



Optima Foundation - Poverty Relief

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

Established: August 1996

News Letter – Issue 7

December 2001

Seasons Greetings!

December is always seen as the month of spiritual awakening or the dawn period. Pagans celebrate the winter solstice on the 21st December. Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, the son of virgin Mary on the 25th December. Hindus celebrate the dawn period by walking through streets in the early hours of the morning, singing Vedhic hymns (similar to carol singing) to awaken the souls that are in deep sleep.

This year, Muslims are in their spiritual fast and contemplation (The Holy month of Ramadan) in December and those who follow the Jewish faith are celebrating the coming of New Year – Hanukkah on the 10th December. So all in all, the month of December has become a month of dawn and spiritual awakening.

Let us wish you all



*Happy,
Healthy and
Peaceful times
ahead.*

Our activities in 2001:

As we stated in our last issue, arrangements have been made to feed the children in 7 orphanages and children's homes on the 10th December as part of our **Spirituality in Action – 2001** Program. On this day, around thousand children will take part in the spiritual contemplation. Following this, all the children will receive a hearty meal to celebrate the **Unity of Mankind**.

Love All! Serve All! **Appeal for 2002**

In year 2002, we are hoping to replicate our work in Sri Lanka and if possible to restart our support in countries such as Bosnia, Romania and Ukraine.

On average we spend 50 Pence per child per meal and every penny we collect (100%) is used for the feeding program.

In this venture every Penny counts. So please support our **Spirituality in Action Program for 2002**

We would also like to take this opportunity to say **'thank you'** to those who have made the **Spirituality in Action – 2001** Program possible.

God Bless you all.

Tom Jeyendran
Hon. Secretary

Membership Program:

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

For further information and Membership Form

Please write to:

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

Or: **email:** tom_jeyendran@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone: Tom on 07974 764929

Bankers:

National Westminster Bank

10 St Peter's Street,
ST ALBANS
Herts. AL1 3LY

Sort code: 60 – 18 – 11

Account Number: 45319502

Per Year:

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

Closing the chapter on Year 2001

At the beginning of Year 2001, people of the world greeted the New Year with jubilation to celebrate the new millennium. The party started at mid night on the 1st of January 2000. There was a sense of brotherhood among many. Even though there were questions on the exact time to celebrate the new millennium, no one minded. It became a two-year long celebration. However, almost everything changed from the 11th of September. Many have already started their soul-searching journey. So let us take comfort offered by **Barbara J. Laing** and **Guru Sathya Sai Baba**.

**As we travel along life's path
Nothing ever stays the same,
All things must change at some time
Whether it be for ill or gain,
Yet, the unchanging factor,
The greatest one of all,
Is that there is a mighty Power that listens
To every human call**

**It will comfort and sustain you
Whenever things go wrong
It will take your hand and guide you
As Life's path you walk along
So, when dark clouds descend
Upon the path you tread
Call upon this Power to guide you
And it will light the way ahead
(Whispers of Love by Barbara J. Laing)**

Be brave!

"Events of this kind overcome humanity from time to time. Face this with fortitude. This is the time to repetition of the Lord's name and remembrance of God always"

(Guru Sathya Sai Baba)

Our Prayer for peace

**We may call you Allah or Baba
We may call you Jehovah or Jesus
We may call you Buddha, Jeganatha,
Shakti, Shiva or Gananatha
Names are many!**



**In all,
You are one,
The God of love
The spiritual light, the universal love,
The omnipresent, the omnipotent**

**Turn our hearts and minds
Towards you to find
Peace and Love
In every one**

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

Children of the World

**If a child lives with criticism
He learns to condemn
If a child lives with hostility
He learns to fight
If a child lives with shame
He learns to feel guilty
If a child lives with tolerance
He learns to be patient
If a child lives with encouragement**

***He learns confidence*
If a child lives with praise
He learns to appreciate
If a child lives with fairness
He learns justice
If a child lives with security
He learns to have faith
If a child lives with approval
He learns to like himself
If a child lives with acceptance and
friendship
*He lives to find love in the world***

Origin unknown

The dating game!

In the modern world, our lives are bound up with the dates and calendar. There are many dates to remember: birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and so on. So the dating game has become part and parcel of our lives and in our relationships with others.

So where did it all start? Our ancestors recognized the cycle between days and nights and then the waxing and waning of the moon (The lunar cycle). The cavemen avoided hunting and other activities during the new moon due to the total darkness of the night. The aborigines of Australia and Proto-Dravidians of South Asia practised the abstention of any activities on the night of a new moon and sat around fire for the darkness to pass over.

The story of calendar begins with astronomy where by astronomers attempted to group the dates and to predict the lunar cycles before the event. So it began to predict the length of a day, lunar month and the year. The earlier development of calendars was not universal and each society created its own calendar based on their knowledge and belief systems.

Even though a seven-day week cycle was broadly accepted by many around the world, the calculation of months and year created problems. Months were often linked to a mixture of planets or Gods and the year was linked to the animals or plants. As the year based on a lunar cycle did not have any consistency with the number of days and nights in one year, the Nordic Society named the longer years after major gods and shorter years after the minor gods.

