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The real colours of peace

R Akhileshwari

Peace+Children=Peaceful Children, says V Balu, the 75-year-old former bureaucrat who has been on a one-man mission for the past 23 years to spread peace through his art.

Every religion holds up peace as the ultimate objective, in this world and the next. Every religion wishes peace on all. And yet today, peace is the most scarce commodity, within individuals, societies and nations. "Today we have everything else except peace of mind," says V Balu, a peace warrior who has dedicated his life to the unlikely pursuit of peace through the art of collages. He agrees that everybody is going wrong somewhere, because our world is full of violence, anger is all pervasive and many of us are in a state of constant battle with ourself and with the environment in which we live and work.

"We are trying to find peace where it is not, in possessions, positions, fame and wealth. We are looking in the wrong places," he says. "Once you know where peace is not, the task of finding it becomes relatively easy. Remove all the obstacles in this search, the ego, jealousy, hatred. Once you clear your mind and purify your heart, peace begins to surface," he adds.

Art in pursuit of peace?

"We are embodiments of peace, but we are not aware of this," says Balu. So he has taken it upon himself to spread the word. Balu, the 75-year-old former bureaucrat has been on a one-man mission for the past 23 years to spread peace through his art. He has travelled with his show around the world, winning admirers and followers.

His collages have been used for a first day cover design by the posts and Telegraph Department. They have appeared on the cover of the Reader's Digest and of the UN Courier.

The collages have been used to raise funds for various causes. His works are in public and private collection's in several countries of Europe, Africa, the USA, South East Asia and of course in India.


The ITC celebrated Balu's work by bringing out a coffee table book with 79 colour reproductions of his art. His most recent exhibition 'Inner Peace for Global Peace' was held in Hyderabad in March 2005, hosted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The blues, the violets and the lilac that mark out his collages are spiritual colours; they are colours of peace.

Single-handed effort

Balu says efforts of individuals are not to be under-estimated. "Individuals command enormous power for both good and evil. Didn't Mahatma Gandhi bring us freedom? Did not Mother Teresa make a difference to the suffering poor of Calcutta? Individuals do matter and can bring about definitive change," he maintains. This change, according to Balu, should begin with children.

"Children instinctively understand and have their own concepts about peace," he says. During an interaction with children, Balu asked a girl to describe 'peace.' Her words: "Peace is doing what you



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want and helping others to do what they want."

Taking cue from such wisdom of the innocent, Balu worked out a formula: Peace+Children="Peaceful" Children. This is also the title of a book Balu has written for children which, incidentally, has been translated into Kannada and the Karnataka Government has agreed to distribute it among 3000 school libraries in Karnataka. Balu tries to reach as many children as possible with his message of peace by giving talks in schools.


For peace to reign supreme, the purity of mind of a baby has to be emulated, he says. Though everybody desires peace, their mind is so cluttered with anger, corruption, dishonesty, discontent, anxiety that peace gets no chance.

Balu has been able to convince people across several continents of his faith in the power of peace. He has held workshops, given lectures and organised shows of his art and faith.

He has written eight books on peace education. He asks each of us to try the mantras which we all know but have not discovered: count our blessings. Shed ego and develop humility. Make it your duty to promote and practise peace.

"Your energy of peace will spread into ether. Like a bag of ice radiating coolness. Anger and negativity corrode our innermost being, like acid does to the container it is stored in. Peace gives us power, for peace is soul power," believes Balu.

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