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## China's Dream of a Harmonious World

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THE nations which lead the world create a 'Weltanshauung', the global outlook, which then becomes a central piece of their global supremacy. The United States created a global outlook, based on liberalism, which charmed the world. This increased people-to-people contacts, without using government machinery all the time. Since the US-sponsored liberal values are at crisis at home and broad, American Dream is proving to be an illusion. In this regard, the rising power, China, faces a major challenge: promotion of harmony and integration of civilisations. The Sufi gleams within Chinese culture relate to the challenge that China faces today.

Utilising the force of Sufism in foreign policy and public diplomacy is not an entirely new idea. In 2003, Nixon Centre held a conference on the role of Sufism in American foreign policy to lessen the prevailing anti-American sentiments and counter radicalism within the Muslim societies. For three reasons, it couldn't work. The policy makers failed to understand that anti-Americanism has much to do with the condescending approach of unilateralism the US adopted. They conceived it more in the context of "why they hate us?" instead of thinking it as "why they should hate us?" Second, American culture is devoid of Sufi values, therefore, it tried to manipulate it as an instrument to meet its foreign policy goals. Absence of altruism failed it as a significant tool of public diplomacy. Third, Sufism cannot be sponsored as a brand, it can only be utilised by incorporating in international norms just like liberalism.

South and Central Asia have emerged as lucrative markets for Beijing, especially for its Belt and Road Initiative. However, the menace of extremism in these regions may hamper the true economic benefits. Drawing on America's mistakes in dealing with religious issues, China can learn a great deal in coping with the challenge of extremism. Anti-religiosity and suppressing spiritual movements are no wise response to radical religious narratives. Nonetheless, spiritualism and Sufi beliefs present itself as a force of moderation. Sufism has always been a critique on individualism and extremism as it always promoted a spirit of collectivism, humanity, brotherhood and moderation.

Therefore, Sufis are not only a cult figure in popular Islam but in the world also. In India, Khwaja Moeen-ud-Din Chishti Ajmeeri, is a Sufi revered by Indians and Muslims alike. In Pakistan, followers of Sufism are a legion. Baba Bulhey Shah, Sultan Baho, Waris Khan, Lal Shehbaz Qalander and Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi are the few names who live in the hearts of the people. In Central Asia too, they are a force to be reckoned with. Shah e Zind, Ahmed Yasawi, Sultan Baba and Baha-ud-Din Naqshbandi are held in high respect and esteem by Central Asians. Dr. Zernov of Moscow University observed that Sufis of Central Asia were the fountainhead of knowledge and intellect.

Sufism is ages old current that is flowing in Chinese culture. Taoism is one such current. When looked from the prism of Taoism, the aura of Chinese nation appears so appealing. It makes Chinese nation quite attractive in the eyes of a foreigner. Taoism is the path to embrace wonder of life and joy in living with grace. It is modern man's crisis that he is not at peace with his own self. Ultimately, he is not at peace with others, let alone with the world. Same is the case of nations. Bringing nations together to acquire inner peace can promote harmony among them. Taoism avoids labels as it perceives man to be a blend of many truths. It is acceptance of one's own self first, of nature and of others. The world needs acceptance instead of tolerance. Bernard Lewis, in his book, *What Went Wrong with the World: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, writes that the world needs acceptance more than tolerance.

Today's China do promote Confucianism but it has lost its touch with its spiritual past. To connect with Muslim world, it should renew inter-cultural dialogue, shared cultural histories and regional biographies. However, Islamic world, being a victim of western xenophobia and hatred, is in search of a cultural bond which goes beyond judging long beards and dark veils.

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