



Reviving Islam: The Only Path to Avoid Disaster

News:

On Wednesday, Karachi was inundated following a heavy downpour, paralysing the southern port city of 20 million people less than a week after deadly flash floods swept away villages in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (Al Jazeera.com)

Comment:

The recent floods in Pakistan have devastated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, while other regions struggle with waterlogged streets that have turned daily life into a hazard. The tragedy of lost lives and livelihoods in KPK has left people shaken. What's most troubling is the absence of proper rescue equipment—making many question the government's capacity to respond. Rescue workers are left doing everything manually, and once again, it's the local people who, hardened by years of neglect, know they must rely on themselves because little to no help will ever come.

These disasters are often tagged as natural and unavoidable by the Government, even though most of the damage is a result of human greed for power and exploitation of the natural resources. Tariq Ali Shah, a forest expert who works closely with the KP government, said the province has been losing forests at a rate of about 1.5 pc annually, which is equivalent to 8000 hectares per year, almost the size of Islamabad's city area, between 2000 and 2023. Another issue is the building of hotels, houses and restaurants on the river banks. In the 2022 floods in the Swat area, around 700 hotels, motels, inns and restaurants were completely inundated. In the recent floods we saw the devastating effects even in Islamabad, encroachment and building on nullah's created bottlenecks, which forced floodwater into low-lying homes and basements. Karachi's floods are evidence of a failed sewage and drainage system, as the city's natural stormwater drains (nullahs) are clogged by solid waste, and the overall system cannot handle the volume of water, especially with erratic rainfall patterns. This is compounded by poor governance, administrative fragmentation, and a general lack of a comprehensive water infrastructure to manage the city's wastewater and stormwater.

The blind developmental programmes in Pakistan can be traced back to British colonial rule. The British, focused on controlling space and maximising profits, introduced a chaotic mishmash of urban planning authorities and inequitable housing policies. They prioritised ribbon development, suburban sprawl, and class-based segregation. Post-independence, our planning philosophy remained unchanged — build outward, build big, and build for the wealthy. Master plans were drafted and ignored. Agricultural land was eaten up by ever-expanding housing societies.

While the capitalist world thrives on disasters, Islam has a totally different approach. In Islam the State is responsible to make policies to protect natural forests,

regulate mining and logging operations as well as other operations that are required to avoid destruction of tree plantations. Allah (swt) created the world and whatever is in it for man and it can only be protected in obedience of Allah (swt). Under the golden age of Islam, engineers and city planners developed sophisticated hydraulic technologies to protect urban areas from floods and ensure a stable water supply. Flood management involved building dams and archways, constructing intricate canal systems and developing water-raising machines for efficient water distribution and storage. These efforts, along with techniques for canal maintenance and embankment protection using willows, established comprehensive water management systems that supported agriculture, urban water supply, and public welfare, all a testament to their sophisticated understanding of hydraulic engineering.

This was possible because of the connectivity of the areas being under the same rule however far away they were located. Floods, drought, disease or war, any challenge was felt and taken care of by the core of the Ummah, i.e., the central power of Khilafah. We are in desperate need of Khilafah (Caliphate) rescue, save and revive the old glory that Allah (swt) has written for His people. Khilafah, when established on the method of the Prophethood, would not let the greed of the power hungry destroy Ummah's wealth. The water that is causing death and destruction now, will become a source of life and growth. Dams and canals will be built and water will be distributed to the areas that need it. We have examples like the 'Zubaida Canal', a canal that was built for the people of Makkah by the wife of then acting Caliph Haroon ur Rasheed for the comfort of the pilgrims. The canal still exists, reminding us of the golden age of Islam and calling us to follow the path of the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).

﴿وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

“And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is over all things competent.” [TMQ Surah Aali-Imran (3:189)]

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