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Āyāt Environmental Welfare Society



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Preface

In an era marked by environmental crises, humanity stands at a crossroads. The relationship between humans and the natural world is no longer harmonious but strained by climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and unsustainable resource consumption. Our materialistic approach has led to a rapid depletion of natural resources, causing irreversible damage to ecosystems. Melting ice caps, vanishing forests, water scarcity, and rising global temperatures serve as stark reminders of the urgency to act.

COSMOS: Echoes of Nature emerges as a platform dedicated to exploring, understanding, and addressing these challenges. We believe that nature is not merely a resource for human exploitation but a living entity with its own intrinsic rights. Rooted in both scientific and philosophical perspectives, *COSMOS* welcomes diverse voices—from environmentalists and scientists to artists and scholars—who seek to raise awareness, propose solutions, and inspire change.

Our magazine publishes essays, interviews, book reviews, reports, videos, and artwork that critically engage with climate change, environmental policies, sustainable technologies, and cultural perspectives on nature. While we acknowledge the spiritual and religious dimensions of environmental ethics, *COSMOS* is a multidisciplinary platform open to all perspectives that contribute to discourse on the future of our planet.

With the launch of *COSMOS*, we invite thinkers, researchers, activists, and creative minds to contribute to this dialogue. The fate of the natural world is intertwined with our own; we must act now to ensure that future generations do not remember us as the destroyers of the Earth but as its guardians and restorers.

Ayat Environmental Welfare Society



Parliament For the Planet

With only a 0.9% contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, Pakistan is ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change. The global rise in GHG emissions contributes significantly to the rise in average worldwide temperatures, which was recorded at 1.48°C higher than at the end of the 19th century in 2023, which was declared the hottest year on record according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service report. The constant rise in global temperatures has caused catastrophic and dangerous consequences for the environment and climate, including air pollution, which has resulted in the spread of conjunctivitis, posing a serious threat to public health, particularly among the elderly and children. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution triggers various diseases, including heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and other respiratory diseases. This is why the international community, particularly most industrialized countries, has set the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 to align their environmental policy with the Paris Agreement of 2016, which covers climate change adaptation, mitigation, and finance. Similarly, each signatory of the Agreement has introduced concrete and comprehensive legislation, combined with the adoption of a circular economy, to achieve environmental sustainability.

Parliaments can implement different mechanisms to protect the living planet. Constitutionally, the parliament performs three functions — legislation, representation, and oversight—to represent the will of its constituents. Depending on the nature of the constituent's socio-political grievances, parliamentarians use a multitude of available parliamentary tools, such as introducing new legislation or amending existing legislation, voicing the concerns of the people in chamber debates, and overseeing legislative and non-legislative policies in parliamentary committees.

When it comes to the parliamentary and legislative measures taken by the Parliament of Pakistan for environmental sustainability, it has adopted two prominent steps in this regard: first, it adopted the Climate Change Act 2017, which provides a legal framework for climate change policy; second, two separate standing committees of the Senate and the National Assembly have been formed for the post-legislative scrutiny and implementation of the Climate Change Act 2017, and to oversee the government's policies for promoting environmental sustainability. When it comes to the effectiveness and actual performance of these two parliamentary forums, there exists a lack of political will to implement the essence of the Act and perform effective post-legislative scrutiny by the members of the standing committees.

The Act recommends constituting the Pakistan Climate Change Council, headed by the Prime Minister as its chairperson and chief ministers as its members, to oversee the plan of action on the

climate change policy in the country. It also suggests establishing a Climate Change Authority, comprising government officials, to execute the government's climate change policies. Amongst its other functions, this Council is bound to convene twice a year to discuss climate change issues. However, there is no available record on whether the Pakistan Climate Change Council has been constituted or not, and if it has been constituted, how many meetings it has held thus far to discuss environmental sustainability in Pakistan. Similar is the case with the Climate Change Authority, which is bound to present its annual report before the parliament. How many reports has it laid before the parliament, and what have been the policy debates of the parliamentarians on those reports?

Another form of parliamentary oversight of the government's climate change policy is the standing committees of the Senate and the National Assembly. The absence of the political will of legislative members, combined with composition factors, committee powers, political interference or pressure, and committee practices, has prevented them from demonstrating any substantial outcomes.

