



The End of Magic

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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