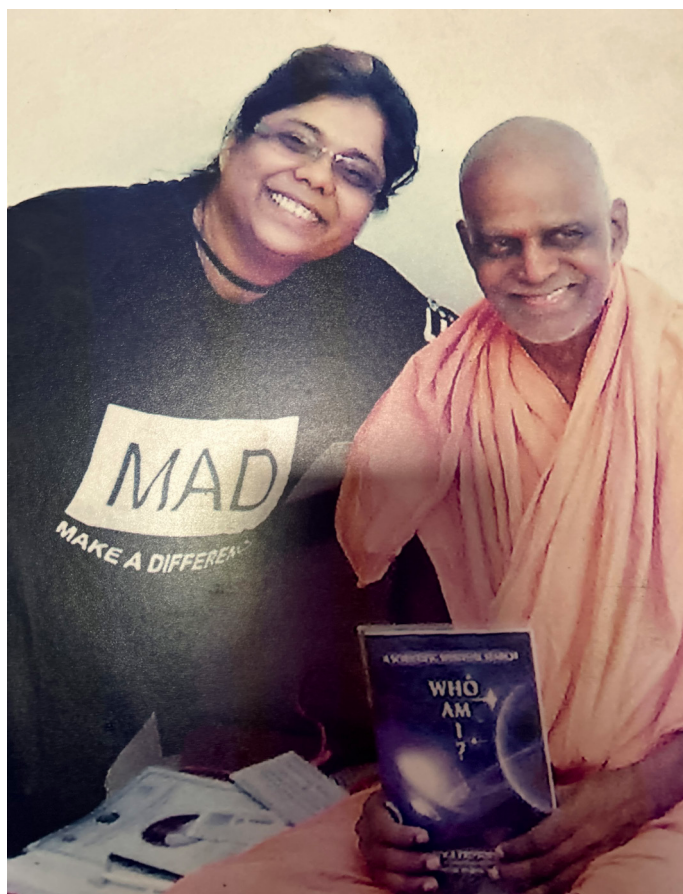


Vande Vandana

Vandana Khaitan, a young woman transformed by the grace of her *guru*, shares with **Navni Chawla** her dream of taking her Master's legacy forward

Born into a typical Marwari business family, Vandana was different from the rest. While everyone in her circle of friends and family sought and pursued worldly pleasures, she had a different longing: she wanted to explore her inner world. Propelled by her suffering, she undertook a mighty self-transformation journey with the grace of her guru, Yogi Protoplasm (Swami Prajna Aranyaji).

Vandana Khaitan is the daughter of a prominent businessman. She invited me to her home for this interview. As I sat in her beautiful house and began talking with her, I was intrigued by her journey. On the next page are the highlights of the conversation.



Vandana with her guru Yogi Protoplasm

Can you briefly tell us about yourself and your journey?

There was a big tragedy in my life, but if suffering takes one closer to God and intensifies one's *vairagya* [detachment] and *bhakti* [devotion], it is a blessing in disguise.

When I was 17, a 65-year-old doctor, who was a family friend, messed up my life. Maybe it was some past-life karma. He tried to molest me, and when I was rude to him I got framed by him. He told my parents that I suffered from manic depression and that I should be taken to a psychiatrist. My 12th board exam results were poor, because of which I was a little depressed, but I certainly did not suffer from manic depression. I had been a topper in school and wanted to go to the USA to study, but my dad refused to send me and was keen on getting me married after school. I rebelled and secretly applied to American Ivy League colleges. However, I did not get admission.

My poor parents fell into the doctor's trap and rushed me to a psychiatrist who put me on strong antidepressants. Only after many years did my parents find out that the doctor was a crook and had cheated them of crores of rupees in a charity hospital project and that there were cases in court against him for molesting nurses.

When I discontinued the medicines abruptly, in anger at what the doctor had done to me, the reaction was so bad that everyone thought I had some illness [antidepressants are psychotic drugs and must never be discontinued abruptly]. For 15 long years, these doctors messed up my life.

