Youth; 1925 (Originally in Hindi.)

This essay, titled 'Yuvak (Youth)', was published in Matwala (Year 2, issue no. 38) on 16 May 1925 under the pseudonym Balwant Singh. Thiis essay is also mentioned in the diary of the editor of Matwala, Acharya Shiv Poojan Sahai (Reference 11).

Youth is the spring season in human life. A person can go berserk during this time. He feels the intoxication of a thousand bottles. All the powers bestowed by the Creator spring in this time like a thousand streams. As uncontrollable as an elephant gone amok, as uncontainable as the dark clouds of the monsoon season, as furious as a strong hurricane in an age of annihilation, as tender as a jasmine bud of a new spring, as ungovernable as a volcano, and as sweet as a morning song is the age of youth. The splendour of a radiant dawn, the lustre of a silken sunset, the sweet warmth of the full moon of autumn and the awful midnight of a hot moonless night in the sixth month of the year are contiguous in youth. The season of youth in a human body is like the bomb in the revolutionary's pocket, the loaded revolver under the conspirator's belt, the sword in the hand of a lover of war. God fills in all possible tumult in a skin-and-bone box from sixteen to twenty-five years. For ten years, this tumultuous boat tosses in the middle of a tempest. To look at, the age of youth appears to be more attractive than the dark passionate earth, but it is filled with the horror of an earthquake. Rat is the reason there are only two paths available to a human being in youth – he can either ascend the highest peak of progress or fall into the deepest abyss. He can be an ascetic if he wants to, or he can become a philanderer. He can become a devta/angel or a demon. He can destroy the world, and he can offer it an assurance of shelter. The world is ruled by the young. History is full of the exploits of the youth. The youth is the lines on the forehead of the war goddess. The youth is the excited war cry of drums proclaiming the glory of a free nation? The youth is the stuff of the banner of victory of freedom. He is as obstinate as the soaring waves of the ocean. He is as dreadful as the first war cry in the Bhishma chapter of the *Mahabharata*, as ardent as the rich kiss of a first union, as fearless as Ravana's arrogance, as steadfast and unflinching as Prahlad's Satyagraha. If you desire a brave man willing to sacrifice himself, ask the youth. It is to his share that the lusciousness of life has fallen. He holds sway over emotions. Despite being ignorant of poetics, he is a gifted poet. The poet too is the honeybee hovering over the secrets of his heart. He doesn't know the definition of the Rasas, but has a truly insightful understanding of it. The youth is a special problem of creation. He is an excellent example of the glory of God's creation. He can sit for hours by the banks of a river at sunset. He can go on gazing, enchanted, at the sun journeying with its crimson rays towards the horizon. He becomes immersed in the soft melody wafting across from beyond. Strange is his life.
Marvellous is his courage. Unfailing is his enthusiasm.

He is free of worries; he is careful. If he gets involved in something, to keep awake the entire night is child's play to him, the sunlight in a summer afternoon is the moonlight of spring for him, the rains in the monsoons are showers of cowers in celebration, the stillness of the cremation grounds is the warbling of birds in a garden. If he desires, he can enlighten society and the community, keep the honour of the country, brighten the face of the nation, and even overset big imperial powers. The upliftment of the downtrodden and the redemption of the world are in his hands. He is the most skilled player of this vast stage of this world.

If the sacrifice of blood is needed, who but a youth can give it? If you want a sacrifice, then you will have to look to a youth for it. It is a youth who is the shaper of the destiny of any community. A western scholar has rightly said, 'It is an established truism that young men of today are the countrymen of tomorrow, holding in their hands the high destinies of the Land. They are the seeds that spring and bear fruit.' It means that the youth of today is the maker of a country's destiny. The young are the seeds of the success of the future.

Open the pages of the history of the world; it is full of immortal messages written in the blood of the young. Sift through the descriptions of revolutionary transformations in the world, and one will find only such young people, whom the wise have called 'mad' and 'misguided'. But what cynics can understand, what men of steel those Japanese youths were, who, bred by patriotism, build bridges over moats of forts with their corpses! A true youth embraces death without hesitation, digs in his feet with this chest thrust out in front of rices, smiles even as he sits on the mouth of cannon, bursts into the national song to the jangle of iron cuffs, and swings on the gallows with a mocking laugh. It is the youth who gains weight on the day he is to be hanged, it is the youth who hums an inspiring mantra as he grinds the millstone in the jail, and he lifts his country out of darkness only by sinking in the darkness of the jail cell. Patrick Henry, the leader of the American youth, once said in one of his passionate speeches, 'Life is a dearer within the prison cell, where it is the price paid for the freedom's fight.' (Originally in English.) He meant that though life outside the jail was precious, life within the four walls of a jail was priceless, because there it is paid as the price of the freedom struggle.

Since the leader is so inspiring, the youth of America has the courage to give this rousing declaration, 'We believe that when a government becomes destructive of the natural right of man, it is the man's duty to destroy that Government.' (Originally in English.) This means that the youth of America believe that it is mankind's duty to destroy a government that denies fundamental rights to people.

O, the youth of India! Why do you lie slumbering in this haze of ignorance? Wake up, open your eyes, look around, the sun is ready to dawn in the eastern sky. Now don't keep sleeping. If you have to sleep, then sleep in the arms of eternal sleep. Why sleep in the bosom of cowardice? Renounce worldly ties of love and affection, and declare:

Farewell! Farewell my true Love
The army is on the move
And if I stayed with you Love
A coward I shall prove. (Originally in English.)

Your mother, worthy of your reverence, the most adored, Goddess Durga, giver of food and nourishment, your goddess with a trident, your goddess on a lion, the verdant deity of abundance is weeping bitterly today. Does her distress not disturb you even a tiny bit? May your supineness be damned! Even your ancestors bow their heads in shame at this impotence. If there is any shame in any part of your body, then get up and honour your mother's milk, pick up the challenge of redeeming

her honour, take a pledge for every teardrop that she sheds, address her sorrow, and with a free throat, utter – Vande Mataram!