty advocates privatising religion, 'making it seem bad taste to bring religion into discussions of public policy'¹ and Robert Audi argues that citizens should provide secular reasons for advocating public policies because 'conflicting secular ideas, even when firmly held, can often be blended and harmonised in the crucible of free discussion: but a clash of gods is like a meeting of an irresistible force with an immovable object'.² Although he has slightly modified his views in recent years John Rawls adopts a very similar position.

Writing of why it is inappropriate for universal truth claims about the essential nature and identity of persons to be made in determining a conception of justice John Rawls has this to say:

as a practical political matter, no general moral conception can provide a publicly recognised basis for a conception of justice in a modern democratic state. The social and historical conditions of such a state have their origins in the Wars of Religion following the Reformation and the subsequent development of the principle of toleration, and in the growth of constitutional government and the institutions of large industrial market economies. These conditions profoundly affect the requirements of a workable conception of political justice: such a conception must allow for a diversity of doctrines and the plurality of conflicting, and indeed commensurable conceptions of the good affirmed by the members of existing democratic societies.³

An analogous kind of reasoning is applied when matters of sacrality are being discussed. It is thought that it is impossible to have a universal conception of the sacred because different faiths and different cultures regard different things

as sacred. Conversely, in a pluralistic society, it is impossible to have a coherent view of what is sacrilegious for exactly the same reasons.

If a person adheres to a set of beliefs, a faith which holds a particularly well-defined God-head as the supreme or only God, and if attached to this strongly defined God there is a set of behaviours, artefacts and attitudes which belong only to that well-defined God, it is only logical that anything which falls outside the well-defined parameters, cannot be considered as sacred by the person of well-defined faith. It is this logic which allowed a pastor from a Pentecostal church in Hobart to refer to a statue of the Buddha which the Buddhist community had just installed in their grounds as a 'lump of metal'. It is this logic which allows devout Christians who enter their sacred places with due reverence, to climb Uluru. It is the same logic which allows American troops to enter mosques and Indian troops to enter the golden temple at Amritzah, and which allows secular tourists from everywhere to enter cathedrals and churches in Britain as if they were going to the fair.

This way of thinking about universal morality or universal sacrality is an error of reasoning amounting to a category error. What we need is to change our style of thinking.⁴ This chapter, therefore, is about changing the style of thinking—ostensibly about what we choose to call 'the sacred'. This is such a fundamental change, however, that it brings with it a radical shift in our understanding of what it means to be human, in our perception of self, in our functioning in society and certainly in our understanding of what words like sacrilege, blasphemy and profanity might mean.

Concepts like the sacred have been misappropriated by organised religion. Such concepts apply universally to human beings and their exclusive attachment to systems of belief has caused a debilitating fragmentation in our understanding of reality, resulting in severe and near irreparable damage to the human psyche, to human society and to the environment which envelops our humanity. Current understandings of these concepts, coloured as they are by the dominating doctrines of the Judeo-Christian tradition are inadequate, or at best partial. This chapter is an attempt to restore them to what I consider to be their proper realm—human Being-ness.

I recognise that human Being-ness is a peculiar term. With it I am attempting to elucidate specifically the distinction between the profoundly and unalterably given nature of a human and the multifarious and ever changing ways each human has of being in the world for which I reserve the term human being. This distinction can be illustrated analogously, by contemplation of the difference between the 'I AM THAT I AM'⁵ of Jewish Scripture and the statement 'I am a jealous God'. Robert Young maintains that this phrase indicates the essential unsearchableness of God rather than mere existence even though it is derived from *hayah*, the Hebrew verb *to be*.⁶ I would use 'human Being-ness' to indicate,

not the mere existence of human beings, but rather the essential, but as yet, not fully fathomed unity of being each human has in his/her intimacy with existence. Human Being-ness, therefore has much in common with Heidegger's *Dasein* in that 'the essential definition of this being cannot be accomplished by ascribing to it a 'what' that specifies its material content, because its essence lies rather in the fact that in each instance has to be its being as its own...' ⁷ This idea is borne out in the ancient Celtic I AM poems. Traditionally, the first of such poems is held to be the one composed by Amairgen, when his people the Milesians claimed Ireland as their own. It illustrates well this condition which I call human-Beingness.

