



# Nostalgia for Eternity

## Journeys in Religion, History and Myth on the Indian Subcontinent

Leonid Plotkin

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- A unique treasure-trove for travelers, scholars and students of Indian religions, visually exciting and ethnographically insightful as well as poetic and reflective
- The author has succeeded admirably in conveying the beauty, the brilliance, and the mystery of the sadhus and the monks, the fakirs, and the holy men and women of India in one aesthetic firework

The culmination of five years' travel with Indian pilgrims, **Nostalgia for Eternity** takes the reader into the depths of millennia-old spiritual and mystic traditions. It is a stunning visual poem about the timeless human search for transcendence and ultimate truth. Translated literally from the Greek, 'nostalgia' means homesickness; spiritually, it is the universal longing for existential peace and completeness – for a final resolution of all life's conflicts and contradictions. 'The truth is one,' taught India's ancient gurus, 'the sages call it by many names.' With breadth and insight unmatched by any other publication, **Nostalgia for Eternity** illustrates the worlds of pilgrims seeking that transcendent truth and illuminates the different paths that they travel. Through evocative, complex images we enter the secretive realm of Tantric worshippers of the Mother Goddess; and we walk with Sufi pilgrims across the deserts of Rajasthan. Meditative, richly layered photographs reveal the inner world of Bengali Bauls – mystics who worship the human being; and of Sidis – descendants of African saints whose religion merges African ancestor worship with Sufism. Richly annotated text reveals to the reader the deeper symbolic and mythological significance of the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and syncretic practices explored in the book.

Born in 1972 in the USSR, **Leonid Plotkin** grew up in America, studied law in Boston and Oxford, and then practised law in New York City. He has worked as a freelance documentary photographer since 2007, and his work has appeared in various international publications including National Geographic, National Geographic Traveler, the Guardian, and the Economist. Leonid spends most of his time out in the world but calls New York City home. Long before he had the opportunity to set out on the road, Leonid was interested in the world and travel - in history, mythology, and religion. At the age of twenty he began traveling the ancient roads of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, photographing what has endured since before the beginning. Fascinated by the historical and cultural continuity of life on the Indian peninsula during his initial trip to the subcontinent in the mid 1990s, Leonid returned frequently and, over two decades, stayed for more than five years to study and photograph India's religious traditions. His photographic work constitutes a meditative contemplation of the human yearning for transcendence, and his photographs evoke the timeless intensity of man's attempts to approach the eternal.