Ancient Indian Magic And Folklore: An Introduction

By Margaret Stutley

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2001. Hardcover. Condition: New. Reprint. 203pp. Margaret Stutley is the author, with her husband, of A Dictionary of Hinduism, an indispensable reference work based on many years of research. In the present volume she draws on her study of religious cults and folklore to provide an introduction to the ancient magic and folklore of India. But the main source is the Atharvaveda, compiled about 1400 BC and containing much earlier lore, some of it originating in Sumeria, Babylonia, Iran and ancient Egypt. The book demonstrates that there are many parallels between Indian and European folklore, since both Europeans and the north-western Indian peoples are of Caucasian origin. The wearing of lucky charms, talismans and amulets is common to both, as well as the belief in lucky and unlucky days, birds and animals, the fear of curses and of the evil eye—still common in Africa, the Mediterranean countries and the east. Another common element is the fear of demonic possession, which has increased so much in the west that in 1972 the Bishop of Exeter set up a commission to devise the ritual for the exorcizing of evil spirits from people and haunted places....

Reviews

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This brief introductory study of ancient Indian magic and folklore is based mainly on the Atharvaveda (compiled c. 1400 BC). During man's existence he finds himself confronted by phenomena, often mysterious, which he strives to explain by classifying the relationships between living beings and the external world into two main classes - the ordinary and the mysterious or magical. In the present volume she draws on her study of religious cults and folklore to provide an introduction to the ancient magic and folklore of India. But the main source is the Atharvaveda, compiled about 1400 BC and containing much earlier lore, some of it originating in Sumeria, Babylonia, Iran and ancient Egypt. It demonstrates that there are many parallels between Indian and European folklore. Reprint of classic, illustrated. The book demonstrates that there are many parallels between Indian and European folklore. Reprint of classic, illustrated. The book demonstrates that there are many parallels between Indian and European folklore.
The folklore of India compasses the folklore of the nation of India and the Indian subcontinent. India is an ethnically and religiously diverse country. Given this diversity, it is difficult to generalize widely about the folklore of India as a unit. Although India is a Hindu-majority country, with more than three-fourths of the population identifying themselves as Hindus, there is no single, unified, and all-pervading concept of identity present in it. This led some locals to believe the children were actually taken by a cult of black magic practitioners who were using them as human sacrifices to the Goddess Kali. To this day, the case remains a mystery. Coming in at number 7 we have The Milk Miracle.