**Channer Pir:The Great Saint of Cholistan**

**The mound where he vanished became a site of pilgrimage, attracting devotees seeking solace and blessings.**

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Nestled amidst the sweep­ing sands of the Cho­listan desert lies a sacred shrine that has stood as a beacon of spirituality for centuries: the shrine of Channer Pir. This revered site, re­vered by both Hindus and Muslims, serves as a testament to the rich cultural heritage and spiritual fervor of the re­gion. Every year, pilgrims from far and wide embark on a journey of faith to participate in the Channer Pir Urs and Mela, a celebration that embodies the essence of tradition, customs, and religious devotion.

The legend of Channer Pir trac­es back to a time when the desert was ruled by kings and queens, and the land was steeped in mystique and magic. According to folklore, Channer Pir, whose name translates to “moonlight,” was born to a childless royal cou­ple, their prayers answered by the birth of a radiant son. Howev­er, fate had other plans for Chan­ner, as he embraced a different faith, leading to his exile into the desert sands. The mound where he vanished became a site of pil­grimage, attracting devotees seeking solace and blessings.

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The Channer Pir Urs and Mela, spanning seven consecutive Thursdays, serve as a vibrant celebration of the region’s cul­tural heritage and spiritual lega­cy. As pilgrims traverse the des­ert landscape on camel backs, the rhythmic sounds of bells echo through the air, signaling their arrival at the sacred shrine. The Mela reaches its zenith by the fifth week, with festivities en­veloping the desert in a kaleido­scope of colors, music, and joy.

At the heart of the Channer Pir Urs and Mela lies the majes­tic Derawar Fort, a testament to the region’s architectural prow­ess and historical significance. Built by the Abbasi Nawabs, the fort’s towering bastions stand as a symbol of strength and resil­ience, overlooking the desert ex­panse with a timeless grace. The fort’s construction, using bricks transported from the nearby town of Uch Sharif, showcases the ingenuity and craftsmanship of the region’s artisans.

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The cultural richness of Cho­listan is palpable at every turn, from the intricate embroidery of local textiles to the soul-stirring melodies of traditional music. As visitors wander through the bus­tling bazaars, they are greeted by a dazzling array of handicrafts, each a testament to the region’s artistic heritage. The Derawar Fort, surrounded by lush green­ery and vibrant orchards, serves as a poignant reminder of the re­gion’s lush past and promising future.

Despite the desert’s harsh em­brace, the spirit of Channer Pir endures, offering solace and hope to the faithful. Attempts to construct a mausoleum at his sa­cred mound have been thwarted by mysterious forces, leaving the site untouched and revered by locals for centuries. The nearby tree, adorned with colorful strips of cloth carrying the wishes of devotees, stands as a silent tes­tament to the enduring bond be­tween man and the divine.

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In the words of Greek historian Ctesias, the land of Channer Pir is steeped in celestial mystique, its festivals lasting for 35 days, a testament to the enduring faith of its people. As pilgrims flock to the shrine, drawn by the prom­ise of divine blessings and mira­cles, they become part of a time­less tradition that transcends the boundaries of time and space.

In conclusion, the Channer Pir Urs and Mela offer a glimpse into the soul of Cholistan, a land where tradition and spiritual­ity intertwine to create a tap­estry of unparalleled beauty and depth. As the sands of time shift and the desert winds whis­per ancient secrets, the legacy of Channer Pir lives on, a tes­tament to the enduring pow­er of faith and the resilience of the human spirit. This religious cum cultural festivity stretch­es to seven weeks duration and usually the fifth week is at peak and a local holiday is always an­nounced on same Thursday in Bahawalpur in his respect and recognition of the great Saint of desert Cholistan.

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