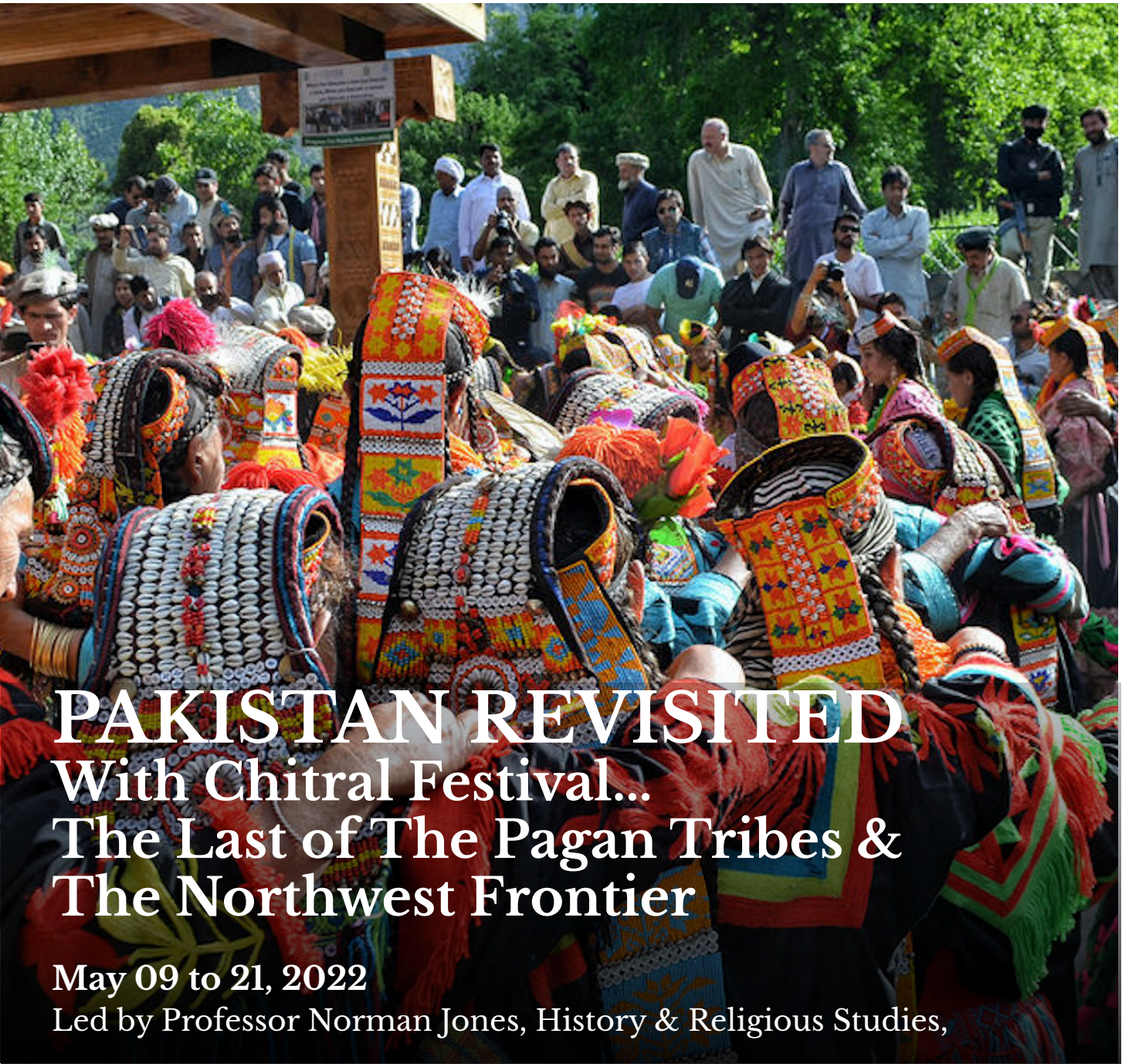


DISCOVER THE WONDERS  
**SPIEKERMANN**  
TRAVEL  SERVICE



**PAKISTAN REVISITED**  
With Chitral Festival...  
The Last of The Pagan Tribes &  
The Northwest Frontier

May 09 to 21, 2022

Led by Professor Norman Jones, History & Religious Studies,

Can be combined with our South Pakistan tour (May 01 to 09, 2022)  
AND our Afghanistan tour (May 21 to June 01, 2022)