As the intensity of climate change increases, it has become necessary for the parliament, political parties, and people to embrace the momentum of addressing this issue by building on the work that has already been done to provide citizens with their fundamental right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment,' provided under a newly integrated Article 9-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. Therefore, the following overarching and sectoral environment-sensitive legislation is suggested for adoption and implementation.

For sectorial-based legislation, measures can be proposed regarding road transport to achieve zero carbon dioxide emissions from cars and vans with a clearly set timeframe, such as by 2035. Second, it can adopt legislation to promote the use of sustainable aviation fuels. Third, the parliament can legislate to introduce a circular economy that will help offset carbon emissions, eliminate waste, and promote sustainable consumption of products. Fourth, it is equally necessary to introduce rules for imposing carbon prices on carbon-intensive industries and stop the import of goods that contribute to forest degradation. Fifth, parliamentarians can represent the voice of the environmental sustainability-related concerns of their people by calling attention to notices and debating government policies in the chamber.

Furthermore, the Parliament of Pakistan may learn lessons from its overseas counterparts to display evidence of positive and effective advisory, legislative, and regulatory mechanisms for climate change policy.

First, it can adopt legislation to establish an independent advisory body, such as the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC), composed of experts chosen for their individual merit rather than their affiliation with a particular stakeholder group or political party, to harness government accountability for climate action and ensure that climate policy is consistent with the latest

scientific findings. The Committee must be given a comprehensive mandate to advise on climate policy decisions, evaluate progress, and set new targets.

Second, it may adopt exclusive legislation for emissions reduction to integrate Pakistan's climate policy with the international community, especially the EU, which has set the target of becoming climate-neutral by 2050. For instance, the parliament can bind the government to set yearly emission reduction amounts and account for its implementation, as in Germany.

Third, it may amend the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act to make it mandatory for any domestic or foreign company traded on Pakistani exchanges to include climate-related information, such as carbon offsets and renewable energy credits, as practiced in the United States, to reduce carbon emissions.

Fourth, it can approve climate legislation to establish procedures for the elaboration of sectoral plans for the mitigation of climate change, especially for developing a carbon market, as has been initiated by Brazil to improve environmental sustainability.

Fifth, it can adopt legislation for the decarbonization trajectory for net-zero emissions for a drastic reduction of emissions from transportation. An example is the Scottish transport legislation that has set the goal of zero-net emissions from transport by 2050. The Scottish government has introduced electric vehicles and encouraged people to use public transport instead of private cars. It has also been made mandatory for the transport authority to submit its annual performance report before the parliament to gauge improvements in policy action.

Sixth, the information disclosure rules introduced by the National People's Congress of China, which encourage reporting environmental impact information, can be adopted in Pakistan. Such reporting will help ensure government transparency, direct democratic participation, and open-source information on sustainability.

In addition to introducing new climate legislation, the parliament is required to scrutinize the existing mechanisms and implementation process of the government's climate policy. It must push the government to allocate appropriate budgets for implementing policies, legislation, and programs that seek to ensure and promote environmental sustainability. Furthermore, Pakistan requires a drastic reduction in emissions from transportation and deforestation, and advancement in technological innovations in all sectors. To achieve this, the political will of politicians and policymakers who have the mandate to take the necessary policy steps to promote environmental sustainability in Pakistan is ultimately needed.

Dr. Dilawar Hussain

Nature as a Reflection of the Divine: Insights from *The Tao of Islam*

The Tao of Islam by Sachiko Murata is a seminal work that explores the intricate relationships between God and the universe, the cosmos and humanity, and God and humankind. The term Tao, which is central to ancient Chinese Taoist thought, refers to the ultimate principle governing the cosmos. Often translated as “the Path” or “the Way,” it signifies the natural order and flow of all things. In the Islamic worldview, the equivalent of Tao is God, the Ultimate Reality, the Creator, and Sustainer of the universe and nature. Murata draws upon the Qur'an, Hadith, and a wide range of classical and medieval Islamic sources, including the works of renowned Sufi metaphysician Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) and philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037), to examine the profound connections between heaven and earth. From the perspective of sacred nature, the book offers an in-depth and illuminating analysis of the relationship between nature and God and humanity. This brief review aims to highlight Murata's insights into the sacred dimension of nature, as articulated in her groundbreaking study.

