

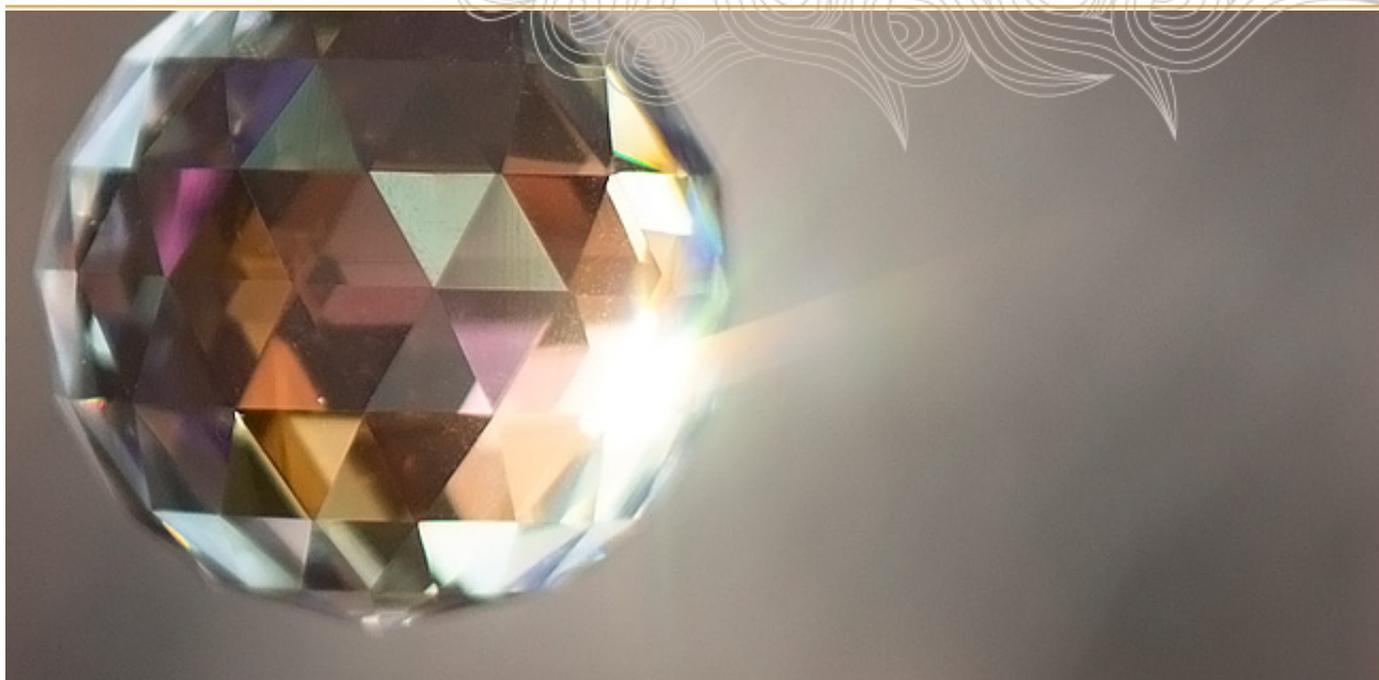
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Yasodhara Ashram
YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1963-2013

GRATITUDE - DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



It was almost a year ago that Swami Radhananda extended a warm invitation to Yasodhara Ashram's 50th Anniversary. That year is now drawing to a close.

Thank you to everyone who joined us - either in person or virtually through our Bhajan Blasts and newsletters.

Thank you to Swami Radha for her vision and promise.

Thank you to Swami Radhanada for leading a vibrant Ashram into its 50th year and beyond.

Thank you for the support we've received all year long from you, our Ashram friends.

In our featured video, join us in celebrating the highlights of this very special year.

Much Light of the season to all of you! Many blessings from all of us at the Ashram!

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- [Festival of Light](#): Step out from the pressure of the holidays and honour the Light in the tranquil and beautiful setting of Yasodhara Ashram. Join us at any point from the Winter Solstice to the New Year, as we celebrate the gifts of the year and enjoy the peace of the season.

UPCOMING ASHRAM COURSES



December 21 - January 1

- [Yoga Development Course \(YDC\) 2014](#): There is still time to sign up for this life-changing course! The YDC is an intensive three-month program designed to give students an in-depth introduction to the major branches of yoga and a foundation in personal and spiritual development. The course is of lasting value not only to potential yoga teachers but also to all those who wish to deepen their yoga practice and make permanent changes in their approach to life.

