

16-Agency and Volition

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself, and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty.

Heinmot Tooyalaket (Chief Joseph),
Nez Perce Leader

The path of the lazy leads to disgrace.

Omaha Proverb

Perform all thy actions with mind concentrated on the Divine, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity.

Hinduism, *Bhagavad-Gita* 2: 47-48

Prosperity forsakes those who always dream of fate and favors those who persevere. One should therefore always be active and alert.

Hinduism, *Matsya Purana* 221: 2

But a man of disciplined mind, who moves along the objects of the sense, with the senses under control and free from attachment and aversion, he attains purity of spirit. And in the purity of spirit, there is produced for him an end of sorrow; the intelligence of such a man of pure spirit is soon established in the peace of self.

Hinduism, *Bhagavad-Gita* 2: 64-65

Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid or feel insecure before them. God your Lord is the One who is going with you, and He will not fail you or forsake you.

Be strong and brave, since you will be the one to bring this nation to the land that God swore to their fathers that He would give it to them. You will be the one to parcel it out to them.

Judaism, *Deuteronomy* 31: 6-7

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for HaShem thy G-d is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Judaism, *Yehoshua (Joshua)* 1: 9

Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what is good in His sight.

Judaism, *Samuel II* 10: 12

By awakening, by awareness, by restraint and control, the wise may make for oneself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

Buddhism, *Dhammapada* 25

Better than a hundred years lived in idleness and weakness is living one day if a person courageously makes effort.

Buddhism, *Dhammapada* 112

Mastering others is strength;
mastering yourself is true power.

Taoism, Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* Chap 33

If a country is governed with tolerance, the people are comfortable and honest. If a country is governed with repression, the people are depressed and crafty.

When the will to power is in charge, the higher the ideals, the lower the results. Try to make people happy, and you lay the groundwork for misery. Try to make people moral, and you lay the groundwork for vice.

Thus the Master is content to serve as an example and not to impose her will. She is pointed, but doesn't pierce. Straightforward, but supple. Radiant, but easy on the eyes.

Taoism, Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* Chap 58

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, ...encouraging one another...

Christianity, *Hebrews* 10: 23-25

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Christianity, *Hebrews* 12: 11

And God loves those who are firm and steadfast.

Islam, *Qur'án* 3: 146

We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will).

Islam, *Qur'án* 76: 3

Unto each one hath been prescribed a preordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth.

Bahá'i, Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 77

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.

Bahá'i, Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 267