But I believe that I also have some good karma and through Krishna's *kripa* [grace], at the age of 32, I met my *guruji*, Yogi Protoplasm, in Rishikesh, who healed my life and got me out of the mess.

When I started narrating my problems to him, he told me to keep quiet and said the root cause of any problem is attachment to the perishable body. He made me realise that I was not this perishable body but a divine eternal soul. He said, "Stop talking about your problems and sit and chant 'Om' with me. Mantras [sounds with mystical powers] will help you break your attachment to your body and connect you to your soul bliss."

Chanting Om for hours in his presence for a few days healed my disturbed mind, which became peaceful. Under his guidance, I left the antidepressants slowly. So I owe my life to Gururji. Now I am 54, and it has been 22 years since I left the medicines. Om is not only a *moksha* [liberation] mantra, but it also has great healing powers. I call my journey *thokar se thakur tak* [from misery to the master].

What is the vision and mission of your foundation, Vande Krsna?

Vande Krsna was founded by me primarily to promote science and spirituality, and especially my guru Yogi Protoplasm's teachings on Vedanta (the body of knowledge found at the end of the Vedas) and science globally.

Gurudev was a disciple of Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Rama. As a former biology professor, he was famous for explaining deep Vedantic truths through science in a simple manner and for his intensive meditation retreats. He was a *tapasvi* mahatma [master of penance] who lived only on milk for 35 years.

Though I am only a struggling seeker still trying to overcome many weaknesses, I dream of turning my guru's camps into a global movement like Vipassana. I want to work especially with the rich who are poor in values, for I feel if the one per cent who has the power



The media is very powerful, and if we can make masala-cum-message movies which not only entertain but also enlighten, they could help awaken the millions of spiritually starving people on the planet

and money could be taught to live like *raj-rishis* [king-sages], ninety per cent of the poverty and corruption problems on the planet could be resolved.

I also dream of setting up:

- Scientific spiritual spas [SSS] which will heal the body, mind, and soul.
- Kirtan [spiritual songs] bars where the DJ only plays rock kirtan and where only juice is served so that we can attract the youth who are mostly going astray through drugs, alcohol, etc.
- Womb-to-tomb centres [WTTC] which comprise *garbh sanskar* schools attached to old age homes and a *sarva dharma* temple where the values of all religions are taught right from the womb stage. Kids must be taught that values are more valuable than valuables.
- Make ‘masala’ message movies which not only entertain but also enlighten.
- As Kalamji [Dr APJ Abdul Kalam] said, “Dare to dream!”

Where does spirituality meet science?

In *Guruji*’s camps, he would show us pictures of skeletons, telling us to ask ourselves the eternal question, Who am I? Am I these perishable body which will certainly decay with disease and die, or am I a divine eternal soul full of bliss, peace, and cosmic love?

Come to think of it, what do most of us do most of our lives? We indulge in fancy stuff—clothes, jewellery, bags, cars—and, finally, fancy diseases, fancy hospitals, and, then, fancy funerals. *Mrityuloka* [abode of death; Earth] is only a fool’s paradise. *Guruji* would show us pictures of the circulatory system and the pumping heart to teach us how to erase the ego. He would say, “Suppose your next meeting is with the prime minister and he is going to give you a big cheque for your project. You are very excited to meet him, but your heart suddenly fails. Can you meet him? So there is a higher power running this cosmic show. Surrender and become egoless. ERASE EGO. This was my *guru*’s mantra.

Mahatma Gandhi shook the entire British Empire, but he never said that he did it. He always said it was the Lord's will done through him. Greatness lies in being humble, simple, and selfless.

When people ask my *guru* why he calls himself Yogi Protoplasm, he would show them cells under a microscope. What is each cell made of? Protoplasm. So, whether you are rich or poor, black or white, male or female, Hindu or Muslim, we are all made up of protoplasm. The Upanishads also say that the soul is one in all and thus we must practise cosmic living, but alas, most people are only living in a spirit of cut-throat competition. Human love is mostly selfish and conditional. Look at the high rate of divorces, female foeticide, rape, and murder in our society. Only saints can practise unconditional cosmic love.