I AM the wind which breathes upon the sea,
 I AM the wave of the ocean,
 I AM the murmur of the billows –
 I AM the ox of the seven combats,
 I AM the vulture upon the rocks,
 I AM a beam of the sun,
 I AM the fairest of plants,
 I AM the wild boar in valour,
 I AM the salmon in the water,
 I AM a lake in the plain,
 I AM a world of knowledge,
 I AM the point of the lance of battle,
 I AM the God who creates the fire in the head. ⁸

In this poem there is no dualism. There is only unity of being. It illustrates the ontological height, depth and breadth of the possibilities and realities of human-Beingness and it takes us in the direction of recognising the places where humans be as holy ground.

We can argue about whether or not 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' ⁹ is a literal verbal communication from Yahweh to Moses. Fascinating as the extensive discussions about the literal truth of scripture and its ratio-philosophical/theological interpretation may be, for the purposes of this chapter they do not really matter. What does matter here is that scripture tells us that human beings have, for a very long time had a conception of something called 'holiness' and for an equally long time they have been able to locate this thing called 'holiness' or 'the sacred' in the world. Scripture does not tell us that God said 'I am in a holy place' but rather that the place, in the world, where Moses stood was a holy place. Scripture can be seen, according to this understanding, not as the exclusive property of a particular religion or religious grouping, but rather as the accumulated liturgical-poetic responses of humanity to the experience of being human in the world.

This does not mean that scripture should be held to be less holy or sacred when seen in this light but I recognise that this does not coincide with the generally held view among believers and non-believers alike. For the most part, religious adherents claim that their holy books impart exclusive and literal knowledge of the divine, while those who do not accept the dogmas attached to religions tend also to eschew the sacred writings. It is my contention that as a consequence, both individuals and humanity as a whole are the losers. Such a position challenges the view that scripture and 'the sacred' are the exclusive province of religion. It is necessary therefore, to examine precisely what is meant when the word 'religion' is used. Such an examination shows that the meaning is anything but precise.

According to the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* 'holy' refers to a thing or place kept, or regarded, as sacred or set apart for religious use or observance. Specifically, in Christianity it is a place or thing 'free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect'. 'Holy' can also refer to somebody 'specially belonging to, empowered by or devoted to God, or something pertaining to, originating from or sanctioned by God'. 'Sacred' is defined as 'consecrated to, or considered especially dear to a god or supernatural being' or 'set apart for or dedicated to a religious purpose and so deserving veneration and respect'.

In lexicological terms then, 'holy' or 'sacred' can be seen as both relating specifically to gods or God, and as set apart from, and capable of being contaminated by, human beings. This idea of the possibility of contamination seems to be conveyed in the command 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet'. In other words, humans were being commanded not to bring the pollution of their everyday (mundane) life into the places where they could meet holiness or divinity.

All this may seem very basic. It certainly appears that everyone knows what 'sacred' means. Its application to designated places of worship and the rites of recognised religion and the somewhat more arcane sites and practices of indigenous culture and the relics and artefacts of both is unremarkable. Today, however, it is also used, literally or metaphorically, in many other contexts. In the West we have, at best, an ambivalent attitude to the whole category of religion and the sacred. In most of the western world, at least, religion and theology have become sidelined as the curious and peculiar pastimes of small ghettos of the idiosyncratically inclined.¹⁰

Those things which concern the inhabitants of these ghettos are seen, therefore, to be completely separate and different from the issues of 'real life'. This is particularly so in Australia where secular life is believed to be enshrined in the Constitution.¹¹ Philosophers, particularly, are susceptible to the ambivalences inherent in this debate. It is a suspicion of philosophers that theology is not

nearly such a rigorous enterprise as philosophy, many seeing academic theology as thinly disguised apologetics for non-rational beliefs. In addition there is tentativeness among philosophers about words, and their meaning that makes questions about the nature of the sacred seem to be fraught with difficulty. In the words of F. E. Peters,

