



The End of Magic

By Ariel Glucklich

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Throughout history, magic has been as widely and passionately practiced as religion. But while religion continues to flourish, magic stumbles towards extinction. What is magic? What does it do? Why do people believe in magic? Ariel Glucklich finds the answers to these questions in the streets of Banaras, India's most sacred city, where hundreds of magicians still practice ancient traditions, treating thousands of Hindu and Muslim patients of every caste and sect. Through study and interpretation of the Banarsi magical rites and those who partake in them, the author presents fascinating living examples of magical practice, and contrasts his findings with the major theories that have explained (or explained away) magic over the last century. These theories, he argues, ignore an essential sensory phenomenon which he calls "magical experience": an extraordinary, though perfectly natural, state of awareness through which magicians and their clients perceive the effects of magic rituals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The reader experiences...a sensible and engaging argument, taking off from a series of humanly gripping anecdotes, that actually confronts the sorts of questions that ordinary rational and not-so-rational people have about magic. This book should be of great value in undergraduate courses on religion, anthropology, and popular culture."--Wendy Doniger, *University of Chicago*

"Like a bodhisattva, Glucklich succeeds in 'tricking' his reader into enlightenment, in this case into opening young minds to cutting edge social sciences theory and methodology as well as to a number of fundamental questions that ritual, belief, and yes, magic, pose for the fields of philosophy and religious studies."--David G. White, *University of Virginia*

About the Author

Ariel Glucklich is Assistant Professor at Pomona College and Lecturer at the Hebrew University to which he received a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship.

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