Murata draws a compelling comparison between Chinese cosmology and Islamic thought by examining Taoist concepts of yin and yang, which symbolize the fundamental dualities of existence. In Taoist philosophy, yin represents the passive, receptive, feminine, and earthly principles, whereas yang embodies the active, creative, masculine, and heavenly forces. These complementary forces are understood as the dynamic foundations of all movements and changes in the universe. As described in Chinese cosmology, “Yin and yang are the principles of change and the symbols of all movement in the universe. When the sun rises, the moon disappears. When spring comes, winter goes.” Echoing the words of Confucius, “Like a running river, the whole universe is flowing, ceaselessly day and night.” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, pp. 6–7). In this worldview, existence is defined by harmonious change in accordance with the Tao. If the balance between yin and yang is lost, the universe ceases to function, and existence itself dissolves. In her Islamic reinterpretation of this duality, Murata maps the concept of yang onto divine attributes such as *jalāl* (majesty), *qahr* (severity), *‘adl* (justice), and *ghaḍab* (wrath), while yin corresponds to attributes such as *jamāl* (beauty), nearness, mercy (*rahma*), and compassion (*lutf*). The universe, she argues, is sustained by the equilibrium and interplay between these two dimensions of divinity. Thus, harmony between *jalāl* and *jamāl* is essential for the order and continuity of creation. (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, pp. 8–9).

In Islamic cosmology, thought holds a central place, and all thoughts begin with God. In Islam, both intellectual reflection and practical action originate from the Divine and develop organically from that foundation. The first of the Five Pillars of Islam, the declaration of faith, “There is no god but God, and Muhammad (PBUH) is His Messenger”, expresses this foundational truth. This

testimony affirms that only God existed before the creation of the universe. Thus, from an Islamic perspective, the existence of the universe is entirely dependent on God. As Murata notes, “God is the owner of the heavens and the earth and everything in between”, He governs, sustains, and encompasses all of creation as its sole Creator, Master, and Sustainer (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 7). Murata writes, “He must be declared similar (tashbīh) in some fashion to His creation” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 9). This perspective opens the way for some Muslims to affirm God's immanence, His nearness and presence within all things. This view is strongly supported by the Qur'an, which states, “Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God” (Qur'an 2:115), and “We are nearer to the human being than his jugular vein” (Qur'an 50:16).

In Islamic cosmology, the cosmos (*al-ālam*) refers to everything that exists apart from God. However, nothing in creation is understood in isolation. As Murata explains, “Nothing is discussed independently from its relationship (nisba) with God” (p. 8). This means that the natural world, and the entire cosmos, can only be truly comprehended in light of its connection to God. Everything in the universe derives its meaning, purpose, and identity through its relationship with God. Murata identifies two fundamental conceptions of the relationship between God and the cosmos: The first view, rooted in classical *Kalām* theology, emphasizes God's absolute transcendence: “God is infinitely beyond the cosmos” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 8). From this perspective, God is utterly inaccessible, beyond human comprehension and detached from the immediate concerns of creation. The second view, which finds strong expression in the philosophical and Sufi traditions as well as in popular Islamic spirituality, presents a profoundly different understanding of the self. Here, God is portrayed as intimately involved with His creation, “supremely lovable, since He is dominated by concern for His creatures” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, pp. 8–9). This perspective is rooted in Qur'anic affirmations such as: “He loves them, and they love Him” (Qur'an 5:54). From this perspective, God's love for creation awakens a reciprocal love in human beings. Unlike the distant and abstract God of the theologians, whom Ibn al-‘Arabī criticizes as being too remote to inspire genuine devotion, the God of love and mercy is knowable and beloved. As Ibn al-‘Arabī remarks in *al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyya* (II, 326.12), such a remote God cannot be truly loved. In contrast, the God of compassion can be encountered through His love, which flows through all creation and draws the hearts of His creatures toward Him.

