



Banaras
Of Gods, Humans and Stories
Text by Nilosree Biswas
Photographs by Irfan Nabi

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- An experience of a lifetime—of traveling through the ghats and lanes of Banaras, the sacred city, where millions of believers pause to encounter the divine—captured in the pages of a book
- Through Nabi's visuals of the waterfront, of the Ganges, the eye meets a world that is frantic of the mundane and magnum opus, a scene of both calm and chaos amalgamated
- A unique journey from the pages of history to the contemporary times, this is a narrative composed with meticulous research and beautiful illustrations
- Narrated in a story-telling manner, this book will appeal to the common reader and the scholar alike

Banaras is an enigma with a carefully crafted antiquity that runs deep into its veins. It is an anagram hard to decipher. In more tangible terms, going beyond the metaphorical, **Banaras** is about all its elements and many sights and sounds. It is about the visible thousands, the Banarasis (the dwellers), the pilgrims, the tourists, the patrons, the kings, the emperors, and the nameless.

Banaras is the perceived 'sacred' by the believer, reflected in its past created and recreated, finally standing ground in the contemporary or the lived-in, in particular. A visit to Banaras leaves you with vivid memories or recall of a particular moment which resides in one's senses long after the journey.

This book is about the author's sensing of Banaras, a quest to comprehend all of the above and a catalyst to experience more.

Nilosree Biswas is an author, filmmaker who was trained in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and later in cinema. Her interests include, history, cultural studies of pre modern, colonial South Asia and early Hindi cinema. Her works both film and writing have appeared in various print media, screened worldwide including at Cannes Film Festival. *Broken Memory*, *Shining Dust*, her prominent documentary had been archived by Oscar Library, acquired by Harvard University, US and School of Oriental, African Studies (SOAS), UK among many. The earlier book, which she co-wrote with Irfan Nabi, *Alluring Kashmir: The Inner Spirit*, has found home in Library of Congress and New York Public Library.

Irfan Nabi photographs often and writes intermittently; his images have been part of major exhibitions in Amsterdam, Washington, Kolkata and New Delhi among many other cities around the globe. He has shot and traveled solo across various terrains. Indulgence in food and music is what keeps him going in his spare time. A book on Ladakh is work in progress. Culturally nuanced photo elements are what his lens seek. In his earlier years he studied in the prestigious Irish Catholic Burn Hall School in Kashmir and later trained in medicine.