Pakistan, a country located on the western side of the Indo-Gangetic Plains, has a rich, diverse terrain consisting of high mountain ranges, plateaus, and the Indus River Plain. Its long history includes a section of the ancient Silk Road (Karakoram Highway) that runs through the country over the famous Khyber Pass. There are many fascinating ancient archaeological and UNESCO World Heritage sites waiting to be discovered. On this amazing adventure, you will visit mountain villages to meet the hardy souls that live in a stunningly beautiful landscape under harsh conditions. On this amazing journey along the Northwest Frontier you will drive through mesmerizing natural scenery, to the ancient kingdom of Chitral. Here we will attend the annual celebrations of the Kalash tribe before heading on over the Shandur Pass to one of the most spectacular drives on earth. Your visit to Swat Valley with its Buddhist legacy and amazing scenery as well as Peshawar, one of those fabled ancient cities will fascinate you. On your way back to Islamabad, you will have the perfect culmination of the tour visiting the Buddhist University town of Taxila.

**Ihab Zaki**

Managing Director, Spiekermann Travel

### Monday, May 09 Arrive in Islamabad



Upon arrival in Islamabad (depending on your arrival time), you'll be met and transferred to Pearl Continental Hotel for check-in. After a short rest, we'll head out on a city tour beginning with a visit to **Lok Virsa Museum** to learn about the history and the culture of Pakistan. We'll drive past the city's modern streets and buildings to **Faisal Mosque**, a contemporary mosque built in the shape of a Bedouin tent. This mosque is the largest in Pakistan and does not have a dome, a typical feature of an Islamic mosque. Afterwards, we'll head to visit the **Shakarparian Gardens** for a panoramic view of Islamabad, and then we'll continue on to **Pir Sohawa** to enjoy dinner and scenic views at the Monal Restaurant. Return to the hotel for your overnight. **(D)**

### Tuesday May 10 Islamabad - Peshawar



We'll begin our day with a morning drive to **Peshawar**, capital of Khaibar Pakhtoon Khwa (KPK), stopping on-route to visit **Taxila**, one of the subcontinent's most important archaeological treasures. You'll visit the **Taxila National Museum**, where you will see some of the best Gandharan art excavated from this region, as well as, a detailed collection of stone, terra-cotta, metals, and precious stone dating back to the 6th century B.C. Drive to **Peshawar** (the center of Gandharan civilization) along Grand Trunk Road, one of Asia's oldest and longest roads. This ancient road, linking India and Central Asia for centuries, made it possible for traders to buy and sell their goods and invaders to conquer lands. You can still see traces of this ancient trade in the fortresses and ancient caravanserais (roadside inns). One of these structures is the **Attock Fort**, built by Emperor Akbar in the 1580's and dominating the Indus Gorge. Due to its strategic location, the Pakistan Army currently occupies it and all invaders coming from the north have to stop as they prepare to cross the Indus. **Sher Shah Suri's Caravanserai** can be found below the fort. Upon arrival in Peshawar, transfer to **Pearl Continental Hotel** for check in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Wednesday, May 11 Peshawar



We'll have a full day tour of Peshawar, which has traditionally been linked to its frontier location, close to the historic Khyber Pass. Today, it is large, rapidly developing and growing city. The fortified stronghold of **Bala Hissar**, the most imposing landmark in the city, was built in the early 16th century by Mughal Emperor Babar. It was a royal residence for the Afghan Durrani Dynasty until it was captured and damaged in 1834. The fort was then rebuilt with mud by the Sikhs and further preserved with mud by the British. It is currently occupied by the Frontier Corps and currently closed to the public, but there is a small museum and excellent views

of the city from the ramparts. Another interesting part of the Old City is **Namak Mandi**, famous for its street food and very interesting Tikka restaurants, as well as, the **Khayber Bazaar**, selling electric goods, and perhaps the most fascinating, **Qissa Khawani Bazaar**, known as the "street of storytellers". **Chowk Yadgar** lies at the heart of the Old City. Originally a memorial to Colonel C. Hasting, it was replaced by a plaza and memorial to the Indo-Pak war of 1965. **Androon-shehar Bazaar**, meaning "inner city", houses the silver and goldsmiths selling a wide range of ethnic, antique, and modern jewelry. Also, we'll visit the 17th century **Mohbat Khan Mosque**, an iconic site in Peshawar with a white marble façade. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Thursday, May 12 Peshawar - Swat Valley



