

True Prosperity Lies in Islam, Not in Pagan Celebrations

News:

LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday finalised all preparations for the three-day Basant festival to be held in Lahore from Feb 6 to 8, urging people to celebrate it in a safe manner. (Dawn)

Comment:

Basant is a well-known festival in Punjab, some link it to a history of a simple kite flying fun activity when the weather changes from the chilly cold to a pleasant spring air, others dig deeper and reach the origin of the festival linking it to a celebration for Hindu goddess Saraswati. The Punjab Government under the Chief Minister Mariam Nawaz has not only lifted the ban from this festival after 20 long years but is also giving it support and a State level platform by mobilising the whole Government machinery to prove it a success. Before we get into the history of the festival, we will see why it was banned in Punjab in the first place. Basant had begun to cause harm not only to the ones who practised it, like electrocutions near power lines and celebratory gunfire, but also saw to the death of many innocent motorcyclists, even young children one moment sitting on bikes with their fathers and next slaughtered by a glass/metal coated kite string. Reviving this pagan practice for pleasure is another example of the Government's thoughtless attempts to prove the dead system alive by decorating its corpse. The stench of the rot can not be hidden. This technique is centuries old and has been used as a strategy by politicians to control oblivious peoples to this day, you give people cricket, movies and concerts, and give some grants and empty promises and then do whatever you want. In 58 CE, the Emperor of Rome sent a ship loaded with gold to Egypt to bring sand to fill the Colosseum where the gladiator games are held. Like the fight between slaves, or the fight between humans and predators. While these ships were at sea, protests started because Rome was going through a great famine. There was not a single grain of wheat in the country, people uprooted the streets and destroyed the city. When the ships arrived in Egypt, the chief officer in charge of the convoy knew what had happened, the Roman ruler of Egypt asked him what he had to do, would he buy wheat with money to save Rome or do what Caesar Nero ordered and go back with sand. The governor was surprised by the question. Of course, he needs to get back to Caesar as soon as possible, being loaded with all the SAND he can. The scary thing is that when he returned with the sand and the games started, the people calmed down and the revolution ended.

The Government claims it to be an attempt towards cultural restoration bringing back a vibrant tradition, connecting people with their heritage, forgetting that vibrance now can only be felt by the elite, while the rest of the city suffers in silence. The Government also claims that this will cause economic stimulation, creating jobs for thousands, particularly in the kite-making industry, and providing a substantial boost

to local tourism and businesses. Showing the Government's desperation and reliance on short lived solutions like this, that are not even worth calling a solution. According to the new 2025 World Bank's threshold, Pakistan's poverty rate has risen to 44.7%, although experts caution that this new figure does not portray the current realities due to reliance on outdated data from the 2018-19 household income survey. These statistics show that extreme poverty in Pakistan has risen to 16.9% from 4.9%. In this hard time where people are finding it difficult to feed their children, the Government is organising for them to celebrate a festival which other notables are busy proving to be an important event of our culture and heritage.

Muslims of Punjab and the rest of the world need to retrace their roots back to Islam. Diversions and distractions are always generated by the enemies of Allah and must be openly rejected by the slaves of Allah. We saw the celebration of Christmas on a State level and we know that Allah and His Messenger have forbidden us from imitating kuffar. In fact we are expected to challenge and reject it.

When Muslims in Makkah migrated to Madinah they left behind all their pagan practices and did not embrace any of the practices of the people of Madinah. That was the birth of a true Islamic State which then flourished and spread throughout the world even though the enemies of Allah kept trying and it took them more than 1300 years to damage and destroy it. Pakistan is a country that was created in the name of Islam and the people of the Subcontinent made hijrah thinking to be following the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his Sahabah (ra), hoping to enter "the land of the pure". From its inception to the present day, the leaders and rulers of Pakistan have consistently acted in the interests of their Western masters implementing non-Islamic laws and normalizing Western, pleasure-driven social practices that erode Islamic values.

Rasool Allah (saw) made it clear over 1,400 years ago which festivals are ordained for Muslims, and no passage of time can alter what has been decreed by Allah and His Messenger. **«بِأَبَا بَكْرٍ إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عِيدًا وَهَذَا عِيدُنَا»** "O Abu Bakr, every people has its festival and this is our festival." (Sunan Ibn Majah). Hassan said that **«مَا ابْدَعَ قَوْمٌ بِدُعْيَةٍ فِي دِينِهِمْ إِلَّا نَزَعَ اللَّهُ مِنْ سُنْنَتِهِمْ مِثْلًا ثُمَّ لَا يُعِدُّهَا إِلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ»** "No people had produced an innovation in their religion without God removing an equivalent amount from their sunnah, then not restoring it to them till the Day of Resurrection." (Darimi transmitted it. Mishkat al-Masabih 188)

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