It is crucial to recognize that the Qur'an frequently affirms that everything in the universe is a *sign* (āya) of God. In other words, all created things reflect or indicate the Divine. Consequently, many Muslim cosmologists and theologians maintain that the entire cosmos mirrors the Divine Names and Attributes, such as majesty (*jalāl*), beauty (*jamāl*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), and life (*hayāt*) (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 10). Therefore, every object in the natural world communicates something about God, and existence itself becomes a form of revelation. The natural world is considered one of the most powerful and accessible proofs of God's existence in theism. In contrast to human beings, all other creatures are inherently good—not because of moral choice, but because they are pure manifestations of God's attributes, “loci of manifestation for the qualities of God, and can be nothing other than what they are” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 15). However, humans occupy a

unique position. While they also reflect divine attributes and possess innate goodness, they are distinguished by a special nobility, the capacity to mediate between God and the cosmos by maintaining balance and harmony in creation. However, this nobility comes with responsibility. When humans fail to uphold this balance, they disrupt the harmony of the universe and give rise to evil. Unlike other creatures, only humans possess the freedom to choose, and thus only they can choose actions that oppose the divine order (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 15). Followers of the school of Ibn al-‘Arabī view human beings as an isthmus (*barzakh*), standing between two vast realities: God and the cosmos, or more specifically, God and nature. Owing to this central and all-encompassing position in the hierarchy of existence, human beings possess unique potential. They alone have the capacity to disturb the harmony and equilibrium between the divine and the created world. However, it is through this same position that humans are uniquely capable of acting as mediators, restoring and maintaining the perfect balance between God and nature. Thus, the human role is both precarious and profound, only humans can disrupt the cosmic order, and only they can uphold it (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, pp. 15–16).

A well-known saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sheds light on the purpose of creation: “God said, ‘I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known; therefore, I created the creatures so that I might be known.’” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 10). As Murata emphasizes, this narration reveals that the cosmos, nature itself, is the medium through which the Hidden Treasure becomes manifest and is known to creation. She writes, “Through the universe, God comes to be known, and since there is nothing in the universe but created things, it is the created things themselves that give news of the Hidden Treasure” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, pp. 10–11). In other words, the natural world serves as an arena for divine self-disclosure. Through its signs, forms, and functions, the cosmos reveals the presence, attributes, and reality of God to those who contemplate it.

The Islamic worldview holds a central place in Islamic cosmology. Unlike purely scientific investigations of the natural world, Islamic cosmology emphasizes the spiritual and symbolic dimensions of existence. Rather than reducing nature to material phenomena, many Muslim cosmologists seek to reveal the analogies and correspondences among all levels of creation, highlighting the unique and central role of human beings as both *‘abd* (servants) and *khalīfa* (vicegerents) of God. As a servant, the human being is bound in obedience to God, for a servant has no right to defy the will of his master. As a vicegerent, however, human beings are entrusted with responsibility, both for themselves and for the stewardship of the natural world (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 15). The Qur'an uses these two terms, *‘abd* and *khalīfa*, to define humanity's position between God and creation, with *khalīfa* representing the highest spiritual station that a human being can attain. Yet, before one can truly embody divine representation as *khalīfa*, one must first fulfill the role of the perfect servant, submitting entirely to the Divine will (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 16), which includes treating nature with justice, care, and reverence. As the most powerful being on earth, humans are uniquely capable of either preserving or corrupting the natural order. Hence, this dual role demands not only authority but also deep moral and spiritual

responsibility. The power granted to human beings is a divine gift, bestowed upon them by God in accordance with their role as vicegerents (*khalīfa*) and bearers of trust (*amāna*) (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 123). Positioned between heaven and earth, humans occupy a uniquely significant place in the cosmic order. Unlike all other elements of nature, which submit to God instinctively, only human beings possess the freedom to accept or reject the divine will. This gift of free will distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation, but it also imposes a profound moral responsibility. With this freedom comes accountability, particularly concerning the natural world. As Murata notes, it is precisely this capacity for choice that makes human beings responsible stewards of nature, obligated to uphold the balance and harmony established by God (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 127).