The modern version of the calendar goes back around 6000 years, built on the tropical year. At that time the climate between Hindu Kush region (Current Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Egypt consisted of 4 seasons – **Planting** (spring) **Protecting** (summer), **Harvesting** (autumn) and **Resting** (winter). Each of these tropical seasons consisted 90 days. Even though the records from the Hindu Kush civilization is lost forever, the Egyptian records have proved that the high priests allocated a number of days, often 5 days, between harvesting and resting to celebrate the birthdays of the greatest gods of the Egyptian pantheon. This accounted for their synchronization of their planting season. The administrative system at that time in Egypt was based on a '10 day' week to carry out the tasks ordered by the rulers (The first Metric working days)

The Hebrew calendar, however, has relied on the lunar month. As the New Year is always fixed to autumn season with the beginning of the month Tishri, there is a continuous discrepancy in the total number of days. The tablets from the 17th Century BC (Before Christian Era) suggest that Hebrew calendar has short years with 12 lunar months and long years with 13 lunar months.

There are also a number of rules, known as dehiyyot to predict the birth of the New Year or Hanukkah. These rules prevent Hoshana Rabba and Yom Kippur falling on the Sabbath. All adjustments are made within the context of deficient year and complete year rules.

The calendar that says 2001 or 2002 simply denotes the Christian era based on the birth of Jesus Christ (Anno Domini). The calculation convention is that the first day of the new month after the birth of Jesus will be known as the New Year. However, there were and still are many discussions on the exact time of the birth of Jesus. The calculation from the Greek Orthodox Church shows a '6 day' difference in the time of birth. There are also some doubts on the day itself; that is 25th December as the birthday of Jesus.

However, the modern society as a whole has accepted both 25th December as the birthday of Jesus and 1st January as the beginning of the New Year for convenience.

Hindus of the Brahminic tradition celebrate their New Year on the same day as Diwali, the Celebration of divine light. This normally falls in the autumn season. The Hindus of the Shaivaite tradition celebrate their New Year around the 14th April being the first day of spring. In both cases the New Year represents Year 5103 since the records began. However there are some discrepancies between those rely on the mathematical calculations and those rely on the logical deductions.

Muslims follow the Hegira Year based on the return of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) to Mecca from Medina. Hegira year is based on the lunar cycle and currently they are in the year 1422.

Finally the dates and the calendar have a major hold on us. They have served the human race well for many years and we hope they will serve us favorably in the future as well.

(Source: Internet Literature)

Points to Ponder

The Master (Guru)

During the first discourse with the Master (Guru) the new disciple with some doubts, broke the silence to pose a question. “Master, there are many, with claims that they are the enlightened Masters, How would someone like myself distinguish a true Master from the rest?”

After a short pause, the Master replied, “When one says that you are stupid on account of your failures is not the Master; but the one who says nothing, yet beams light on those dark corners that hide the stepping stones for your success and wellbeing is the Master.”

**A momentary triumph or a lasting victory
- That is the question.**

All gains through forced arguments and loud voice do not last a solar cycle. It is like conquering a sandcastle. The ill will, one stirs-up in conquering, destroys not the opponents but the castle itself. So it is powerful and resourceful to get others to agree with your plans through demonstrable reasoning. Here, it is better to be a gentle maiden than a wild rabbit.

(Sun-Tzu: The statesman and Warrior Fourth Century B. C.)

Automata

People who experience themselves as automata, as robots, as bits of machinery ... are rightly regarded as crazy - Yet why do we not regard a theory that seeks to transmute persons into automata ... as equally crazy!

R. D. Laing, (From “The Divided Self”)

On a lighter side

A middle-aged, self-proclaimed bachelor farmer in the heart of Cornwall suddenly decided to advertise for a partner using a notice board in the local parish church after long Sunday sermon on spiritual journey – Genesis to Destiny. The bemused churchwarden confronted the farmer to find some explanations. The farmer replied, “*I have a cockerel to wake me up in the morning, sheep and cattle to follow my orders, dogs to guard me and pigs to ignore me. But who will tell me, looking at my face, **where I’ve come from, where I’m now and where I’m going**”.*

Tom Jeyendran

Corporate Social Responsibility

1. Use hospitality one to another without grudging

(The Holy Bible – Peter - an apostle of Jesus Christ –PBUH- Chapter 4 Verse 9)

2. Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight: That is the most fitting and most advantages in the final determination.

(The Holy Qur’an - Sura xvii – Section 4 Verse 35)

3. “It is unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money ... that is all. When you pay too little, you some times lose everything, because the thing

you bought was incapable of doing the things it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot ... it cannot be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder it is well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better.”

John Ruskin (1819 – 1900)

4.
“Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive”

(Excerpts from an Old English song)

Our life in 4 “L” words

Listen to Learn
Learn to Live
Live to Love

Social Disharmony in 4 “C” s

Closed mind leads to Communication vacuum
Communication vacuum leads to Contempt
Contempt leads to Conflict