

Man was born into the world to move. Since the day we discovered how to walk, movement meant freedom. To dance is to be unbound by all physical and mental constraints the world forces upon you, and to feel movement is a breath of fresh air for the body and nourishment for a soul so tired of being chained to endless work.

All humans are born with purpose, and many spend most of their lives pondering what to make use of the time that they have on earth, and for most it still remains the “pursuit of happiness”, and the founders of our country knew this. But what goes overlooked is that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are all interconnected. Without liberty, without the freedom of movement, without the right to bodily autonomy, without the means to have a voice heard, our lives can never be fully lived, and happiness will never be truly obtained.

But who are these voices who go unheard? It's the forty million victims of human trafficking globally, including over five and a half million children, sold into slavery and forced into a state of vulnerability, having no control over their bodies. Humans sold into slavery are no longer seen as persons, but as property. Once a person loses the right to their body, subsequently, they lose the right to their mind. As Marcus Garvey, a champion for civil rights speaking on behalf of those enslaved around the world in the 19th century, stated, “We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others may free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind.” When a person is mentally restricted, they essentially become a slave to someone else's will even if it isn't physical.

It's necessary to stress the importance of the mental effects of human trafficking on its victims, who are essentially left helpless, without a spotlight shined upon their situations from any prominent media. Victims of sexual slavery suffer from post traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse, and unfortunately even suicidal tendencies. Poverty is the heart of human trafficking, with women and children merely reduced to gratifying sexual needs. It has become an organized billion dollar industry with investors and corrupt public officials as principal participants. Governments must realize that every individual has the right to life, including education and employment, and to combat slavery, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of the financial, political and cultural power structures in society.

So the next time you dance, run, and simply move with your body, remember the millions of people who can't spread their wings in the same way you do. There's no doubt that we live in a world that thrives in creating broken people, but we've also reached the point where eradicating human trafficking isn't simply the goals of a few organizations. Anyone, by simply reading, can help end this condemnable violation of human rights. All it takes is for humanity to take that first step.