After breakfast, we'll drive to **Swat Valley** via **Mardan**, the second-largest city of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, where we'll visit the ancient **Takht-i-Bahi** "Throne of the Water Spring", the archaeological site of an ancient, well-preserved Buddhist Monastery. This spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site was founded during the 1st century A.D. Not far from Mardan is the historic village of **Shahbaz Garhi**. At an altitude of 964 feet, this lovely village is surrounded by mountains and has a river that runs right through the village. We'll see the historic 3rd century **Stones of Ashoka**, ancient rock inscriptions written in Kharosthi script, as well as, the ancient site of **Mekha Sanda**. We'll continue on over the **Malakand Pass** to the Swat Valley and transfer to **Swat Serena hotel** for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Friday, May 13 Swat - Bamboret



We'll start the day by passing through the Lower Swat Valley, across the Swat River to the Dir District and then continue through Lawari Tunnel. We'll drive to **Ghahrat Gol** (3,118 meters) and through Winston Churchill Picket at Chakdara. We'll then head to Chitral via Dir, through Lawari tunnel into Chitral Valley. This is the residence of a family, which ruled a small principality before Chitral Valley was integrated into Pakistan. The rocky outcrop on which the residence is built has the **Chitral River** swirling below. Relax at the end of this day's drive in the lovely gardens. Chitral is a fascinating place offering the sheer natural beauty of the Hindu Kush Mountain range, which is dominated by Tirich Mir Mountain (25,282 feet). It is home to the Chitrali people who speak the Indo-European Khowar language, as well as, the semi-nomadic Wakhi-speaking people, the friendliest and interesting people in the Kalash Valley. In upper Chitral, there are Ismaili Muslims, and similar to the Hunza, they are very open, peaceful, and friendly people. Historically, Chitral has been an independent princely state. The pagan tribes of Kalash Valley worship a pantheon of gods and goddesses and hold exuberant festivals inspired by the seasons and the farming year. Continue to **Bamboret**, the largest of the three valleys in the Kalash

Valley, to participate in the Kalash spring festival - **Chilam Joshi**. During this colorful event that lasts for several days you'll see people dancing, drinking wine, and celebrating the arrival of spring. This is also when young couples announce their new partners. Transfer to a *Family Guesthouse in Bamboret* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Saturday, May 14 Bamboret



We'll spend the day witnessing more of the Chilam Joshi Festival. Later in the day, we'll visit the local **Ethnographic Museum**, built to resemble a traditional Kalash home using materials of wood, rock, and mud, and explore the village of **Bamboret**, located in the main valley of Kalash. Return to *the family guest house* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Sunday, May 15 Bamboret to Chitral



Today you'll return to Chitral and visit the **Chitral Bazaar** and **Chitral Fort**, situated on the banks of the Chitral River. The fort has a commanding position on the river and is believed to have been built by Raja Nadir Shah in the 14th Century. Afterwards, transfer to the Hindu Kush Heights Hotel or similar for check-in, have some rest and enjoy lunch. This afternoon, we'll head to visit the **Chitral Museum**, built to preserve Chitral's rich cultural heritage. The museum has a display of cultural items dating back to as early as the 12th century such as costumes, jewelry, weapons such as guns, daggers, and swords, musical instruments, and household objects. There is also an **archaeological gallery** containing ancient pieces from the Kalash valley such as pottery, arrow heads, and jewelry. Return to the hotel, enjoy the evening and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Monday, May 16 Chitral - Mastuj



After breakfast, we'll drive to **Mastuj**, was once the seat of power of the independent Kushwaqt principality which in its heydays reached across into the Gilgit River valley. **Mastuj fort**, similar in the style in the one in Chitral town, is still occupied by Colonel Khushwat ul Mulk, the son of Shuja ul Mulk who was made Mehtar of Chitral by the British in 1895, following the siege of Chitral fort. The setting is beautiful, with the village spread out across a large alluvial fan. Bubbling streams and irrigation channels run through golden fields of wheat and barley lined with towering poplar trees, shimmering in the sun and wind, while in village apricot trees are scattered all around. Transfer to PTDC / *Mastuj castle hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Tuesday, May 17 Mastuj - Phandar



After an early breakfast, we'll drive to **Shandur Pass** for a short walk then we'll continue via scenic Ghizar Valley to Phandar an important destination on the route to Shandur, which is considered to be the world's highest polo ground. Transfer to PTDC *Phandar hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Wednesday, May 18 Phandar - Gilgit



We'll drive in the morning to explore the beautiful **Phandar Lake** and later we'll drive to **Gupis**, an important town of Ghizer, which is one of the ten districts of the Gilgit-Baltistan Region

of Pakistan. After lunch, we'll continue to **Gilgit** and transfer to *Serena Gilgit hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Thursday, May 19 Gilgit - Islamabad



