

# Pound-foolish on Basant penny-wise on Eid

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A SPIRIT of festivity and fun has dominated the city scene for quite sometime. Starting from events marking the advent of the New Year to Basant to Jashn-i-Baharaan, anything and everything seems to be symbolic of revelry and jubilation.

Come Eidul Azha and we are suddenly all complaints, reminded of our indigence. The prices of the sacrificial animals, a matter of a few thousand, appear to become a cause of concern for those who spend an unaccountable amount on observing self-propagated festivities for months on end. This stark disparity in our approach towards the two types of expenses springs from the varying attitudes that tends our disposition. While one attitude stems from self-indulgent instincts that thrive on leisure, the other reflects a lack of the spirit of sacrifice. Where hundreds of thousands are spent on ostentatious merriment that add to our pleasure and the deprivation of millions, sparing a couple of thousands on an observance that obligates selfless offering and sharing with the needy appears demanding to those used to working for their own needs.

It's the involvement of big budgets, the ones usually generated by translational culture, that have turned some of our festivals into flashy affairs, and us into a hedonistic lot. "It is not out of the corporations' loyalty towards indigenous cultures, but their motivation to maximize profits and popularity and create a capitalist cultures that such involvements or projects are undertaken", observes an economist. "It is a phenomenon that social scientists refer to as 'conspiracy of courtesy,' a Third World happening in which international business chains pander to the ambition and enterprise of the small but influential elite of the developing countries, creating isolated islands of wealth and revelry, among unfathomable seas of penury. Hardly would these so-called public relations and culture promotion attempts of the organizations ever involve the masses or invest in avenues that would benefit the poor majority." They would only invest for the good of their target market segment or the opinion leaders.

both of which can help further their sales motives.

The capitalist elite, already influenced by the effects of globalization and neo-colonialism, welcomes such programmes with open arms. Their interest in the celebrations, whether they are held to herald spring or a sporting festival, goes no further than the entertainment part of the occasion. While all of us dress up and head for the Walled City on Basant eve, few would really be interested in knowing that part of the world or its problems. While they love to throng the amazing ethnic havelis where western style bashes have been arranged to cater to their taste, they would never actually want to be a part of it all. While celebrating spring and verdure, our awareness level about preserving the environment would not go any higher, and this is not even ever the aim of corporations undertaking the campaigns. Spring festivals would leave the parks hosting the events littered and soiled, and we would continue to dump garbage heaps in our streets. If at all the corporations take to putting a banner or two that would carry an awareness message, it would be so badly designed and worded that it would fail to make an impact. A multinational soft drink company that spends millions on painting the city with its beautiful, receiver-oriented banners about the spring festival disappoints you by displaying poorly designed and pathetically worded message on The Mall against drug abuse.

For all the spring festivity, we would still be as unaware of how we need to protect the greenery around us and maintain our city by keeping it clean. Eidul Azha will still leave its impressions in the form of offal and remains of the sacrificial animals, defacing the city face for days. Torn and tattered skeletons of what were once beautiful kites, would continue to hang from poles and electrical cables for months to come, reminding us of how bad we are at wrapping up the aftermath of events. The already overflowing sewers of southern Lahore would continue to be blocked with kite paper and food remnants for God knows how long. Would those respon-

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