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# Opinion | True Freedom of Expression Is Inner Liberation

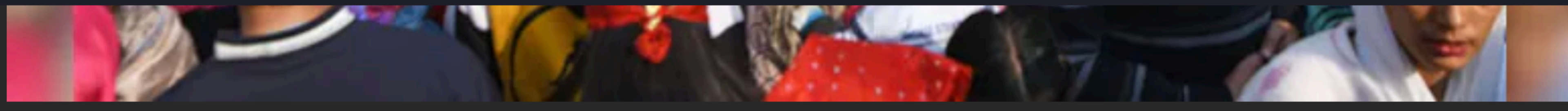


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Never before have we had more freedom to speak, and so little clarity about what we are speaking. There are voices everywhere, shouting and debating in the name of freedom of expression. But is it really freedom if the one speaking is bound by confusion, borrowed beliefs, and anger?

True freedom of expression lies not in the right to speak but in the clarity from which the speech arises. In other words, what you say is only as free as you are. Dominant political, cultural, and technological narratives of the time merely reflect our inner tendency to be told what to think and how to hear. In such a scenario, freedom of expression becomes much more than a right: it becomes almost a necessity. So before we defend our right to free expression, we must ask ourselves: Who is the one within me who's expressing? Are my words truly my own or just echoes of the noise that surrounds me?

### Freedom Begins Within

We mistake freedom for something the world grants us: the right to speak, move, or choose. But whatever the world gives, it can also take away. This is why the scriptures speak of an inner freedom: the one that's untouched by time, politics, or power. It doesn't ask for permission and is independent of praise or censorship, admiration or indifference.

A person sitting silently in a prison can be freer than the person shouting his or her opinions out to the world. If your mind is no longer swayed by fear or attraction to approval, you are free in the only way that truly matters. Meanwhile, someone with a million platforms to voice their thoughts can be a prisoner to reaction and desire for validation. True freedom doesn't depend on opening external doors but on having a clear mind.



### Expression As Discovery And Growth

Every external act of expression is also a method of understanding the self: like a mirror, it shows you what your inner life is like. Expression, therefore, is a movement towards self-understanding, if done with honesty and sincerity. When expression is curbed, thoughts, too, begin to shrink. A society that punishes honest speech kills not just debate but also self-discovery. The mind then retreats behind a mask from fear of being persecuted or criticized and merely looks for ways to survive.

When you silence expression, you don't just silence words but also inquiry, and therefore truth. Real progress, therefore, happens in spaces where everyone can talk without feeling ashamed or afraid. The spirit behind our Constitution, too, recognized that freedom of expression is not mere liberty, but a means to awaken intelligence. Mahatma Gandhi called the Truth the highest law. George Orwell captured its cost when he said, "Freedom means the right to tell people

what they do not want to hear." One must never allow the truth to be trampled within, and the outward expression will then automatically be free.

### The Fine Line Between Expression And Exhibition

The line between genuine expression and sensationalism is razor-thin. That's why to express is a right, but to express rightly is a responsibility. You're not just responsible for censoring the self but also awakening the self: identifying not just the message but its center with honesty. Before asking, 'Can I say this?', one should pause for a moment and ask, 'Where within me is this coming from?' When what we express comes from understanding, it has compassion. But when it's born out of restlessness, it only wants attention, not connection.

Truth does not need to shout to sustain itself. It has its own power, silent and steady. Popularity, however, is impatient. It feeds on instant rewards and applause and pays attention to fleeting fads. The Truth, when spoken sensitively, can leave a lasting impact. There will always be a crowd hungry for sensation. The free artist, writer, or leader does not follow the crowd; he illuminates it. A message coming from the Truth doesn't seek to entertain but to transform.

To speak honestly doesn't mean one must be harsh. In fact, Truth delivered with sensitivity and warmth can transform expression into a means of awakening.

### Inner Clarity In The Digital Age

We live in the attention economy, where people capture, buy, and sell attention, often with our silent permission. In such a scenario, self-awareness has become essential. Along with the eyes that guide us in the outer world, an inner eye is necessary to watch our thoughts, reactions, and assumptions. We must observe ourselves gently but honestly to see how fear, desire, and other types of conditioning shape the person we become, and by extension, the words and actions we use to express.

Much of the expression in the digital age is being done for engagement, profit, and control. However, sincere voices do exist. Those who cultivate inner clarity don't speak to get attention; they speak out of love, understanding, and responsibility. Their words have a quiet power that's subtle, steady, and transformative.

The human mind always likes to be distracted and indulged. However, today there's the problem of immediacy: destructive or trivial content is one click away, constantly reinforcing desires, fears, and incomplete assumptions. Without some inner clarity, the constant rush of information can easily sweep us up—we start scrolling instead of seeing, reacting instead of reflecting. It can leave us feeling agitated and empty. The digital world can drown us, yes, but it can also feed us. What makes the difference is how awake we are while using it. Are we letting it shape our thoughts without noticing, or are we using it to learn, to understand, to grow a little each day?

The world can show you everything, but if you have not seen yourself, everything will still be invisible to you.

### Freedom Outside & Inside

We must defend the right to express ourselves in the world, but this defence is incomplete unless we ask a deeper question: Are we free inside? How can speech be truly free when the mind is still bound by prejudices, unexamined beliefs, and unconscious impulses? You can't be free without being aware of yourself. When we are aware of our fears, know what makes us feel bad, and think about why we say what we say, our expression changes. It stops being reactive or borrowed and starts being aware, thoughtful, and responsible. Only then can we truly call our words free.

Change starts from the inside and works its way out. Our words, actions, and choices have an effect on the world as we become freer inside. A flower doesn't try to spread its scent: that happens on its own when the flower blooms. Real freedom begins quietly within us and naturally touches others. Individual freedom isn't just about doing what you want, but about living in a way that naturally becomes a boon to society. It creates space for genuine connection, understanding, and lasting understanding.

Freedom of speech isn't just about exercising a right: it is knowing where our words come from and why we choose to speak them. When expression grows from inner clarity, it stops being noise and becomes sacred. Like all sacred things, it starts in silence, with honesty and self-reflection.

When your speech comes from clarity, it does not just change the world; it fundamentally transforms it.

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