

5. We must insist that free oratory is only the beginning of free speech; it is not the end, but a means to an end. The end is to find the truth. The practical justification of civil liberty is not that the examination of opinion is one of the necessities of man. For experience tells us that it is only when freedom of opinion becomes the compulsion to debate that the seed which our forefathers planted has produced its fruit. When that is understood, freedom will be cherished not because it is a vent for our opinions but because it is the surest method of correcting them.

'The unexamined life', said Socrates, 'is unfit to be lived by man'. This is the virtue of liberty, and the ground on which we may best justify our belief in it, that it tolerates error in order to serve the truth. When more men are brought face to face with their opponents, forced to listen and learn and mend their ideas, they cease to be children and savages and begin to live like civilized men. Then only is freedom a reality, when men may voice their opinions because they must examine their opinions.

The only reason for dwelling on all this is that if we are to preserve democracy we must understand its principles. And the principle which distinguishes it from all other forms of government is that in a democracy the opposition not only is tolerated as constitutional but must be maintained because it is in fact indispensable.

The democratic system cannot be operated without effective opposition. For, in making the great experiment of governing people by consent rather than by coercion, it is not sufficient that the party in power should have a majority. It is just as necessary that the party in power should never outrage the minority. That means that it must listen to the minority and be moved by the criticisms of the minority.



Freedom of Opinion: A Cornerstone of ~~Democracy~~ Democracy

The freedom of opinion is just a start to free speech. It is a way to reach find reality. History shows that when freedom of opinion becomes a song of all it means that such society is on the right path to liberty. It is the goodness of freedom that allows one to correct its mistakes. But to achieve the true freedom, people must listen to each others' opinions and try to reach to a conclusion. Moreover, freedom of opinion is also a main pillar of a democratic government. This government system stands out because opposition is considered a crucial part of the government. That is not possible otherwise. It is an integral aspect of any government system to listen and to act upon by the opinions of opposition to run a state in an effective way.