



Do We Remember?

-Anoushka S. Rabha, XI

The deep rot in the Indian democracy that we all speak of and do nothing about: the misinterpretation of Secularism. A new understanding of secularism represents India's best chance at moving beyond the constraints of religion.

Rethinking the idea of Secularism is due for the Indian populace, from being a term that meant separation of the State from religious institutions to one that evoked fear; Secularism has come a long way. As Secularism returns to the center of India's political debate, due to the infamous CAA, NRC and the tumultuous Shaheen Bagh, we must understand that it is not a concept that can be taught inside the four walls of a classroom. It has been on the back foot since the majestic mandate of the BJP, who identify Secularism with 'minority appeasement', making it a suspect doctrine in the eyes of the Hindutva biased masses. No surprise when the appeal of multiculturalism has been more effective in shaking up the ethos and rhetoric of majoritarianism.

Even as we hear about grand declarations of the alleged attack on Secularism in India, we must remember that when the NRC process began a few years earlier some 1.9 million people were on the verge of statelessness, including many Hindus. Since then the country has been fixated on the core question, "Is India Secular?". In this regard we may agree to disagree that secularism too is a utopian ideal along the lines of Democracy, in its true nature.

The underlying assumption of Secularism is that the State ought to be disassociated from religion. Yet, the

truth of the matter is far from that. The State isn't blind to religion. Take their different strokes for different places of worship for example. The blindfolded Lady of Justice is also guilty of not being Secular. In a courtroom, the oath that one takes involves religious texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible and the Quran. It is high time we reach the conclusion that religious tolerance and Secularism are two separate concepts and must be treated so. Secularism as a political construct stemmed from the conflict between the majority and

the minority. While the intent of the Constituent Assembly was to ensure multiculturalism, yet the manic fear of a 'Hindu Rajya' ensured that multiple clauses were added into the Constitution that permitted other religions, to function according to their own code. The idea of Secularism thus got diluted at its very birth.

The Ram Rajya that Gandhi spoke of which the Left hated, was

about equal rights and pluralistic Secular beliefs. That was the India that Gandhi had dreamt of and not this version where an illusory, utopian Secularism exists. Contrary to popular belief, Secularism was missing in the Gandhian and Nehruvian vocabulary because of their firm belief that religion was intrinsic to Indian society.

As India continues to be ripped apart by the misconception of Secularism, we must reflect and redefine while we still can. Either Secularism corrects itself and broadens its ambit to recognize pluralism or multiculturalism as a part of it or we will find ourselves in a crisis bigger than a Coronavirus outbreak.



Illustrator: Ssara Jha

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Under The Stars

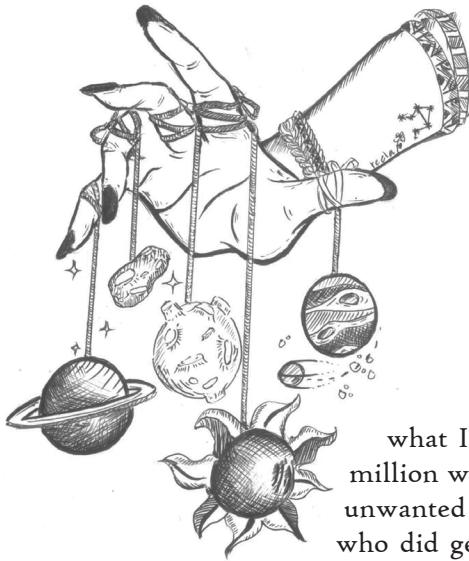
-Deborah Bhuyan, VII

Stars, they are as magical as they sound.

Twinkling away in the night sky like scattered fireflies. Despite the scientific theories about them that they are but only giant balls of fire, there feels a different story to them that waits to be discovered. I feel that we have a connection with the stars. Folk lore has it that if you see a shooting star, and you make a wish, chances are that they will likely come true. The deep dark fear of the night is lost when a curtain of stars envelopes the sky at night. It feels like they keep all the nightmares at bay. They seem to string their tiny bodies together to quell out the darkness from the night sky and have been doing so ever since the 'Big Bang'. The way they shine even in the darkest of

times always fascinates me. In fact, I want to be like them one day. People say darkness implies negativity. That everything associated with it automatically catches on a negative implication. I think otherwise though. Everything in the world has multiple shades to them. So does darkness. Darkness does not always mean 'negative' and nothing makes it clearer than the stars do. It is the dark sky that brightens up the stars and helps them twinkle at the world below.

