

# Optima Foundation - Poverty Relief

25 Oxford Avenue, ST. ALBANS  
Herts, AL1 5NS, United Kingdom

Established: August 1996

News Letter – Issue 6

August 2001

## Summer time!

In the affluent societies, summer is often associated with romantic sunny afternoons, relaxing with a preferred drink in the company of family and friends. Yes ! some are fortunate enough to enjoy the fruits of life. Enjoyment is the gift - the Almighty has bestowed upon the human race. But summer can also be a period of suffering, whether they are nature induced – such as hay fever or human induced - such as riots, violence and general social misbehaviour. No matter which part of the world we live in, it is difficult to change the physical environment that affects our wellbeing. But with the adoption of Human Values in our day to day life, we can overcome the human

induced illnesses that prevail across the world.

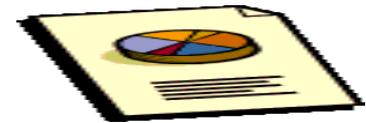
*“..the eternal questions – what is the world really like? How am I to live my life in it ? How can I be truly be myself?”*

*Bruno Bettelheim, 1991.*

## News update:

We have just sent £400 to Sri Lanka to feed the children in six orphanages and children homes. This will help us to feed the children on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2001 as part of our **Spirituality in Action –2001** Programme. As the programme suggests, on this day, around thousand children will take part in the spiritual contemplation to re-engage with the **Five Lamps of the human values – Love, Peace, Truth, Right conduct and Non – violence**. Following the Contemplation, they

will receive a hearty meal to celebrate the **Unity of Mankind**. We are currently assessing the viability of adding an extra orphanage to our programme.



However, our funds are currently very low to commit ourselves to feeding the children in more orphanages. We also have no human resources this year to collect food and other items for the orphanages in Bosnia, Romania and Ukraine.

As the saying goes, we, the humans are only actors in this drama, and the producer and director of the whole show, **The Lord - Almighty** has the final say. So, we will keep you posted with any further developments.

**Membership Programme:** We invite all the benefactors to join our membership programme. This will enable us to work closely with you and to fulfil your aspirations within Optima Foundation.

*For further information and Membership Form*

Bankers:

**National Westminster Bank**

10 St Peter's Street,  
St. Albans, Herts. AL1 3LY  
Sort code: 60 – 18 – 11  
Account Number: 45319502

**Please write to:**

Miss Valli Luschwitz (Hon. chairperson)  
14 Blueberry Close  
ST ALBANS  
Herts. AL3 6NH  
United Kingdom

Per Year:

Members	(Individuals)	£10.00
Associates	(Organisations)	£50.00

**Or:** **email:** tom\_jeyendran@yahoo.co.uk  
**Telephone:** Tom on 07974 764929

Please write your cheque to:

**Optima Foundation**

## Formation and brief history of Optima Foundation

Optima Foundation was established in August 1996 as a Forum to consolidate the spiritual and voluntary work carried out by Miss Valli Luschwitz and Tom Jeyendran.

Miss Valli Luschwitz has been active since 1950's and Tom Jeyendran has been active since late 1970's in promoting spiritual and social harmony among the under privileged. Although Valli (Hon. Chairperson) and Tom (Hon. Secretary) have taken the leading roles in this Forum, there are many supporters and service providers, whose dedication and support has enabled the Forum to achieve many of its objectives in its short history.

Optima Foundation has no political or sectarian alliances or affiliation and funded by donations and membership fees only. Currently, every Penny collected (100%) is spent on the under privileged children in countries such as Bosnia, Romania, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. Administration costs are borne by a few selected benefactors and the committee members.

### Aims and Purpose

Optima Foundation exists to provide Poverty Relief on a global basis, thus reducing the physical, intellectual and spiritual hunger. In this mission, Optima Foundation aims to promote the **Five Lamps** concept in Human Values. They are Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non Violence.

### Commitment

Optima Foundation is fully committed to the Principles of Interfaith Harmony and Human Values. Thus we shall carry out our work, rising above any social barriers resulting from gender, race, class, religious affiliation and physical or mental limitations of individuals.