Philosophers have been uneasy about language almost from the beginning. The sculptor may curse his stone or the painter his oils, but neither contemplates suing for divorce. The philosopher, on the other hand, lives constantly in the shadow of infidelity, now suspecting metaphor, now tautology, or occasionally succumbing to the ultimate despair, the fear that he is dealing with *nomina tantum*.¹²

Only words—this certainly seems to apply to ‘religion’ and ‘sacred’. It appears that nowadays ‘religion’ can mean anything, everything and nothing. That religion has no value, that it is anachronistic, superstitious nonsense—that religious institutions are at best irrelevant, and at worst, conservative, backward-looking inhibitors of human progress, are common-place attitudes to be found in almost every discussion from talk-back radio to the academy. As well as the claims that religion means nothing there can also be detected attitudes that religion can mean anything and everything. Statements like ‘I don’t go to church any more because I am spiritually fulfilled by Tai Chi’—or Feng Shui, or bushwalking, or painting, or Amnesty International are commonplace. A further attitude toward religion can be characterised as the pragmatic approach, where religion is used somewhat cynically, especially by politicians, to engender particular patriotic fervour among a populace. The use of religious language at times of national threat is a case in point. The authenticity of such language must be questioned. How authentically Christian is it, for instance, to use the language of a religion whose founder preached peace and ‘turning the other cheek’, when sending young people off to war?

One of the aims of this chapter is to bring some clarification to our understanding of what constitutes the sacred in order to develop a philosophical understanding of what the sacred means in the context of human Being-ness, and determine what might constitute sacrilege or blasphemy in a secular and multicultural state.

Here I find myself in sympathy with the work of the German idealist philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher set himself in sharp opposition to the intellectualism and moralism of the Age of Reason. He accused Enlightenment thinkers of misunderstanding and debasing religion, by confusing it with, and transforming it into, metaphysics and morality. By this process religion became the object of empirical scrutiny and was stripped of its completely unique and independent essence. It is this process, Schleiermacher claims, which discredited religion to the point where it was being considered an irrelevance. He tirelessly

repeated his demands that a sharp distinction must always be made between religion and all metaphysics and all moralities.¹³

In order to make quite clear to you what is the original and characteristic possession of religion; it resigns, at once, all claims on anything that belongs either to science or morality. Whether it has been borrowed or bestowed it is now returned.

Schleiermacher makes a strong distinction between 'religion', with its questionable metaphysics and even more questionable morality, and what he calls 'piety', but what might equally be called 'reverence'. In his introduction to the first edition of Schleiermacher's *Collected Speeches on Religion*, Otto had this to say:

Schleiermacher based his justified attack—though very exaggeratedly—on the complete rejection in the field of religion of knowledge and action, of 'metaphysics' and 'practice'...He wished to show that man is not wholly confined to knowledge and action, that the relationship of men to their environment—the world, being, mankind, events—is not exhausted in the mere perception or shaping of it. He sought to prove that if one experienced the environing world in a state of deep emotion, as intuition and feeling, and that if one were deeply affected by a sense of its eternal and abiding essence to the point where one was moved to feelings of devotion, awe and reverence—then such an affective state was worth more than knowledge and action put together.¹⁴

This is what Schleiermacher himself says on this matter of metaphysics, morality and piety:

Only when piety takes its place alongside of science and practice, as a necessary, an indispensable third, as their natural counterpart, not less in worth and splendour than either, will the common field be altogether occupied and human nature on this side complete.¹⁵

Schleiermacher is more concerned with the essential experiences that give rise to the processes and his use of 'piety' as the attitude correlative to religion is a radical departure from the thinking which preceded him, and regrettably, much of that which followed him.