Some people may not understand what I have just said. Then tend to have a million ways to judge others, giving them their unwanted opinions. For those readers however, who did get the subtle hint, 'do be yourself for the only opinion that does matter, is yours'. And reach your stars.



Illustrator: Takhe Tamo Reela

My Love, My World

-Ssara Jha, VIII

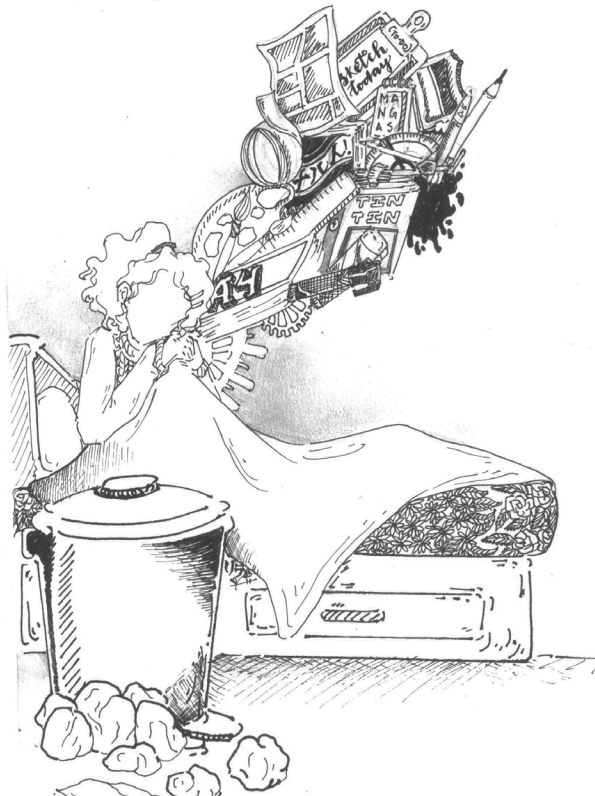
"The new comic is out!" Anne grabbed my hand and almost lifted me into the air in her excitement. As always, I was clueless about whatever it was she was talking about. I don't really read comics because my mother disapproves of them. She lets my elder sister do anything she wants although she is still in Middle School. The reality however is that I love writing and illustrating comics. I don't really draw these days because it makes my mother apprehensive that my hobby could compromise my academic achievement. But something happened that totally changed my life. I had to prepare for my upcoming Math test but was getting so bored so I picked up my pencil and began to draw behind my Math notebook.

I was deeply engrossed in my work and had almost completed the comic strip when my mother entered

my room. For a moment there I froze in fear. I was certain that a thunderous rebuke would soon follow. However, my mother just left some snacks on the side table near my bed and left without saying a word. I let out a visible sigh of relief when I realised that she had probably not seen the comic and had assumed that I was deep in my studies. The next day, as I returned from school, I saw my sister rush towards me. "Congratulations!" she shouted in excitement and more or less dragged me into the house.

I was reeling from confusion wondering what it was all about when I saw a man sitting in our living room talking to my mother. I had never

seen him before and my sister's torrential introduction did not help. My curiosity perked up when I saw him holding the comic strip I had made the previous night.



Illustrator: Takhe Tamo Reela

My mother looked up smiled at me and asked me to come over. It was then that the matters of the day unraveled. While cleaning my room my mother had come across the comic strip I had made. In anger she had decided to throw the notebook away but my older sister had convinced her to instead publish it on Instagram. Hesitant, my mother gave in thinking that seeing no takers for my artistic work, I would choose to give up such faulty pursuits. The strip however got many 'likes' and caught the attention of a Publishing House. The

man sitting on the sofa speaking to my mother had been sent from the same Publishing House and they wanted me to develop a larger story board which they wanted to publish! My mother was thrilled, my sister ballistic and I went a little numb from the sheer excitement of it. All this happened a year ago. Since then I have been making steady inroads with my art work and my mother has grown to appreciate it too. This golden opportunity did not just turn around my life but helped me pursue art that has long been my passion.