While much attention in the modern world is given to phenomena that can be measured, quantified, and empirically observed, Muslim thinkers have traditionally focused on a very different aspect of reality. As Murata explains, “Muslim thinkers were not primarily interested in the things themselves. Rather, they were concerned with showing how the signs or attributes of God can be observed in different creatures and various domains of existence” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 25). The Islamic conception of nature stands in stark contrast to the modern scientific worldview. In Islamic cosmology, the natural world is not viewed as a self-contained system of material facts but rather as a realm filled with signs pointing beyond themselves. Nature is understood as a tapestry of symbols and reflections of the Divine, not as an object of ultimate significance. As Murata notes, “Things are pointers and not of any ultimate significance in themselves. Once we recognize that the qualities that things manifest rather than the things in themselves are of primary interest, then we will be able to perceive that Islamic cosmology presents us with a perspective that has no relationship with the changing viewpoints of scientific cosmology” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 25). This insight reveals that Islamic cosmology invites a spiritual reading of the universe, where the focus is not on the objects themselves, but on the Divine truths they reveal.

Everything in the heavens, the earth, and all that lies between them submits to the laws of God, for all of creation belongs to Him. This universal obedience is, in essence, *Islam*—submission to the Divine will. Nothing in the natural world disobeys God, because He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all that exists (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 203). As the Qur'an declares: “To Him has submitted (*Islam*) all that is in the heavens and the earth” (Qur'an 3:83). Thus, the entire cosmos is in a state of continuous worship, as affirmed in several verses: “Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God” (Qur'an 57:1; 59:1; 61:1). Through their praise, service, and obedience, all elements of the natural world bear witness to their unique relationship with their Creator. However, the human being stands apart: endowed with free will, he alone may choose whether or not to submit. To reject this submission is to oppose the Divine will, and in doing so, to disrupt the harmonious balance of creation. Murata explains that corruption begins at the microcosmic level, within the human being, when the spirit and soul are no longer aligned in fruitful interaction. This inner disharmony then spreads outward to the macrocosm, affecting the entire universe. As God's vicegerent (*khalīfa*) on earth, the human being bears a sacred

responsibility: to maintain the divine order. When that duty is neglected, the earth itself suffers as a consequence (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 203).

Islamic texts often describe the cosmos as a book of God, much like the Qur'an, which is also considered a divine book. The Qur'an presents both its revealed verses and the phenomena of the natural world as *āyāt*, signs of God. As Murata beautifully summarizes, "The Book is the spoken word of God, and the universe is the result of God's command, 'Be!'" (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 45). Just as the Qur'an conveys divine truth through words, the universe proclaims the same truth through its very existence, order, and beauty.

In her discussion of the relationship between God, nature, and human beings, Murata emphasizes that, from an Islamic perspective, everything in the cosmos possesses a divinely ordained role and purpose, intimately connected to the human being. Nothing in creation exists without meaning; every element of the universe has been assigned its proper function by God (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 44). For Muslims, it is essential not to view the cosmos merely through an objective or scientific lens, for such a perspective implies detachment—as if the universe were silent, devoid of any moral or spiritual message. As Murata explains, "That would imply detachment and disinterest, as if the universe were mute, without any message of moral and spiritual significance" (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 121). Instead, when believers perceive the cosmos as a collection of signs (*āyāt*) of God, they recognize it as a living, spiritual reality—one that derives its meaning and order from the Divine Source.

One of the most profound terms the Qur'an uses in relation to nature and its rights is *haqq*, a word that signifies truth, reality, and rightful due. In the Qur'anic worldview, *al-Haqq* is one of the Divine Names, referring to God as the Absolute Reality. Yet, the term is also extended to creation itself, indicating that the natural world is imbued with truth and purpose. As Murata explains, The Qur'an insists that "God's signs, His verses, manifest not only in the revealed scripture but also in the natural phenomena of the cosmos. Just as the prophets came with the Real (*al-Haqq*), so too was the universe created with the Real" (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 122). Thus, both revelation and creation reflect the same ultimate reality, grounding the natural world in divine truth and affirming that nature, too, has its own sacred right and meaning.

In a profound sense, nature may be likened to a mother, giving birth to and nurturing all creatures. Drawing on the insights of Ibn al-‘Arabī, Murata writes: "Nature in the widest sense refers to the Breath of the All-Merciful, within which are imprinted the words, or creatures, whether spiritual or corporeal" (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 210). In this vision, human beings are the children of nature, and just as love, compassion, and reverence are owed to one's parents, Mother Nature too deserves our deepest respect and affection (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 213). Nature nourishes and sustains us, providing food, shelter, water, and care, much like a mother who gives life and nurtures it. She carries us where we wish to go, offers her resources generously, and asks only for reverence in return. Yet, despite her beauty and benevolence, the equilibrium and majesty of the

earth are gravely endangered. As Murata warns, “If people deal with the earth while ignoring its relationship with heaven, they will bring about its corruption” (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 246).