Schleiermacher's concern is to describe or redescribe that characteristic of human Being-ness, which gives rise to religion. To this extent he has no doubt about the validity of religion. His concern is that this characteristic has been misconstrued, distorted, contorted and neglected because people had been mistaken about its nature. His descriptions, therefore, do not seek to prove anything for he does not believe that there is anything to prove. He is merely

describing a phenomenon which the 'cultured despisers' have misconstrued and therefore erroneously rejected.

Schleiermacher describes religion in a way which is new and radically different. This is because his perspective is different. Before Schleiermacher, theologians concentrated their attention on the object of religious activity—namely God and doctrines of God. Schleiermacher is not interested in furnishing new evidence for the existence of God, the independence of the soul, or immortality. Schleiermacher's focus is unequivocally, the subject that engages in religious activity, namely humanity. He identifies the essence of religion, not by a unique object, but by the uniqueness of the human faculty that operates in religious activity. He attempts to show that human understanding has three components: knowing, doing, and feeling, and that just as science is the legitimate expression of human knowing, and ethics is the legitimate expression of human doing, religion is the legitimate expression of human feeling.

Otto warns us that we should not be misled by the English word 'feeling'. Schleiermacher is not linking religion with a particular emotional attitude or a very personal and particular inner experience. He makes this clear with the use of three different German words: *Anschauungen* (intuitions), *Gefühle* (feelings), and occasionally *ahnden* (divining or surmise). Clearly Schleiermacher did not intend to associate religion with an emotional response nor did he seek to ground religion in a personal inner religious experience. 'Feeling' refers to a faculty of mind and not a mental category, and is, therefore, a metaphysical or ontological category rather than a psychological one. For Schleiermacher, the important factor is not that religion is the human response to 'being' or to 'power', but that it is a particular kind of response, which has been called 'religious response' to 'whatever' one considers divine. The object of that response is unimportant. What is important is the kind and quality of response. Viewed in this way it is possible for a person to reject any particular religion as a conglomeration of culturally conditioned manifestations and yet be a full participant in an authentic religious life.

Schleiermacher identifies a religious sphere to human life that is not a matter of belief, but of being, so that whatever else humans may be—physical, moral, mental, social, emotional—they are also religious. Human life is incomplete if the religious side is not developed, and human existence is understood incompletely if its religious facet is not considered. When J.N. Mohanty writes, 'Authentic religiosity experiences the world as intrinsically sacred'¹⁶ he is making this same point—that when one lives authentically there is no definitive distinction between holy things and everyday things, between holy places and ordinary places.

The holy, the sacred, the numinous, can be characterised, according to this view of religion, not as Anselm had it as 'that than which no greater can be conceived'

but rather as the Upanishads proclaim, the *ā-caryam*,¹⁷ 'that in whose presence we must exclaim 'aaah!'

This is the way It [Brahman] is to be illustrated:

When lightnings have been loosened:

aaah!

When that has made the eyes to be closed –

aaah! –

so far concerning Deity (*devatā*).

As we go about our daily lives, ordinariness, routine and rational explanations prevail. We eat and drink because we need nourishment and hydration in order to survive, we build shelters as protection from life threatening elements and we indulge our sex drive because of the promptings of the 'selfish gene'. None of these responses are questioned or questionable in our scientific age. The explanation follows the behaviour as night follows day. But our 'religious' impulses are not given the same value. They are seen as a distortion of our other impulses rather than as a legitimate response to a legitimate prompting. The object of these impulses is of little significance here. What is interesting is that it cannot be disputed that human beings from the beginning of their history have recognised the 'aaah of things'.¹⁸ Recognition of the 'aaah of things' has nothing to do with the characterisation of the 'aaah'. The characterisation is time and culture specific. The logic of the characterisation is simple if not simplistic. It goes something like this: 'The essence of the thing which elicits the "aaah" must logically be greater, more significant, more powerful, more beautiful, more loving, more sagacious, more valuable, than anything we know which does not elicit the "aaah". Let us, therefore, attribute to "the aaah of things" the superlatives of that which we value'.