If you want to know more about science and spirituality please read Yogiji's book *Who am*

I?: Scientific spiritual search. It is available on Amazon and other sites. You could also watch the film based on the book on the Vande Krsna channel on YouTube.

What inspires you to make movies?

The media is very powerful, and if we can make masala-cum-message movies which not only entertain but also enlighten, they could help awaken the millions of spiritually starving people on the planet. I have made four films so far on Vedanta and science, inspired by Guruji:

- *Who am I?: Scientific Spiritual Search*. It is based on Yogiji's book of the same name. With the help of skeletons, circulatory systems, galaxies, and protoplasm, Yogiji takes the seeker on an exciting scientific voyage of Self-discovery. Self-discovery is Self-recovery.
- *Mum: Meditation ultimate medication*, which talks about the healing powers of the mantra Om, *Garbhsanskar*, past



Yogi vs Bhogi

life regression therapy, how to heal relationships, and so on.

- *Search of a Spiritual Scientist* is a docudrama on Yogi Protoplasm and his great *gurus*—Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Rama. The film explores how a biology professor from Nellore became a great yogi [one who practises yoga] and a spiritual scientist.
- *Yogi vs Bhogi* (a person who indulges in sensual pleasures). In the *bhogi's* life, we have shown corruption, female foeticide, etc. The yogi tries to awaken the *bhogi* through Soul Shakti. Art of Living singer Siddharth Mohan plays the role of the yogi and sings in the film, and Kiran Bedi makes a guest appearance too.

So, *yogi bano ya bhogi ya fir rogi* (become a yogi or a *bhogi* or a diseased person)—the choice is yours!

I dream of remaking *Yogi vs Bhogi* for the big screen.

I am grateful to my dad who helped me produce these movies. Special thanks to Sucheta and Harsh Anand who directed the films as a *guru seva* (service to the guru) project.

Movie-cum-meditation workshops are done through me. Level 1 is for two hours, and Level 2, for two days. We teach an ancient meditation technique called *Pranava Nada Anusandhan*, or six stages of chanting Om.

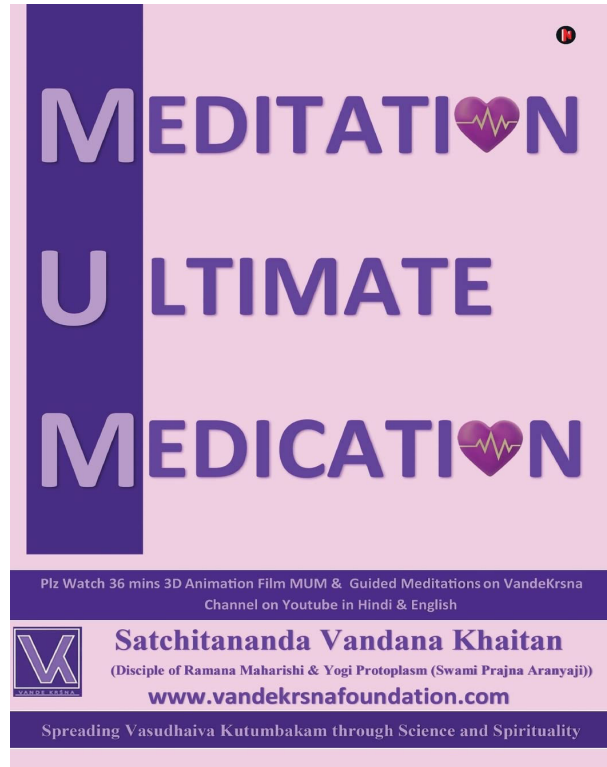
In the past, we have done workshops for the Bhilwara group, Manya group, PHD Chamber of Commerce, and others.

What, according to you, needs to change in the world we live in?

