

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Alia Hanna Habib

212-420-5878

alia.habib@hmhpub.com

“I love Minal Hajratwala’s book **LEAVING INDIA**. It is what I imagine India itself to be like: **incomparable**, sprawling, rich, **surprising**, very old and **wise** and forever capable of recreating itself, no matter where pieces of it land.”

— Alice Walker

“Minal Hajratwala's **LEAVING INDIA** is a **fascinating** history that kept me up late into the night—and I suspect it will do the same for most readers. Filled with amazing and **compelling** family stories, it will strike a chord in anyone whose people have come from elsewhere--and today, in America, that's most of us! I am filled with admiration at Minal's honesty and the careful beauty of her language. I learned so much, through the story of this one family, about the **tragedies and triumphs** of the Indian diaspora.”

— Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

“Told with the probing detail of a reporter, the fluid voice of a poet and the **inspired** vision of a young woman who walks in many worlds, Hajratwala’s story offers an **engaging** account of what may be one of the fastest-growing diasporas in the world.”

— *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

## **LEAVING INDIA**

**My Family’s Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents**

*Minal Hajratwala*

In her groundbreaking debut, Minal Hajratwala mixes history, memoir, and reportage to explore the questions facing not only her own Indian family but that of every immigrant: Where did we come from? Why did we leave? What did we give up and gain in the process?

**LEAVING INDIA: My Family's Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents**

(March 18, 2009, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) is the inspiring multigenerational saga of one unforgettable family. Beginning with her great-grandparents, Hajratwala follows her ancestors through the twentieth century to explain how they came to migrate across five continents and nine countries. As Hajratwala delves into the relationship between personal choice and great historical forces — British colonialism, apartheid, Gandhi's Salt March, and American immigration policy — that helped to shape her family's experiences, she brings to light for the first time the breadth and depth of the epic story of the Indian diaspora.

Over seven years in the writing — and a century in the making — **LEAVING INDIA** is an unprecedented look at one of the twentieth century's most important and least discussed movements of people. A luminous narrative by a child of immigrants, the book offers a deeply intimate exploration of what it means to call more than one part of the world home.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Minal Hajratwala is a writer, performer, poet, and queer activist based in San Francisco, where she was born before being whisked off to be raised in new Zealand and suburban Michigan. She spent seven years researching and writing **LEAVING INDIA**, traveling the world to interview more than seventy-five members of her extended family. As a journalist, she worked at the *San Jose Mercury News* for eight years and was a National Arts Journalism Program fellow at Columbia University's Graduate School of journalism. She is a graduate of Stanford University.

**LEAVING INDIA: My Family's Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents**

\$26.00 ISBN 978-0-618-25129-2 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Publicity Manager Alia Hanna Habib, (212) 420-5878, alia\_habib@hmhpub.com