To truly fulfill the role of God’s vicegerent on earth, ruling with wisdom and justice over creation, the human being must first become a true servant of the Real, one who submits wholeheartedly to the Divine will. Only through such submission can the sacred bond between heaven, earth, and humanity be restored and preserved.

Muslims have traditionally viewed nature as a living reality, a creation that willingly obeys and worships God. This stands in stark contrast to the modern scientific worldview, which often sees the universe as inert and mechanistic. In Islamic cosmology, all of existence is seen as returning to and rooted in the One, the Real, God. This perspective not only affirms the sacredness of nature but also powerfully expresses the central Islamic doctrine of *Tawhīd*, the Divine Unity that binds all things together. (Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, p. 321)

Dr. Atta Muhammad

The Climate Crisis is Impacting Pakistan Severely

Pakistan, home to over 250 million people, ranks as one of the most vulnerable nations in the face of climate change. The country has endured numerous environmental crises, with the devastating floods of 2022 being particularly notable, resulting in nearly 1,700 fatalities and displacing more than 30 million individuals. Families suffered immense losses, including their homes, livestock, and crops, and the repercussions continue to affect the nation deeply. Once again, Pakistan is in the grip of another intense monsoon season, bringing with it devastating floods. Monsoon rains have long caused destruction in the region—sweeping away homes, drowning livestock, ruining crops, and leaving countless people exposed under open skies. But with the rising severity of the climate crisis, these seasonal patterns have become more deadly and harder to manage. Pakistan lacks the infrastructure, resources, and political commitment to effectively respond to such disasters. Successive governments have failed to take meaningful action, and the public, largely untrained in critical thinking or disaster preparedness, remains vulnerable.

I recently witnessed this crisis firsthand during a visit to Pakistan. In major cities, streets were flooded and people were trapped in their homes. On the day of my return flight, my family had to hire a pickup truck just to get me and my luggage out of the house. I was fortunate to take refuge at another brother's home, who later drove me to Lahore. Along the way, I saw fields that were once ripe with crops turned into vast lakes. Children were playing in the floodwaters, while on the radio we heard about flight cancellations across many cities.

Pakistan urgently needs global support to confront this crisis. During the colonial era, the British had developed a system of “barsati nala” (seasonal drains) to carry excess rainwater to the ocean. But today’s challenges are far greater and demand modern, innovative solutions. I’ve seen inspiring examples of local ingenuity on YouTube. In one video, people constructed wells to direct rainwater underground, helping to replenish groundwater that can later be pumped for daily use. In another, residents of a housing society built their own small dam to store rainwater. These initiatives show that this calamity can be transformed into an opportunity.

While the world faces increasing water scarcity, Pakistan is drowning in seasonal floods. With creativity, education, and honest governance, this challenge can become a blessing. The Pakistani government must seek international funding to combat climate change and, more importantly, use that aid transparently to educate and empower the population. Training communities to think critically and respond strategically can save lives.

Allah (SWT) mentions in several verses of the Qur'an that rain is a source of life. It can nourish the earth—or destroy it. It's up to us to decide how we respond to this blessing. Will we let it wash us away, or will we rise with it?

Mamoona Randhawa

ماحولیاتی بحران: انسانی وجود، سماجی انصاف اور فطری جماليات کا المیہ

ماحولیاتی بحران اب محض سائنسی یا تکنیکی مسئلہ نہیں رہا، بلکہ یہ ایک ایسا ہمہ گیر انسانی بحران بن چکا ہے جو ہماری تہذیب، معاشرت، اور روحانی شعور کو براہ راست چیلنج کر رہا ہے۔ یہ بحران نہ صرف زمین کے درجہ حرارت یا کاربن کے اخراج کا معاملہ ہے بلکہ یہ انسانی اقدار، طبقاتی تفاوت، ریاستی ترجیحات اور فطرت کے ساتھ ہمارے تعلق کی معنویت کو بھی متاثر کرتا ہے۔ آج دنیا بھر میں ماحولیاتی تباہی کے اثرات یکسان نہیں، بلکہ یہ افراد اور طبقات کی سماجی حیثیت، شہریت کے حقوق، اور جغرافیائی مقام کے مطابق مختلف صورتوں میں سامنے آتے ہیں۔ کہیں صاف پانی ایک عیاشی بن چکا ہے، کہیں زبریلی ہوا سانس لینے کا حق چھین رہی ہے، اور کہیں زمین کی بانجھ پن لوگوں کو اپنے آبا و اجداد کی زمینیں چھوڑنے پر مجبور کر رہی ہے۔

