

How Does Wealth Get Us to Peace?

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What does anyone really want, but to live in peace and security?

So how do we get there? The principled views of Baha'is, for their well-known solutions to solving the world's problems, rest on this fundamental answer: by recognizing the unity of humanity:

Two points bear emphasizing in all these issues [affecting the unification of mankind]. One is that the abolition of war is not simply a matter of signing treaties and protocols; it is a complex task requiring a new level of commitment to resolving issues not customarily associated with the pursuit of peace. Based on political agreements alone, the idea of collective security is a chimera. The other point is that the primary challenge in dealing with issues of peace is to raise the context to the level of principle, as distinct from pure pragmatism. For, in essence, peace stems from an inner state supported by a spiritual or moral attitude, and it is chiefly in evoking this attitude that the possibility of enduring solutions can be found. – The Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, p. 9.

The major path to peace—security brought about by the Rule of Law—starts with a moral code in the individual and extends outward. It also requires, oddly enough, a measure of wealth. No sane person wants to put up with corruption, crime, terrorism and other evils if they ever hope to feel secure. So, on the surface it's easy to say that the vast majority of human beings want peace and security for themselves, their families, their cities and towns and their nations. But in today's world, peace and security come with high price tags, and we can debate how much is enough and how much is too much. Suffice it to say that we all want—and are generally willing to pay for—peace and security. Sadly, the wealthy typically have peace and security, while the poor often don't.

We all want peace and security, together with a solid work ethic, a good paying job, a suitable dwelling, food and drink, and healthcare. Those things all require wealth—not only personal

wealth, but a reasonably wealthy and successful society, like most of the developed nations of the world.

“With wealth comes great responsibility,” said Bill Gates. And of all the people to say it, he was the perfect choice. His Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation parses out enormous wealth for good causes to millions.



The Gates Foundation is the largest private foundation in the world

So of all the things I might personally wish for myself, and you, and every single person on Earth, it's wealth. We all need sufficient wealth to provide for our needs, and to keep our civilizations peaceful and secure. Our societies all need a modicum of wealth to operate fairly and equitably, to provide for the needs of their people, and to keep everyone safe and secure. The Baha'i teachings say:

Wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired by an individual's own efforts and the grace of God, in commerce, agriculture, art and industry, and if it be expended for philanthropic purposes. Above all, if a judicious and resourceful individual should initiate measures which would universally enrich the masses of the people, there could be no undertaking greater than this, and it would rank in the sight of God as the supreme achievement, for such a benefactor would supply the needs and insure the comfort and well-being of a great multitude. Wealth is most commendable, provided the entire population is wealthy. If, however, a few have inordinate riches while the rest are

impoverished, and no fruit or benefit accrues from that wealth, then it is only a liability to its possessor. If, on the other hand, it is expended for the promotion of knowledge, the founding of elementary and other schools, the encouragement of art and industry, the training of orphans and the poor—in brief, if it is dedicated to the welfare of society—its possessor will stand out before God and man as the most excellent of all who live on earth and will be accounted as one of the people of paradise. – Abdu’l-Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 24.

So go earn some wealth, and help create and deliver the welfare and well-being your society needs for its peace and security. And, if you are able, please share it.