Human beings are communicating beings and in order to communicate the experience of the 'aaah of things', it is necessary to clothe the ungraspable, the ineffable, the unconceptualised, in language and concepts which have some immediate rational meaning. The 'aaah of things' the *ā-caryam*, is that element of the Being-ness of human being which reveals to each individual his or her reality as part of something other than the routine ordinariness of finite, physical, empirically provable existence.

Here then is an explanation of how we can make sense of such concepts as sacrilege and blasphemy in a secular multicultural state. If we think about sacrality as emanating from objects which have been designated as sacred by groups or persons who claim to have jurisdiction in such matters we can develop one of two possible ways of thinking about the universal sacred. We can adopt the position, which seems to be the one adopted by Rawls of believing that what is sacred (or moral) is entirely relative—peculiar to specific groups and therefore not capable of being universalised. If such a position is taken then the appropriate

response is surrender to the entirely relative, or the one taken by Rawls, of attempting to develop a universal concept which isolates the relativities and pursues a parallel path to universalities.

There is another way of looking at this issue. Sacredness or sacrality is not constituted by an object (a relic, an icon, a deity, a place or a person) in just the same way that love is not constituted by an object (the beloved person, thing or place). In a special sense it is not objective—it is not vested in objects.

Like love, sacrality or sacredness is a faculty—an orientation, an attitude. It is therefore subjective—the product of a subject. The subjectivity of the sacred does not mean, however, that the sacred or sacredness is necessarily and exclusively relative. Even though what is sacred for you is not necessarily sacred for me the ‘subjective sacred’ can be universalised because being a subject is a human universal.

When we recognise that the possession of the faculty for sacredness, like the possession of the faculty for love, is an indelible characteristic of what it means to be human we can respect the sacrality which others recognise without needing to accept the specifics of their sacred objects, or the idiosyncrasies of the system they adopt to identify the sacred.

By this process sacrality is transformed from a question of metaphysics into a question of virtue. The focus moves from the contestable arena of the nature of the sacred object to the less controversial domain of relationships. The question is no longer whether this or that object, person, place or practice is sacred. It is transformed into a question of what virtue is operating when subjects are engaging their faculty for recognition of the sacred.

What is a virtue? It has been argued that ‘a virtue of a thing or being is what constitutes its value, in other words, its distinctive excellence...’¹⁹ So virtue in human beings is both what makes them distinctively human and also what contributes to their excellence as human beings. A virtuous human being then might be one who has a disposition (given or acquired) to do what is good. Thinking of virtue in this way circumvents the relativist dilemma created by attempts to define the Good. There is no need to contemplate or know an Absolute Good or goodness-in-itself if the focus is on the subject rather than the object, or to put it another way if the focus is on the verb rather than the noun. Goodness ceases to be something which we must define and agree upon—it becomes something to be accomplished and virtuousness becomes transformed from a list of attributes to be acquired to a way of being—an endeavour to act for excellence in every situation.

What does this mean for the issue of sacrality and for the denial of sacrality—sacrilege? What is the virtue most applicable to this part of human-Beingness? If Schleiermacher and Mohanty are right and the sacred is

not something to be defined but rather to be apprehended—‘the aaah of things’—then the virtue associated with the sacred is the capacity for awe or an understanding that there is that which lies outside human control. Sacrilege then becomes a refusal to accept this understanding. The English word ‘reverence’ is the one which most nearly describes this ‘sacred-centred’ virtue. It is a word which has fallen into disuse probably because of overuse and misuse in a previous time. I am not arguing for a return to reverence by rote or formula, or to reverence without humour or criticism—that is a kind of inverted hubris—but I am arguing that to forget that one is only human or to deny the inevitable imperfection of being human is the attitude of mind which gives rise to the absence of the ‘sacred-centred virtue’ or sacrilege. Claiming to have absolute truths, claiming to know the mind of God either through scripture or experience, claiming to act on God’s behalf is to fall into this understanding of sacrilege. Sacrilege thus ceases to be an attack on particular beliefs or artefacts and becomes an assault on human beings living up to the best they know. It becomes, not a crime against God or gods, but rather a crime against humanity because as the capacity for awe or reverence increases so too does the capacity for respecting the work and life of all human beings even in, or especially in their inevitable imperfection.