یہ صورتحال ہمیں مجبور کرتی ہے کہ ماحولیاتی مسئلے کو صرف سائنس یا ٹیکنالوجی کی حد تک نہ دیکھیں بلکہ اسے انسانی فکریات، جماليات، فلسفہ اور سماجی ڈھانچوں کے تناظر میں بھی سمجھیں۔ ہمیں ایک ایسا بین العلوم نظریہ تشكیل دینا ہوگا جو ماحول، معاشرہ، اور انسان کے باہمی تعلق کو بحال کرنے میں مدد دے۔ اس تناظر میں چند بنیادی سوالات ابھر کر سامنے آتے ہیں جو فکری زاویوں کو جھنگھوڑتے ہیں:

کیا آلوگی کا بوجہ ہر طبقے پر یکسان ہوتا ہے؟

کیا شہری چمک اور جدیدیت فطرت کے حسن کا حقیقی نعم البدل بن سکتی ہے؟

جب زمین خشک ہو جائے، پانی ختم ہو جائے یا بواز بر آلوڈ ہو جائے تو کون لوگ ہجرت پر مجبور ہوتے ہیں؟

کیا ماحولیاتی بحران صرف سائنس کا مسئلہ ہے یا یہ ایک انسانی، معاشرتی اور جمالياتی بحران بھی ہے؟

اور سب سے بڑھ کر، کیا ہم نے فطرت سے اپنے روحانی اور جمالياتی ربط کو کھو دیا ہے؟

یہ سوالات ہمیں ایک نئی فکری سمت کی طرف متوجہ کرتے ہیں جہاں ماحول کو صرف ایک ماحولیاتی مسئلہ نہیں، بلکہ انسانی بقا اور تہذیبی ارتقاء کے تناظر میں دیکھا جائے۔ اور یہی وہ سوالات ہیں جن پر ماحولیاتی بحث کے دوران شاذ ہی غور کیا جاتا ہے۔ ماحولیات کو اکثر صرف کاربن کے اخراج، درختوں کی کٹائی یا گلوبل وارمنگ تک محدود کر دیا جاتا ہے، مگر اس کے گھرے اثرات سماج، طبقاتی ساخت، انسانی حس جمال اور انسان کی بنیادی شناخت تک پھیل چکے ہیں۔ ماحولیاتی تبدیلی اب ایک ایسا کثیر الجہتی بحران ہے جس سے سمجھنے کے لیے ہمیں معاشرت، فن، انصاف اور ہجرت جیسے پہلوؤں کو ایک ساتھ دیکھنا ہوگا۔

ماحولیاتی تبدیلیاں سب کو یکسان طور پر متاثر نہیں کرتیں۔ ترقی یافته ممالک اور امیر طبقے اپنی معاشی طاقت کی بدولت صاف ہوا، محفوظ پانی اور سبز فضا تک رسائی حاصل کر لیتے ہیں، جبکہ غریب اور پسمندہ علاقوں کے لوگ زہریلی فضا، آلودہ پانی اور بنجر زمینوں میں زندگی گزارنے پر مجبور ہیں۔ مثال کے طور پر، پاکستان میں نہر کے باشندے خشک سالی اور پانی کی قلت کا شکار ہیں، جبکہ کراچی یا لاہور کے امیر علاقوں میں زیر زمین پانی کے غیر منصفانہ استعمال سے یہ مسئلہ مزید گبھیر ہو رہا ہے۔ ماہر ماحولیات Rob Nixon اسے "Slow Violence" (دھیما تشدد) کہتے ہیں۔ ایک ایسا خاموش ظلم جو بتدریج غریب طبقات کو نکل جاتا ہے، مگر اس پر میڈیا یا پالیسی سازوں کی توجہ نہیں ہوتی۔ یہ نالنصافی صرف پاکستان تک محدود نہیں، بلکہ عالمی سطح پر بھی دیکھی جا سکتی ہے۔ ترقی پذیر ممالک، جن کا ماحولیاتی بحران میں سب سے کم حصہ ہے، وہی اس کے سب سے بڑے شکار ہیں۔