January 8 - April 8

- [Stilling the Mind Retreat](#): What is the mind? How can it be directed? You will learn various practices - including visualization, breathing techniques, concentration and reflection to help you understand different levels of mind.

February 7-9

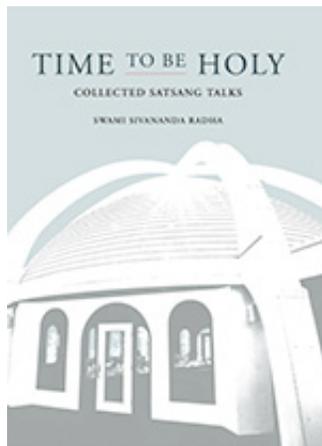
- [Relaxation Retreat \(Spring Equinox\)](#): As winter turns to spring, find balance and renewal within yourself. Focus on going inward, stilling the mind and body, connecting to your inner source of peace, harmony and joy.

March 21-23

- [Personal Retreats](#) and [Artist and Professional Renewal Retreats](#) are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

- **NEW!** 2014 Yasodhara Ashram Program Calendar [now online](#)

Featured Book



Time to be Holy

by Swami Sivananda Radha

www.timeless.org

Video - 50th Anniversary Year in Review



A celebratory retrospective of the Ashram's 50th Anniversary year.

[Watch the video](#)

The Gift of Giving Swami Jyotihananda

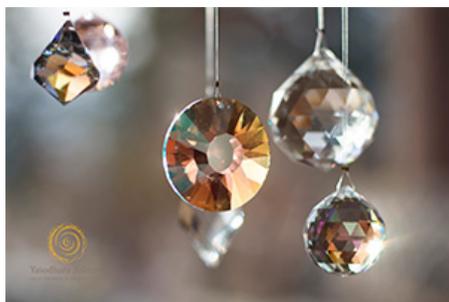


December Recipe:
[Holiday Cookies:](#)
[Vegan & Gluten Free](#)

*"Take time off to think,
to reflect. This is your
time to be holy."*

Swami Sivananda Radha
Time To Be Holy, p 13

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**Desktop Photo
of the Month**

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Our 50th Anniversary has been a year of abundance - most recently through the generosity of donors to the Yasodhara 108 fundraiser, which will help sponsor the Young Adult Program.

Swami Radha said that we have to give back to life. She often told the story about a merchant who promised, when he returned home, to send his guru a carpet. When the gift didn't arrive, the guru finally sent another disciple to remind him. This disciple went resentfully, thinking the guru should be above desiring worldly goods. He found the merchant, who, alarmed at his forgetfulness, sent an even more beautiful, thick carpet back with the struggling disciple. The guru then explained that by asking the merchant to follow through, he saved him from the karma of a broken promise and sustained the good will that was at the basis of the promise.

How do we find the willingness to give in our own lives? What does it mean to give back to life? The answer lies in recognizing that we each have something unique to offer. In some ways the act of giving is an act of surrender. We're not holding onto to our own gifts; we're letting them go. Karma Yoga is a practice where we learn to give without expecting anything for ourselves. In giving, we become more whole, more light, more fulfilled.

Yasodhara 108 - Thank you!



"The best part was when my 90-year-old mother insisted on donating and said how good it made her feel to give back!"

45 days
58 participants
364 donors
\$32,000 raised!

The results are stellar! The initiative, creativity and enthusiasm of each participant was uplifting; the generosity of each donor, humbling.

Thank you from the Ashram's Young Adult Program!

Last year Yasodhara Ashram awarded \$60,000 in bursaries so that young adults could experience life in a spiritual community, learn new skills and participate in yoga courses - including the YDC.

"...my participation in this program had an immensely positive influence on me, and changed the course of my life in remarkable ways..."

Learn more about [Yasodhara 108](#).

Your generous gifts of support are always greatly appreciated. In this season of giving, [please consider supporting the Ashram](#) in our ongoing projects and programs - help us maintain this sacred space and keep Swami Radha's vision alive. www.yasodhara.org/give

My Professional Retreat

Mona Afary



Mona Afary is the Executive Director of a California-based [non-profit center](#) providing social services to refugee families dealing with trauma and exposure to violence.

"Your light is out." When Mona heard this message from the chair of her board, she knew it was time to renew. Her Board raised the funds to send Mona to Yasodhara Ashram for a three-week retreat.

