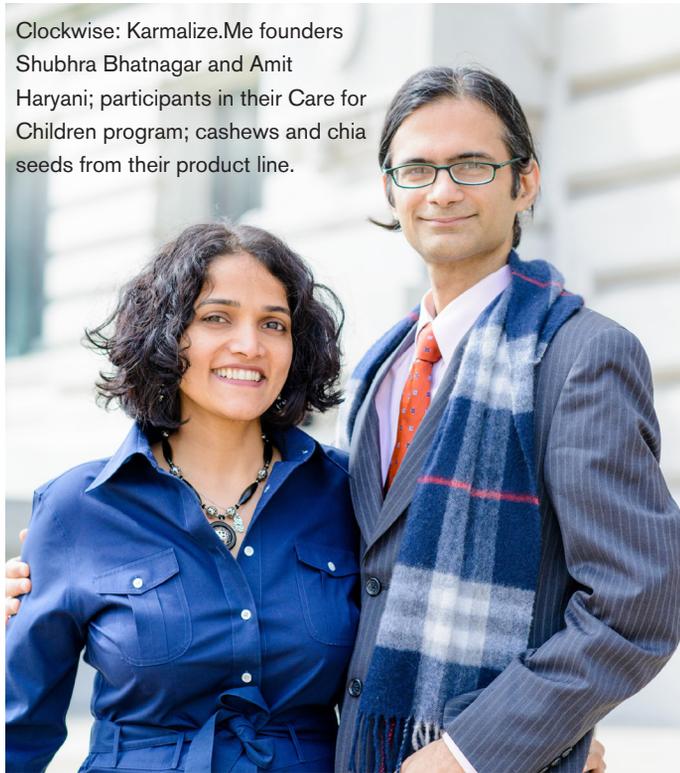


Clockwise: Karmalize.Me founders Shubhra Bhatnagar and Amit Haryani; participants in their Care for Children program; cashews and chia seeds from their product line.



Karma Lies in Me

A philanthropic couple sets out to build their new business around good karma

By **Kristin Vukovic**

One fine Friday, Shubhra Bhatnagar, a successful investment banker, had an epiphany: she decided that she no longer wanted a career in finance. “I woke up and said, this is something I don’t want to do,” Bhatnagar reflects. “I said, whatever I’m going to do now, moving forward, it needs to be life supporting. I want to make a difference in my lifetime.” On Monday, she quit her job.

She was browsing the Internet late at night when the phrase “Karmalize in me” entered her consciousness. The next morning she told her husband, Amit Haryani, about the name Karmalize.Me, a play on words: Karma Lies (in) Me. “Karma means you do good and good comes back to you,” Bhatnagar says. “I thought, what if I can do something that is karmic and with food?”

Her husband came up with the idea of donating 50 percent of their profits to a cause or charity of the customer’s choice, which was inspired by the Art of Living Foundation, where the couple volunteers seven to 10 hours a week teaching the Happiness Program. “When we started this company, we asked ourselves what our lives are defined by,” Haryani says. “We decided that the company had to represent who we are—we love to give, and giving has to be a very important part of the company. There are a lot of companies that give, but if you

really look at the label, it’s one percent. Our approach to giving is phenomenally different than everyone else.”

The company’s first product was organic quinoa. They asked their 12,000+ Facebook fans for ideas about what items to introduce next. One fan wrote, “Can you do something with chia or dal?” Their next product was chia. Organic coconut sugar, beans, nuts and seeds, and sprouted raw almond milk followed. “Every step, we’ve taken feedback from the customers,” Bhatnagar says. “It is the people’s company: They’re running it, they are telling us what to do. It’s an extension of their kitchen.”

Karmalize.Me’s signature organic almond milk, crafted from almonds sourced from Spain, is made to order. “Every almond that’s grown in the U.S. has to be either pasteurized or treated with PPO, a chemical that is banned in Europe and Mexico,” says Bhatnagar. “Even if it’s organic, it has to be pasteurized. If you heat the nut, there’s no life in it. Our almonds are not pasteurized; they’re not treated with PPO. It’s a live food.”

The couple’s long-term vision is to work directly with organic farmers who employ sustainable farming. “Not all organic is equal,” Haryani says. “We want to give people premium quality organic, and make a difference in society.” karmalize.me