As a consequence of this understanding, determining whether a particular act or utterance is blasphemous or sacrilegious requires the asking of two new questions. Firstly it is necessary to ask whether that which is being ‘attacked’ is an example of human beings living up to their potential for awe. If the answer is affirmative then it becomes clear that the object or behaviour or person being attacked is sacred. The second enquiry concerns the accused but the question is no less straightforward. Was the ‘attack’ made in reverence; that is was it made in an attempt to live up to the possibility of excellence (not perfection) in human-Beingness, or was it made from a position of lack of virtue? Obviously, even such straightforward questions carry their own complexities and another paper is necessary to even begin such a project, but if these two questions become the criteria for assessing whether blasphemy or sacrilege have occurred the vexing questions of cultural relativism disappear while sensitivity to those things which people hold sacred is preserved and enhanced.

ENDNOTES

¹ Rorty, Richard 1994, ‘Religion as a Conversation-Stopper’, *Common Knowledge*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 2.

² Audi, Robert 1989, ‘The Separation of Church and State and the Obligations of Citizenship’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 18, p. 296.

³ Rawls, John 1985, ‘Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 14, p. 310.

⁴ ‘Much of what we do is a question of changing the style of thinking’. Wittgenstein, Ludwig 1972, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, Cyril Barrett (ed.) Berkeley CA, University of California Press, p. 28.

⁵ Exodus 3:14.

- ⁶ Young, Robert 1979, *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible*, 8th. edn., Guildford, Lutterworth Press.
- ⁷ Heidegger, Martin 1996, *Being and Time*, Stambaugh, Joan (trans.), Albany, State University of New York, p. H12.
- ⁸ Quoted in O'Donohue, John 1997, *Anam ara*, London, Bantam Press, p.128.
- ⁹ Exodus 3:4.
- ¹⁰ This is so, even in the USA where church-going is more prevalent than in Australia. There, attendance at church can be seen to be much more about civic duty and pride than about genuine faith. See Bellah, Robert et al.1985, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- ¹¹ 'The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office of public trust under the Commonwealth.' Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (as amended 1986) section 116.
- ¹² Peters, F. E. 1967, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, New York, New York University Press, p. ix.
- ¹³ Schleiermacher, Friedrich 1958, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, John Oman (trans.), New York, Harper and Row, p. 35.
- ¹⁴ Otto, R. 'Introduction', in Schleiermacher, 1958, pp. xvii-ix.
- ¹⁵ Schleiermacher, 1958, pp. 37-9.
- ¹⁶ Mohanty, J. N. 2000, *The Self and Its Other: Philosophical Essays*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p. 42.
- ¹⁷ Otto speculates on the derivation of the Sanskrit word *āśārya*, claiming that it may be a compound of two words *as* and *carya*. *Carya* meaning that which is done or is to be done and *as* being the primitive sound used to express awe—the long protracted open vowel of wonder (ā oh, hā) combining with the sibilant, which in all languages is used to express or produce a terrified silence (cf. Hist! Sh! Sst!). An *āśārya* would not then be properly and primarily anything conceptual at all, not even a 'marvel', but simply 'that in the presence of which we must exclaim 'ās! ās!' 'If this interpretation is correct, we can detect in this word just the original 'shudder' of numinous awe in the first and earliest form in which it expressed itself, before any figure of speech, objective representation, or concept had been devised to explicate it...' Otto, R. 1950, *The Idea of the Holy, an inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*, John W. Harvey (trans.), London, Oxford University Press, p. 191.
- ¹⁸ Otto, R. 1950, pp. 191-2.
- ¹⁹ Comte-Sponville, André 2002, *A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, London, Random House, p. 2.