"At first I wondered how I would relate to the Ashram, not knowing what to expect. What I discovered is a beautiful venue, people I easily relate to and the beginnings of friendships.

"During my time at the Ashram, I came to realize how this wonderful force called Divine Light has supported our center, our clients and me. Despite the atrocities our clients have experienced, they are loving and generous. Despite ongoing funding challenges, our center continues to operate. This sense of appreciation has changed my focus from seeing what is lacking to seeing how much is there.

"This insight applies to my personal journey as well. The classes in Dream Yoga, mantra and Hidden Language were immensely beneficial. Self-reflection guided me to understand the importance of balance for my well-being.

"I'm leaving the Ashram filled with Light and knowing that my commitment to my personal journey will also enrich my role as a professional."

Learn more about [Artist and Professional Renewal Retreats](#)

- **Bhajan Blast** - The final 50th Anniversary Bhajan Blast of 2013 took place on Sunday, December 15th! Thank you to all who tuned in this year and connected with us. It has been a rewarding and heartfelt experience to share the vibration of sacred song and dance with our Ashram friends.

View the December 15th recorded broadcast (as well as past Bhajan Blasts) [here](#).

Bhajan Blasts in 2014 are scheduled to take place quarterly. Stay tuned for the announcement of the Winter 2014 Bhajan Blast date!

- **NEW! 2014 Program Calendar [now online](#)** - Discover 2014 Signature courses, core programs and retreats as well as new courses that address contemporary issues such as [Conscious Aging](#), [Relationships: Challenge and Choice](#), [Unplug Retreat: A tech-free weekend](#), [Ethics in Yoga: The Yamas & Niyamas](#), [Discover Yasodhara: Introduction to Spiritual Community](#), [Light & Vibration led by Swami Lalitananda](#), and more.

And learn more about the [Yoga Development Course 2014 \(YDC\)](#), starting on January 8, 2014. Three months of self-reflection and becoming the kind of person you want to be. For more information, contact [Swami Samayananda](#).

- Thank you from the 2013 Newsletter Team - Anna Di Pede, Amy Allcock, Dan Seguin, Swami Matananda, Swami Lalitananda, Swami Samayananda - for subscribing to the Ashram newsletter! Missed a newsletter? Check the [Archive](#) for past issues. Look forward to the launch of the 2014 Newsletter in January!

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

December's theme is **Retreat**



Historical Moment Satsang at the Ashram

Satsang is a Sanskrit word meaning "in the company of the wise." Here at the Ashram we have been gathering for satsang as a community most evenings for 50 years to open our hearts, quiet our minds and send out spiritual vibrations to those on our prayer list.

Satsang was held in Main House (now Shakti) for the first few years. When Swami Radha received her first donation in 1964, she purchased materials and the residents built the Beach Prayer Room, which still holds the vibrations from many years of practice and satsangs.

During a special time in the mid 1980s, Swami Radha offered satsang out of her home at Many Mansions. Her talks from these satsangs are published in *Time to be Holy*.

Once the Temple of Divine Light was completed in 1992 - again thanks to the generosity of many donors - her long-time

vision was fulfilled. Satsangs continue in this beautiful space dedicated to the Light.



Teaching Guide - Retreat

We are celebrating December, the final month of the Ashram's 50th Anniversary, with the theme of "Retreat." It's been a busy time for us, and we're ready to retreat! We know that December is also a busy month for many people, so we hope you lead the way for your students by being relaxed and enjoying some special retreat time this month.

[Click here](#) for reflections and practices.

"Retreat" is the theme for December 2013.

Swami Radha passed into the Light on November 30th, 1995. In this video, Swami Radhananda talks of Swami Radha as a bodhisattva or "diamond being" and reads Swami Radha's Last Message. In the Last Message Swami Radha encourages us to see life as the play of Radha and Krishna and asks those involved to stay together and love one another.... Lots to reflect on for Retreat Month. What would your last message be? [Click here](#) to view the video.

In this month's audio excerpt, Swami Radha encourages us to consider the need in this approaching winter season to retreat, restore and rejuvenate our energy. She suggests that relaxation brings renewal to the body - discovering the inner wells of energy - and deeper, more interconnected reflections to the mind. [Click here](#) to listen to the audio.



December Art Project - Relax and Create

On Friday nights before satsang, karma yogis at the Ashram are dedicating an hour to creative expression. Some people dance, others play music or create collages or draw. During this busy time of year, why not [join us](#) and find relaxation through your favorite creative activity?



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