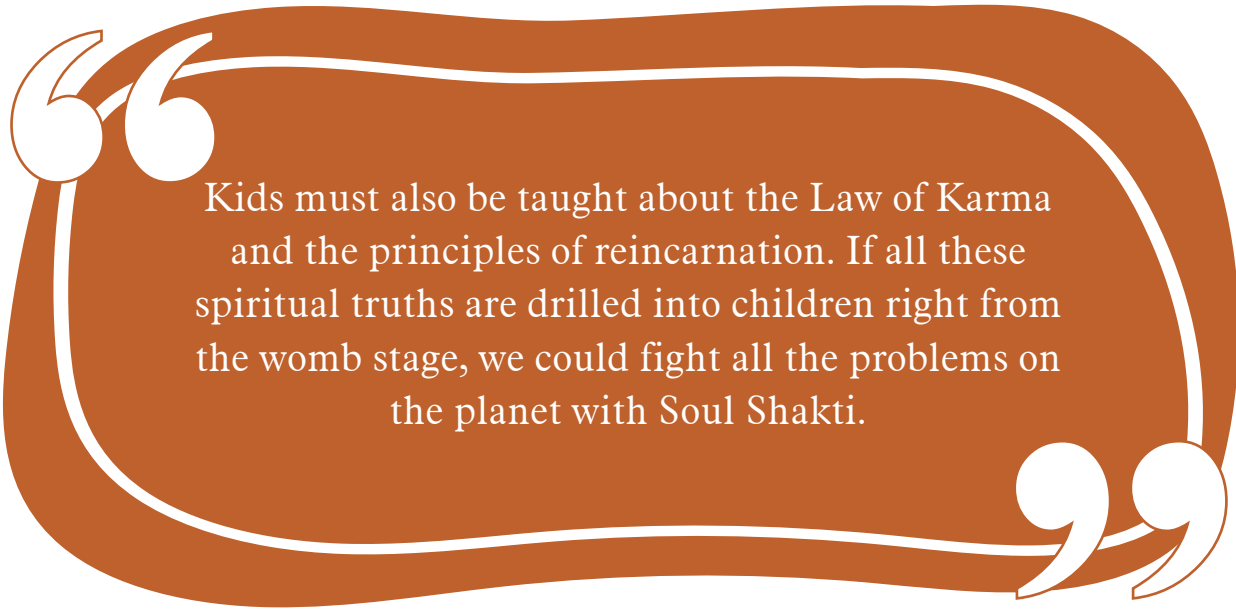
I feel there are many problems on the planet, but the root cause is a lack of spiritual awakening.

Why is man so greedy and selfish? Why are most people religious and practising commercial devotion, but only a few are spiritual, leading simple selfless lives? Why is there corruption and politics even in the ashrams (monasteries)?

I feel that a 'values vaccine' is the urgent need of the hour and that instilling values must start right from the womb stage. *Garbhadhan* and *Garbhsanskar* must be promoted. Children must be taught the knowledge of the soul: At the soul level we are all one and if we have to earn our promotion from *Mrityuloka* (which is temporary and full of suffering) to *Brahmaloka* (where there is no disease and death) we have to live pure lives of simplicity and selflessness. Alas, due to ignorance, most of us are running after *paisa* [money], power, and party—not Purity.



MUM: A film by Vandana Khaitan



Kids must also be taught about the Law of Karma and the principles of reincarnation. If all these spiritual truths are drilled into children right from the womb stage, we could fight all the problems on the planet with Soul Shakti.

Kids must also be taught about the Law of Karma and the principles of reincarnation. If all these spiritual truths are drilled into children right from the womb stage, we could fight all the problems on the planet with Soul Shakti. Pseudo-secularism destroyed our heritage. Secularism means values from all religions must be taught, and kids must learn to respect their differences. The goal of human birth is not just money and marriage, but *moksha*.

I have written a booklet called *MAD—Make a Difference*—which explores spiritual solutions to problems on the planet, such as corruption, female foeticide, and drugs. This book is available on Amazon.