### Objectives

#### In the Short and Medium Term, Optima Foundation shall:

- 1 Sponsor feeding Programmes for children in need
- 2 Provide books to orphanages and children's homes to enhance their educational abilities.
- 3 Promote religious harmony among young children and develop interfaith understanding.
- 4 Provide training and development workshops for the volunteers, members and supporters.
- 5 Help those who endeavour to help themselves

#### In the Long Term, Optima Foundation shall:

- 1 Establish an "adopt a child" programme to provide 'fatherhood or motherhood support' to the under privileged children in orphanages and children's homes all over the world.
- 2 Promote interfaith harmony at a global level.
- 3 Promote the concept of "Living with Human Values" among young adults.

**No child deserves neglect and poverty. Let us show that we care!**

### Membership Protocol

Since the inauguration of Optima Foundation we have invited all the participants and benefactors to join our membership scheme.

The Membership is open to anyone who wishes to contribute financially and participate actively in the overall mission of Optima Foundation – Poverty Relief.

In inviting a new member, following criteria will be applied: The new member will be of **good character and trustworthy**.

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The Associate Membership is open to any business or organisation that actively promotes the **Corporate Social Responsibility** in its Operations.

The Management Committee shall determine the annual minimum contribution payable by the members. All contributions from the members, unless requested otherwise, will be used for the Poverty Relief Initiatives only.

All paid up members will receive the free Newsletters published by the Foundation.

## The zero factor -

### From the Indian and Arab mathematical system to the Computer Age

We all know the importance of zero, a mathematical phenomenon that has shaped all the developments in the analytical techniques. The binary system which under-pins the computer programming relies on two digits; firstly one and then zero.

So where did this zero start its journey to modernise the mathematical calculations? Both Greek philosophers and Roman strategists rejected the notion of null factor (Greek: Ouden) or 'nothingness'.

Even though the historical facts are sketchy, the earliest evidence of using the zero for mathematical calculations goes back to the Babylonian era. That era dates back to 1700 Before Common Christian era (B.C.C.E also referred to as B.C). During that time a wedge shaped symbol was used represent the null factor. In that period, for example, 6 with a wedge - represented 60 days which equated to 2 solar months, and this in turn equated to 1 season. Babylonian and other civilisations at that time enjoyed six seasons in a solar cycle of one year. This may account for their base factor of 60 in their astronomical projections. The symbols on tablets, known as Kew-ni (cuneiform), enabled the astronomers with their calculations. Since the demise of the Babylonian civilisation, the zero disappeared from mathematical calculations.

The earliest recorded use of the numeral zero in the modern format with the base factor of 10 is in an inscription on a copper plate symbolising Sankheda (Vedhic hymns / Prophecies) found in an archaeological dig in Gujarat State, now in custody of the State Government of India. This plate is said to date back to 585 – 586 B.C.C.E. In the earlier Sanskrit texts of the fourth century B.C.C.E, Zero was referred to Shunya. The concept of Shunya was clearly explained in Pingala's Chandah Sutra which dates back to second century of the Common Christian Era (C.C.E also referred to as A.D). In Brahama Gupta's Brahamasphuta Siddhantha, the seventh century version of the spiritual pathway, zero is lucidly explained as the point of null value, yet central to many astrological and astronomical calculations. The Dravidian philosophers of South India of that time, referred to zero as Miyam, meaning the centre of all numerals, represented with a dot. The Indian symbols for numerals now in use all over the Arabic world.

In 776 C.C.E. An Indian philosopher presented the calculations to determine the movement of heavenly bodies at the Court of Caliph Al-Mansour. Since then many Arabic philosophers had incorporated the use of zero to explain the calculations on solar and lunar time horizon. Also the father of Algorithm, Al-Khwarizmi (translated in Latin as Algoritmi) depended on zero value for his mathematical calculations. Zero also became an important mathematical symbol to the medical and natural healers of Egypt and other Arab countries for the calculation of time period to prescribe medicine.

There are still some doubts over which symbols for the numerals started first. The works of Al Baghdadi - circa 800 C.C.E, Al-Sizji – 969 C.C.E, and Al Biruni – 1082 C.C.E are crucial to understand the early development. They point out that the Gubba method of learning (writing on a plate of sand dust, as there were no paper based writing system during that time) might have created the modern Arabic numerals from the original Indian numerals. Al Banna Al Marrakushi's work shows the 90% rotation of the symbols resulted from the Gubba method of learning and the switch to - right to left - writing system in the Arabic world.