جب زمینیں بنجر ہو جاتی ہیں، دریاؤں کا پانی خشک ہو جاتا ہے یا سیلاب گھروں کو بھا لے جاتا ہے، تو لاکھوں لوگ اپنے آبائی علاقوں سے بھرت پر مجبور ہو جاتے ہیں۔ "Climate Refugees" (موسمیاتی مہاجرین) کی اصطلاح اب ایک حقیقت بن چکی ہے۔ بین الاقوامی ادارہ برائے مہاجر (IOM) کے مطابق، 2050 تک تقریباً 1 ارب افراد کو اپنے گھر چھوڑنے پر مجبور ہونا پڑ سکتا ہے۔ پاکستان میں بھی سندھ اور بلوچستان کے دیہاتوں سے لوگ شہروں کی طرف منتقل ہو رہے ہیں، جہاں وہ غیر رسمی آبادیوں (Slums) میں زندگی گزارنے پر مجبور ہیں۔ ان مہاجرین کے لیے نہ کوئی قانونی تحفظ ہے، نہ ہی ان کے مسائل کو قومی پالیسی کا حصہ بنایا جاتا ہے۔ یہ لوگ نہ صرف اپنی زمینیں کھو رہے ہیں، بلکہ اپنی ثقافتی شناخت، روایات اور سماجی تحفظ سے بھی محروم ہو رہے ہیں۔

جدید شہری زندگی نے انسان کو فطرت سے دور کر دیا ہے۔ شاپنگ مالز، کنکریٹ کے جنگل اور مصنوعی روشنیاں ہمیں فطری حسن سے محروم کر رہی ہیں۔ فلسفی مارٹن بائیڈیگر کے مطابق، جدید انسان نے فطرت کو صرف ایک "ذریعہ" (Resource) سمجھ لیا ہے، جبکہ اصل میں فطرت ہماری روحانی اور جمالياتی ضروریات پوری کرتی ہے۔ اسلامی نقطہ نظر سے بھی فطرت کو اللہ کی نشانی (آیات) کے طور پر دیکھا جاتا ہے۔ قرآن میں ارشاد ہے: "زمین میں پہیلے ہوئے رنگ برنگے پھولوں، پھاڑوں، دریاؤں اور درختوں میں غور کرو، یہ سب اللہ کی نشانیاں ہیں" (سورہ النحل: 10-11)۔ لیکن جدید معاشرے نے فطرت کو صرف ایک معاشی وسیلہ سمجھ لیا ہے، جس کے نتیجے میں ہم جمالياتی اور روحانی طور پر مفلوج ہو رہے ہیں۔

ماحولیاتی بحران کا مقابلہ کرنے کے لیے صرف ٹیکنالوجی یا پالیسیاں کافی نہیں ہیں۔ ہمیں ایک کثیر الجہتی نقطہ نظر اپنانا ہوگا، جس میں شامل ہوں: ماحولیاتی انصاف کے لیے غریب طبقات کو تحفظ دینے والی پالیسیاں، موسمیاتی مہاجرین کے حقوق کے لیے بین الاقوامی قوانین، شہروں میں فطری جماليات کی بحالی کے لیے سبز مقامات کا قیام، اور عوام میں فطرت سے محبت کا شعور اجادگر کرنا۔

ماحولیاتی بحران در اصل انسان کے اپنے وجود، اقدار اور تہذیب کا بحران ہے۔ اگر ہم نے اس پر قابو نہ پایا، تو نہ صرف زمین تباہ ہوگی، بلکہ انسان اپنی انسانیت، جمالیاتی حس اور سماجی انصاف سے بھی محروم ہو جائے گا۔ ہمیں اس بحران کو صرف ایک "ماحولیاتی مسئلہ" نہیں، بلکہ ایک انسانی المیہ سمجھتے ہوئے اس کا مقابلہ کرنا ہوگا۔

نناشہ اعجاز

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