How do you relate to Krishna Consciousness?

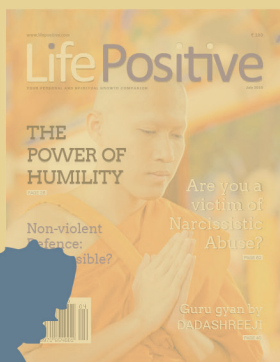
I am a Krishna bhakta [devotee] and I practise both Saguna and Nirguna Upasana. I dance to Krishna Kirtan every day for around one hour in the morning and evening. It keeps me charged and blissful, and connected to the Lord of the Universe.

Kirtan is the easiest form of *sadhana* in Kaliyuga. It is nice to do kirtan in the morning and evening, but we must also try to see Krishna or our *Ishta Devata* in everyone we meet, whether rich or poor, friend or foe, male or female, healthy or sick. Only when we can radiate and practise unconditional cosmic love, we get eligible for liberation from this painful cycle of repeated birth, old age, disease, and death.

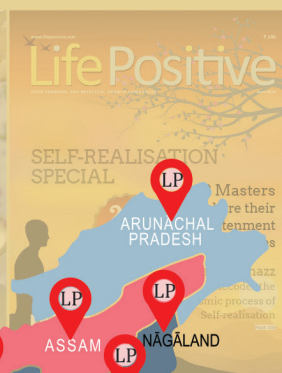
What is love according to you?

Human love is mostly selfish and conditional. Look at the high rate of divorce, female foeticide, and rape in our society. Divine love is selfless and unconditional, as in the case of Mother Teresa picking up abandoned people on the streets and taking care of them or that of Jas Kalra, who is only 22 and heads the Earth Saviours Foundation. His NGO also picks up and takes care of homeless people. We must, as human beings, aspire to move from our human love into cosmic love. Only then will God, or Divine Dad, free us from the repeated cycle of birth, old age, diseases, and death.

I know many rich ladies, who read the



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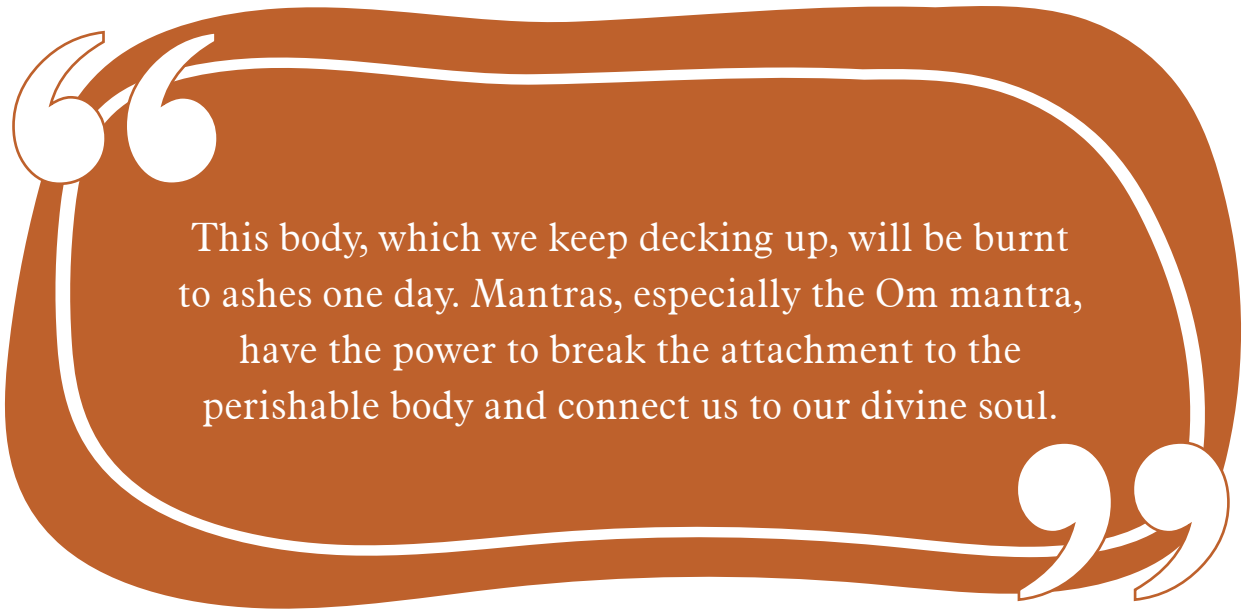
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This body, which we keep decking up, will be burnt to ashes one day. Mantras, especially the Om mantra, have the power to break the attachment to the perishable body and connect us to our divine soul.