Kurt and Love

-Letminlun Haokip, XI

How did I get here? How did I go from a kid in a garage, playing a second hand guitar to this? My mouth is dry, the heroin shooting through my veins put the demons at bay; but at what cost? My eyes drift lazily across the room, shuffling through all the expensive furniture that I couldn't care less for. They stray for a second longer on the shotgun hung over the mantle. How did I get here? It probably started with her. Pain. Pain is a synonym for love; at least it is, when it comes to her. *Love* is pain, and pain deserves to be felt. I lose track of time, but that didn't really matter. When stuck in a limbo, time is irrelevant and so does the universe. The sky is blue, the grass is green, the sun is a star and stars burn out; but then again, I prefer that, to fading away. This is the way of the universe. Oblivion is a certainty. Permanency is nothing but a cry into the empty void of nothingness. A flimsy illusion we cling on to, to surf through our days

better. What a great tragedy, our pointless existence and the inevitability of it all. Not really. Forever is overrated. The world spins before my eyes, like a million flying monkeys, racing rings around Saturn sometimes makes me laugh. How are we possible? I've always wondered. After all, we are just a bunch of talking monkeys living on a floating rock, but then again, that doesn't matter right now. I let out a tired sigh. I have to admit that I sound like an old worn out love song put on a loop.

Love is pain, and pain deserves to be felt. My eyes drift over to the shotgun again, as the heroin races through my veins. My hair should be gray, but it isn't; it still shines like spun gold when the light catches it in the right angles. How did I get here? I'm pretty sure it started with her. But how does it end? They say the good die young and I honestly don't want to find out what happens to those who don't.

In Time...

-Aryaman Choudhary, XI

The scars behind your melanin bags
Those which cannot be seen
Time has not been healing them
Darling, you have been

A shadow lies
beneath your eyes
The shadow of your dream
A magic wand to a happy flowing stream

Don't let the grievances
Be under your foot
They are seeds of darkest kind
They will start building their roots

Let the past be with the moon
Don't bring it up to the sun
Throw away your inane excuses
Soon, you'll become the chosen one.

THE OUTPOST

Tension and drama was rift at Trump's third official State of TheUnion address as Pelosi's extended hand was skipped while Trump's speech was ripped apart. Shaheen Bagh shows political conspiracy as shooter's family denies any link with AAP. The Wuhan crisis is spreading its wings beyond the boundaries of China, with 500 people dead and over 20,000 affected. The Seattle City Council has become the first legislative body in the US to pass a resolution against CAA and NRC in India. The fight for Delhi reaches its penultimate as people vote today choosing between freebees and nationalistic agenda.



Keep It Reel!

Rippling Through

-Letminlun Haokip, XI

THE THINKING CORNER WITH MR. WATTS

"Challenging the way you think"

How dare we point our finger and very smugly accuse the west of decadence. We lament that they have lost their morals. They hop in and out of marriage as if it were a meal at a diner. They indulge in debaucherous lifestyles; an absolute anathema to us virtuous souls. They have lost all sense of spirituality and now lean on other cultures for sustenance. They expose parts of their anatomy, meant only for the most intimate occasions, with such abandon. They produce more than they can ever consume and are thus guilty of wanton waste. Their licentious ways only exacerbate issues of violence and crime. We are so much better than them! Or are we?

Opinion Poll Results

Last week, we asked YOU (our readers):

**"Is Murong
in need of more women Masters?"**

Here is what some of you had to say to that:

"Yes, women House Masters should be there in the boy's side as long as they are able to handle the situations wisely and take proper preventive measures." - Jayan Pariwal

"NO, because boys would not be scared of a House Mistress and they won't care."
- Angshuman Sharma

"No, because women House Masters will not be able to control boys." - Anonymous

"Yes! Because they will be able to control the boys." - Kashvi Kalita

"Yes! So that boys will be treated the same way as girls are!!! *smiley face*
-Krushelu Sazo

"Yes! Because females really know how to control boys. This way boys will be well mannered" - Bipasha Haloi

"Yes, as there will be equality, I guess..." - 2560

"It's fine but there should also be male House Masters in the girls' side." - Sanendi Toy

"No, because a man can understand a boy better than a woman." - Kavya

"Yes, because women are the ones who give birth to a child and therefore she has the ability to understand their needs as well." - Aarav Jain

Ripple #120

-Jeremy Jahau, XI

Pages strewn across
the floor
They laughed at him
for his words
Yet he was far from
what he would be
So run home little
Shakespeare...
Run home.

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. You mean say to me - Himangshu Lohia, XI (*We mean you no harm.*)
2. She in the best - Ashmita Phukan, XI (*That's why you're out.*)
3. Where was you? - Mr. Devesh Prajapathi (*Everywhere, Sir.*)
4. I took a bag from my book - Dev Agarwal, IX (*Next is the bunny, right?*)
5. There is not that much hot - Arnav Jain, IX (*Well obviously with you here.*)
6. I got Veg. Chicken for you - Raghav Agarwal, IX (*The word your looking for is 'paneer'.*)

THE GRAND FINALE

-Ssara Jha, VIII



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Weekly Newsletter of The Assam Valley Express