

45-Wealth & Poverty

It is not enough for a man to know how to ride, he must also know how to fall.

Native American Proverb

When all the trees have been cut down,
when all the animals have been hunted,
when all the waters are polluted,
when all the air is unsafe to breathe,
only then will you discover you cannot eat money.

Cree Prophecy

But those men who act unchangingly towards their friends in reverses of fortune, I esteem in my heart as true friends; who is not the friend of the prosperous man in his times of abundance?

So those who, having obtained riches in the world, employ them for the sake of their friends and religion, — their wealth has real solidity, and when it perishes it produces no pain at the end.

Hinduism, Ashvaghosha, *Buddhacarita*, XI: 4

Relatives, sons, spouses, the body itself, and all one's possessions stored with care, are unsubstantial and prove of no service in the next world. Only acts, good and bad, that one does, follow one to the other world. When it is certain that thou shalt have to go helplessly to the other world, leaving behind thee all these things alas, why dost thou then suffer thyself to be attached to such unsubstantial things of no value, without attending to that which constitutes thy real and durable wealth?

Hinduism, Vyāsa, *The Mahabharata* 12 330.2

Even one that is slack in his work is brother to him that is a destroyer.

Judaism, *Misheli (Proverbs)* 18: 9

No labor, however humble, is dishonoring.

Judaism, *The Talmud*

[Be careful that you not] say to yourself, 'It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity.'

Judaism, *Devarim (Deuteronomy)* 8: 17

The poor will never cease to exist in the land, so I am commanding you to open your hand generously to your poor and destitute brother in your land.

Judaism, *Devarim (Deuteronomy)* 15: 11

If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich.

If you stay in the center and embrace death with your whole heart, you will endure forever.

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

If a man does not seek children, wealth or power either for himself or for someone else, if he does not seek his own advantage by unprincipled means, he is a virtuous man, a wise man and a righteous man.

Buddhism, *Dhammapada* 56

Riches destroy the foolish, not those who seek beyond.

By craving for riches the fool destroys oneself, as one destroys others.

Buddhism, *Dhammapada* 255

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Christianity, *Matthew* 6: 19-21

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Christianity, *Matthew* 6: 24

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Christianity, *Corinthians II* 9: 6

Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good.

Islam, *Qur'án* 3: 134

Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas God, with Him is a great reward (Paradise).

Islam, *Qur'án* 64:15

But as to him who giveth alms and feareth God,
And yieldeth assent to the Good;
To him will we make easy the path to happiness.
But as to him who is covetous and bent on riches,
And calleth the Good a lie,
To him will we make easy the path to misery:
And what shall his wealth avail him when he goeth down?

Islam, *Qur-an*, 92: 7-13

The essence of wealth is love for Me; whoso loveth Me is the possessor of all things, and he that loveth Me not is indeed of the poor and needy. This is that which the Finger of Glory and Splendour hath revealed.

Bahá'i, Bahá'u'lláh,
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 156

The first Taraz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. Having attained the stage of fulfillment and reached his maturity, man standeth in need of wealth, and such wealth as he acquireth through crafts or professions is commendable and praiseworthy in the estimation of men of wisdom, and especially in the eyes of servants who dedicate themselves to the education of the world and to the edification of its peoples...

Bahá'i, Bahá'u'lláh,
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 34-35

Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavours be spent in promoting your personal interest.

Bahá'i, Bahá'u'lláh,
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 138