Transfer to the airport for your flight to Islamabad. Upon arrival, you'll be met and transferred to *Pearl Continental Hotel* for check-in and time to freshen up. In the afternoon, we'll explore the city of **Rawalpindi**, commonly known as "Pindi". Islamabad's sister city, with which it shares strong social and economic links, Pindi is a bustling town with a strong colonial influence and one of the only remaining old Jewish **Synagogues**. Return to the hotel for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Friday, May 20 Islamabad

Have a free day at leisure and overnight at the hotel. **(B,L,D)**

### Saturday, May 21 Islamabad - USA



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to USA. **(B)**

**NOTE: If our May 19 flight to Islamabad is canceled, the itinerary for May 19, 20 and 21 will change as follows:**

### Thursday, May 19 Gilgit - Besham



After breakfast, drive for 10 hours to **Besham** and transfer to *PTDC Motel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Friday, May 20 Besham - Islamabad



After breakfast, drive for 7 hours to Islamabad through the lush green Valleys and towns of the lower Himalaya. At **Mansehra**, view King Ashoka's edicts carved on a roadside rock. Then drive through Abbotabad, the town where Osama Bin Laden was captured. Upon arrival in Islamabad, transfer to *Pearl Continental Hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Saturday, May 21 Islamabad - USA OR Afghanistan



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to USA or continue your adventure to Afghanistan. **(B)**

***"We (STS) reserve the right to replace lecturers, change hotels or the order of activities if/as needed. The program is also subject to changes based on the schedule of internal flights within the country".***

***"We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed meet the needs of our clients".***

### **Suggested Air and Post Tour Extensions:**

Using Qatar Airways or Emirates Airline with connecting flights through Doha or Dubai for a possible stopover at either of these amazing cities is ideal. Both cities feature world renowned museums, stunning architecture, a delectable cuisine, and exceptional accommodations. The other air option is Turkish Airlines via Istanbul. If you need help, please contact us.



**About your Lecturer...** *Professor Norman Jones*, is Professor of History and Religious Studies, as well as, Director of General Education and Curricular Integration, at Utah State University. Holding a doctorate from Cambridge University, he specializes in the interplay of religion and culture, especially on the cultural fault lines where religions mingle and identities are shaped through religious allegiances. A specialist in the history of Christianity, his publications focus on the early modern world. A popular lecturer, his teaching spans ancient and early modern history. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, Oxford University, the University of Geneva and Cambridge University, as well as the Huntington Library and the Folger Library. He is a Fulbright Special Programs consultant to universities in Hong Kong. He delights in the cultural colorfulness and religious fervor of Ethiopia, a nation that makes you feel time has stopped there since the times of Christ.

**Tour Cost (Land Only): \$7,495.00**

*per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$795.00**

Price based on group size minimum of 4 participants and maximum of 14 participants

**Trip Grade: III**

**Lodging Level: \*\*\_\*\*\*\***

**Tour includes:**

- Transfers - airport/hotel/airport.
- Accommodation at hotels mentioned or similar.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner)
- Water on the bus on touring days.
- Transportation by minibus with A/C.
- Entrance fees to all sites and museums.
- English-speaking guides.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached)
- A/C 4x4 vehicles on part of the tour in the mountains.

**Tour does not include:**

- International airfare (**Approx. \$1,000 from NYC**).
- Pakistan Visa - obtained online (**Currently \$60.00 - subject to change**).
- Beverages with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, phone calls, emails, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled flights/tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**).

**Trip Grade:**

**III Moderately Rigorous** - Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, and high elevations (5,000-16,000 ft). Comfortable but busy schedule, and some very long rides.

**Lodging Level:**

**\*\*\_\*\*\*\* Basic to Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service and comfort level acceptable to western standards (2 or 4 stars in some small cities and a few 5 stars-luxury properties in the larger cities.)

**Special Trip Remarks:**

Anyone joining this trip must understand that in many places, the tourist infrastructure (roads, restaurants and bathrooms) is very primitive. Some days are long and hard, and the level of services will not match those offered in most touristic locations. The hotels and lodges are comfortable but some lack the luxuries provided in the West. Security checkpoints can be annoying, but travelers must be flexible and patient. Many roads are in a bad state of repair and journeys can be long and tiring. You need to be flexible and accepting any necessary changes. By signing up for this tour, you acknowledge your complete understanding and acceptance of all terms and conditions and assert that you are in good physical and mental health and that you will maintain an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a tolerant and patient spirit during all aspects of the tour. Recommended departure date from USA is May 7th, 2022 in order to arrive early morning May 9th. The night of May 8th is included to allow immediate check-in if arrival is the first hours on May 9th.