scriptures, do not touch non-veg food, and do a lot of *pujas* [rituals] but are guilty of committing female foeticide. Aren't they murderers?

Most people are religious and practise commercial devotion to get this or that from God, but only a few are spiritual and lead simple selfless lives. I find those who attain cosmic love very blessed.

Visualise one person who has hurt you and send that person vibrations of forgiveness and say, "Oh God, You Yourself have come in this form to help me work out my past life karma and to test me. Please help me to have compassion for this person and not hatred." I have used this visualisation to heal many of my relationships and forgive people who hurt me in my troubled times.

How does one access creativity and intuition easily?

One can access the reservoir of creativity, inspiration, and intuition through chanting, meditation, and selfless work as they help to purify our mind. As our soul awareness increases, our intuitive powers also increase proportionally.

As the mind becomes purer and subtler through *sadhana* [spiritual practice] and *seva*, creativity also shoots up.

So, a pure mind is your passport to becoming a Bliss Billionaire. But, unfortunately, most people are chasing *pati* [husband], *putra* [son], *paisa* [money], party, property, and power, but only a few are chasing Purity. Maya Magic [illusion] is very powerful in *Mrityuloka* that allures everyone and keeps them away from realising their highest Self.

What is the antidote to suffering according to you?

A Self-realised master knows that they are not this perishable body but a divine, eternal soul and radiates unconditional cosmic love. They can watch the ups and downs of life like a drama and be mentally unaffected. Ramana Maharshi had cancer, but was immersed in the bliss of Samadhi [abidance in the Self] and was not affected mentally by his body pain. In the last stages of his life, he was operated on without anaesthesia. Of course, it is very rare to find a yogi like Ramana Maharshi

in today's times, but if we are regular with our prayers, chanting, meditation, and selfless work, we can also access our divine soul's blissful nature. Whether one is playing the role of a beggar or a millionaire, this body will certainly disease, decay, and die. The Upanishads and the Geeta repeatedly tell us we are not these perishable bodies but divine eternal souls full of bliss, peace, and cosmic love. Because of ignorance, our attachment to the perishable body is strong, and that's why we suffer. We say "my body, my money, my family" but, in reality, nothing is ours. This body, which we keep decking up, will be burnt to ashes one day. Mantras, especially the Om mantra, have the power to break the attachment to the perishable body and connect us to our divine soul.

So, we must make a routine of prayers, chanting, and meditation, and try to see and serve God in everyone, whether rich or poor, black or white,

Hindu or Muslim, friend or foe.

The Geeta says your last thought determines your next birth. So, if your last thought is pure or divine, you will certainly get out of this cycle of birth, old age, disease, and death.

The most beautiful thing about Vandana is that regardless of whatever she went through in life, she used all the good, bad, and ugly experiences to become a better human being and help other people transform their lives. Her resilience, will, and love for her *guru* not only helped her come out of hell but also turned her mind and heart into a living paradise where bhakti, bhajans [devotional songs], and pure love for God reside. Today, she dreams of transforming other people and contributing towards making this world a better place to live in.

- One can marvel at Vandana's work by visiting her website: www.Vandekrsnafoundation.com.
- All her workshop enquiries can be emailed at vandekrsna@gmail.com
- One can watch her films, talks, bhajans, and guided meditations on her YouTube channel called Vandekrsna.
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