

GANDHI: Serving the Poorest



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-Osho

A friend who had come to see Gandhi off at the ship to South Africa presented him a book, *Unto This Last*, by John Ruskin -- a book which transformed his whole life. It is a simple book and a small book. It professes -- "*Unto this Last*" means the poorest one -- we should consider the poorest one first. And that became his whole philosophy of life: the poorest should be considered first.

In South Africa, while Gandhi was travelling in a first-class compartment, one Englishman entered and said, "You get out, because no Indian can travel in first class."

Gandhi said, "But I have a first-class ticket. The question is not whether I am Indian or European; the question is whether I have a first-class ticket or not. Nowhere is it written who can travel; whoever has a first-class ticket can travel."

But that Englishman was not going to listen. He pulled the emergency chain and threw Gandhi's things out. And Gandhi was a thin and weak man; the Englishman threw him out also on the platform and told him, "Now you travel first-class."

The whole night Gandhi remained on that small station's platform. The stationmaster told him, "You unnecessarily got into trouble; you should have got down. You seem to be new here. Indians cannot travel first-class. It is not a law but this is how things are." But the whole night Gandhi spent in a turmoil. It became the very seed of his revolt against the British Empire. That night he decided that this empire had to end.

Gandhi lived many years in Africa and there he learned the whole art of fighting non-violently. And when he came to India in the 1920s he was a perfectly trained leader of non-violent revolution, and he immediately took over the whole country, for the simple reason that he was conventional, traditional, religious. Nobody could say that he was not a sage, because he was following rules of five thousand years before, laid down five thousand years before.

In fact he was preaching that we should turn the clock backwards and we should move to the days of Manu -- five thousand years ago. To

him the greatest and the latest invention was the spinning wheel. After that, no science ... science's work finished with the spinning wheel. Of course he became the leader of those people who are not contemporary.

You are asking me how to save humanity. From whom? I will say from Mahatma Gandhi and people like him.

Yes, save humanity:

Save it from the popes, shankaracharyas, imams. Save it from Jesus Christ, Mahavira, Gautam Buddha. Save it.

Problems that your own problems will seem negligible. Perhaps you may forget all about them. This is a very psychological device, but very poisonous. You want somehow to be as far away from yourself as possible so you need not see the wounds which are hurting. The best way is: serve.

One man has been opening schools in India for aboriginal children his whole life. He is a follower of Gandhi. Just by chance he met me, because I had gone into that aboriginal tribe. I was studying those aboriginals from every aspect, because they are living examples of days when man was not so burdened with all kinds of morality, religion, civilisation, culture, etiquette, manners. They are simple, innocent, still wild, fresh.

This man was going and collecting money from cities, and opening schools and bringing teachers. Just by the way he met me there. I said, "What are you doing? You think you are doing great service to these people?"

He said, "Of course!"

So arrogantly he said, "Of course!" I said, "You are not aware of what you are doing. Schools exist in the cities, better than these: what help have they provided for human beings? And if those schools cannot provide, and colleges and universities cannot provide any help to humanity, what do you think? -- your small schools are going to help these poor aboriginals"

"All that you will do is, you will destroy their originality. All that you will do is, you will destroy their primitive wildness. They are still free: your schools will create nothing but trouble for them."

The man was shocked, but he waited for a few seconds and then replied, "Perhaps you are right, because once in a while I have been thinking that these schools and colleges and universities exist on a far wider scale all over the world. What can my small schools do? But then I thought it was Gandhi's order to me to go to aboriginals and open schools, so I am following my

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master's order." I said, "If your master was an idiot, that does not mean that you have to continue following the order. Now, stop -- I order you! And I tell you why you have been doing all this -- just to escape from your own suffering, your own misery. You are a miserable man; anybody can see it from your face. You have never loved anybody, you have never been loved by anybody."

He said, "How did you manage to infer that? -- because it is true. I was an orphan, nobody loved me, and I have been brought up in Gandhi's ashram where love was only talked about in prayer; otherwise, love was not a thing to be practised. There was strict discipline, a kind of regimentation. So nobody has ever loved me, that's true; and you are

right, I have never loved anybody because in Gandhi's ashram it was impossible to fall in love. That was the greatest crime.

"I was one of those whom Gandhi praised because I never fell in his eyes. Even his own sons betrayed him. Devadas, his son, fell in love with Rajagopalchari's daughter, and then he was expelled from the ashram; they got married. Gandhi's own personal secretary, Pyarelal, fell in love with a woman and kept the love affair secret for years. When it was exposed it was a scandal, a great scandal."

I said, "What nonsense! But Gandhi's personal secretary ... that means, what about others?" And this man was praised because he never came in contact with any woman! Gandhi sent him to the aboriginal tribes and he had been doing what the master had said.

But he said to me, "You have disturbed me. Perhaps it is true: I am just trying to escape from myself, from my wounds, from my own anguish." So all these people who become interested in saving humanity, in the first place are very egotistic. They are thinking of themselves as saviours. In the second place, they are very sick. They are trying to forget their sickness. And in the third place, whatever they do is going to help man become worse than he is, because they are sick and blind and they are trying to lead people. And when blind people lead then you can be certain sooner or later the whole lot will fall into a well.

-Osho, From Darkness to Light Chapter #1

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