

Islamic Ecological Ethics and Sustainable Development in Pakistan: A Qur'ānic Perspective on Climate Challenges

Dr. Imran Hayat

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Division of Islamic and Oriental Learning, University
of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

imran.hayat@ue.edu.pk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0647-0989>

Abstract

Pakistan, as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, faces severe environmental challenges including water scarcity, deforestation, soil degradation, urban pollution, and increasingly frequent floods and heatwaves. While policy responses often draw upon secular environmental frameworks, the rich ethical resources of the Qur'ān remain largely underutilized in shaping national climate strategies. This study explores the potential of Islamic ecological ethics—rooted in the Qur'ān—to provide a morally compelling and culturally resonant framework for sustainable development in Pakistan. Drawing upon classical and contemporary exegesis, the paper identifies and examines ten key Qur'ānic principles relevant to environmental stewardship: Khalīfah (vicegerency of humanity over the earth, 2:30), Mīzān (balance in creation, 55:7–9), Isrāf (prohibition of waste, 7:31), Fasād fil-Arḍ (prohibition of corruption and harm on earth, 7:56), 'Imārat al-Arḍ (constructive development of the earth, 11:61), 'Adl (justice in resource use and distribution, 16:90), Shukr (gratitude for natural blessings, 14:7), Tadbīr (prudent and equitable resource management, 25:67), Iḥsān (excellence and moral beauty in action, 16:90), and Maslahah (promotion of public good and welfare, 21:107). Each principle is analyzed in its Qur'ānic context, supported by prophetic traditions and classical tafsīr, and then applied to the specific environmental realities of Pakistan. The study argues that integrating these Qur'ānic values into policy frameworks, educational curricula, and community initiatives can strengthen climate resilience while fostering social justice and ethical responsibility. Furthermore, the paper situates Islamic ecological ethics within the global sustainability discourse, illustrating their

compatibility with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By presenting the Qur'ānic vision of environmental care as both a spiritual obligation and a civic duty, this research highlights its enduring relevance as a holistic approach to combating the climate crisis in Pakistan and beyond.

Keywords: Islamic environmental ethics, Qur'ānic principles, sustainable development, Pakistan, climate change, ecological justice, khalīfah