

# Outreach

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## DO YOU HAVE 'FOOD FOR THOUGHT'?

Everything in the world requires energy to function. Whether it is batteries that power our cell phones and laptops, or gasoline that powers our cars, the need for a regular supply of energy is essential. Likewise, the human body is no exception. Our body is an extraordinary machine that requires an adequate intake of food to sustain itself. In addition to the nutrients we get from food, physical exercise is just as important in maintaining a strong and fit body. Having a balanced meal and regular exercise would undoubtedly enable us to be physically productive and efficient throughout the day.

Everyday our world is becoming more and more health conscious. While it is easy to recognize the importance of staying in good physical shape, staying in good mental shape is equally, if not more important. In fact, history goes to show that even if an individual is physically weak but mentally healthy, then, no task is impossible.


So let's take a moment and think:

- What does it mean to be mentally fit?
- Where do we get the energy to have a healthy mind?
- How can we exercise our mind?
- Where do we get our 'food for thought'?

Just as the battery in our cell phone needs to be charged, just as the fuel in our car needs to be replenished, our mind too needs its regular dose of energy.

Our mind requires regular mental stimulation to stay active and fully functional. Consider the example of warming up prior to engaging in a vigorous physical activity like playing a sport, jogging or weight-lifting.

Warming up prepares our body for the increased demand for physical activity to come. Similarly, our mind needs its regular "warm-up" to enhance our concentration and thinking capacity.

So how can we give our mind its regular stimulation? What is the healthy diet for our minds? Well, one of the key ingredients of this healthy diet is . It does wonders for the brain. Reading strengthens analytical thinking skills, expands vocabulary and speaking skills, significantly improves memory, enhances focus and concentration, and most importantly, it reduces mental stress!

Reading is a source of fuel that powers the mind. So, if you are looking to enhance your thought process, improve your brain activity, focus on your goal, and follow your dreams, then reading regularly is sure to provide you with the right food for your thoughts.




**Lasting Thought** "The book to read is not the one that thinks for you, but the one which makes you think." - Harper Lee

# atmiya AY Youth Shibir

## CORDIAL INVITATION

2013  
JULY  
26 27 28

  
Venue  
University of Pittsburgh  
450 Schoolhouse Road  
Johnstown, PA 15904

JULY 26 Fri 27 Sat 28 Sun 2013

Register at  
[www.ydsus.org](http://www.ydsus.org)

Registration Mandatory

AYS 2013 is a unique event to connect with individuals who can make a positive difference in your life and help you discover new horizons.



You might only have a few gigabytes of storage on your flash drive, but ever wonder what is the storage capacity of your brain? Though scientists have not settled on a definitive amount, the storage capacity of the brain is estimated to be between 10 to 2,500 terabytes. To put this into perspective, one of the world's largest libraries, the Library of Congress, which contains over 22 million books, is about 200 terabytes, making the brain's memory power quite impressive!



### **Reading: The Best Way to Feed Your Mind**

What do Bill Gates, Mark Cuban, and J.K. Rowling have in common besides each of them having a net worth of over a billion dollars? During their youth, they had and still have one common habit: reading. All three attribute reading as the root to their financial success. Reading stimulates the brain to help us think harder and creatively, which ultimately leads to a successful career.

Our mind has immense capabilities to think and analyze. However, instead of letting it wander aimlessly, it is important to give the mind a task to keep it active. One of the most productive tasks for the mind is reading. Unfortunately, these days, there is very little time for reading. We all live busy lives, be it at work, school, or home. But when we have a break, how do we make use of our free time?

Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji's life is a prime example of how to utilize every single second. Swamiji is personally involved in guiding, inspiring, motivating, and educating countless youths. Swamiji has delivered countless sermons, written thousands of letters, sanctified the homes of innumerable individuals, and consoled over a hundred thousand devotees, all for the sole benefit of uplifting and transforming their lives. Yet, in the midst of this hectic schedule, whenever Swamiji has a few spare moments, he engages in only one activity: reading.



(Lilavati Hospital - Mumbai)

A major part of Swamiji's schedule involves travelling to the homes of His devotees. Once, Swamiji sat in the car and within a few moments after closing the door, He immediately asked the *sarathi* (driver) for a book.

Unfortunately, the *sarathi* had packed the books in a bag stored in the trunk. So Swamiji requested the driver to stop the car and retrieve the book. Such is Swamiji's inclination to make every moment productive.

In another instance, Swamiji underwent open-heart surgery in April 2009 at the age of 75. Fortunately, the complex surgery was a success and our beloved Swamiji's physical health was restored. In the days following the bypass surgery, the doctors strictly requested Swamiji to rest and not perform any physical activity. But instead of helplessly lying in bed, Swamiji would request His personal aides to read aloud while He listened. Swamiji's aides would read *Purushottam Bolya Prite* in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Some days, the total time spent reading & listening would surpass six hours!

Even though Swamiji's knowledge and wisdom is unparalleled, His constant persistence and sincerity for reading, especially at this age and in such an excruciating situation, is truly inspiring. It

demonstrates to us the importance of developing a habit of reading, as well as the necessity to feed our minds with positive words.

Just as we can eat both healthy food and junk food, feeding the mind the right food is just as critical. When it comes to *what to read*, there are two main categories. The first category is reading to help you in your career, which includes studying for exams and reading to stay up-to-date in your profession. But there is a second category which is just as important: reading to guide your mind and soul towards enlightenment.

For this, Swamiji has indicated three scriptures in particular for youths:

*101 Tales of Wisdom* by Yogiji Maharaj, *Swami Ni Vaato*, and

*Vachanamrut*. These three scriptures provide practical guidelines and

examples on how to live with a positive spirit each day. It is Swamiji's inner most wish for us to read any of these three scriptures. Reading these scriptures on a regular basis will calm a restless mind, increase concentration, help us overcome bad natures like anger and jealousy, and enlighten our mind with true wisdom.



## **Four Unique Steps to Transform Words into Actions**

1. Input (*Shravan*) – Reading the divine words written in the scriptures and listening to sermons given by saints.
2. Selection (*Manan*) – Identifying the important principles and concepts to improve yourself.
3. Repetition (*Nididhyas*) – Continuous effort to imbibe the concept into daily life with the help of *bhajan* and prayer.
4. Implementation (*Sakshatkar*) – As a result of the efforts, God blesses you with *buddhiyog* (true wisdom), allowing you to live according to the newly learned principle.