

Dear India,

I am a nineteen-year-old girl from Mumbai who had only read about violence, riots, detention camps, and discrimination. The only image I had for all of these was imaginary, or what I had created in my mind after reading about it in my History class.

The fact that it never affected me made me realise that history is important and we must take its lessons seriously before it's too late.

Elie Wiesel, a survivor of the Holocaust and winner of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, in his acceptance speech refers to a Jewish boy who asked his father of the Holocaust, "Can this be true? This is the twentieth century, not the Middle Ages. Who would allow such crimes to be committed? How could the world remain silent?"

I now ask the same question. How can India remain so silent and ignorant?

When peaceful protesters are called 'anti-national' or 'terrorists', I ask myself, how could this be true? We are in the 21st century; educated, more advanced in terms of knowledge and technology. How can our people not raise our voice against injustice? Why don't we feel anything when violence as in Delhi in February 2020 erupts in our country?

In his speech, Wiesel later continued, "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victims. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes, we must interfere... Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the centre of the universe."

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