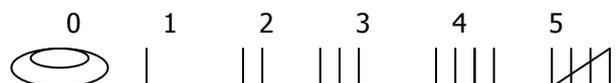
From the Eighth Century C.C.E onwards Europe has adopted the Arabic numerals and the zero resulting from a **base factor of ten** calculations. Since then Europe has used the zero extensively to explain the natural and scientific phenomena. In this process Roman numeral system was discarded in favour of the Arabic numeral system and the symbols.

Even though there were many gaps and assumptions in the original Indian and then the Arabic calculation systems, the zero value played a major role in the development of modern mathematics including Algorithm and Geometry.

This is the story of Shunya in Sanskrit becoming Sipher in Arabic to become Zero in English, as we know it today.

Source: from many citations linked to the History of Mathematics, Arabic numeral system and the History of Zero on the web (Internet).

Editor's Note: There is also some evidence on the use of an oval shape zero by Mayans and Aztecs in Americas. However the base factor was 5 and zero was just a starting point (See below).



## **Points to Ponder**

Excerpts from the Book called **Autobiography of a Yogi** by **Paramahansa Yogananda**.

"Don't concern yourself with the faults of others", the Master said. "Use the scouring powder of wisdom to keep the rooms of your own mind bright and spotless. By your example, other persons will be inspired to do their own house-cleaning"

"Man is not an automaton, and therefore cannot always live wisely by simply following a set of rules and rigid moral precepts. In the great variety of daily problems and events, we find scope for the development of good judgement."

Two disciples unjustly angry with one of their brothers took their complaints to the Master. He

listened in silence. When they were through, he said, "Change yourselves".

### **Guru Sai Baba on Interfaith Harmony**

"Let the different faiths exist; let them flourish, and let the glory of God be sung in all languages and in a variety of tunes. That should be ideal. Respect the differences between faiths, and recognise them as valid as long as they do not extinguish the flame of unity. If each person lives the ideals propounded by the founders of their religion, unaffected by greed or hate, then the world will be a happy and peaceful habitation for man."

### **Ephesians Chapter 2: 5**

"By Grace ye are saved"

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## **On a lighter side**

During first week of the new term in January 2000, one of my colleagues, an English teacher in an inner city primary school asked his pupils a question to start the interactive learning. "What is special about this year – Year 2000?" Quick reply came from a pupil in the corner, "Grown-ups telling lies!" The teacher prompted the pupil, "What do you mean?" The pupil replied " them telling, the whole wide world is gonna' end in 2000 and then buying loads 'n' loads of food in the supermarkets on the New Year's eve to store it".

*Tom Jeyendran*

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## **Celebration of Unity Hymns from our Jewish friends**

### **Shalom**

#### **Chorus:**

Shalom my friends, Shalom!  
May Peace be yours, Shalom!  
Shalom my friends, Shalom to you  
May Peace be yours Shalom!  
May Peace be with you Shalom!  
May Peace be with you and with the world!  
The Peace we all yearn to have

Shalom my friends, Shalom to you  
May Peace be yours Shalom!

#### **Verse:**

Be still and Find  
That Place within  
The source of Love  
Where Peace begins  
Access that Source  
Of Love and Light  
Peace will be yours  
Throughout your life

*(Shalom means Peace)*

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## **How did we do in the past with our Spirituality in Action Programmes?**

Since the inauguration of **Spirituality in Action Programme** in 1996, we have despatched food and other items to orphanages in Chernigov – Ukraine in 1996 and 1998. The orphanages in Mostar – Bosnia were included in 1996 for food and other goods. In Sri Lanka, we sponsored the feeding programmes in 2 orphanages over four Mondays in November / December period. The 97 feeding programme was over 3 Mondays to the 2 orphanages and one lunch for the street children of Colombo. There was a switch to the Programme in 1998 and one single day was selected to sponsor five orphanages and children's homes. In 1999, the number of institutions was increased to six and on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1999 we were able to feed well over 1000 children on that day. This was replicated in year 2000 on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December.