

158869 - Inheritance of a woman who contributes with her husband to the household expenses and savings

the question

Someone asked me about the inheritance of a woman who works with her husband. It is known that in our country there are women who work and contribute to the family expenses, and the spouses have agreed that whatever the husband earns is for paying off debts, and what the wife earns is to pay for the daily expenses of the family, and that is not by way of charity; rather it is by way of contributing to increasing the family's wealth. If one of them dies, how should the inheritance be divided; should it be divided on the grounds that it is the wealth of one of them, or that it is shared between them? For example, the spouses agreed to buy a specific house or apartment with their wealth, then one of them dies; how should the estate be divided?

Detailed answer

If someone dies, then all that he owns is his own property, and it is to be divided among all his legitimate heirs, as prescribed in Islamic teaching; Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has explained their shares in His Book.

His wife's share of that is either one quarter or one eighth; the man's share of his wife's estate is either half or one quarter, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And for you is half of what your wives leave if they have no child. But if they have a child, for you is one fourth of what they leave, after any bequest they [may have] made or debt. And for the wives is one fourth if you leave no child. But if you leave a child, then for them is an eighth of what you leave, after any bequest you [may have] made or debt. And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is a sixth. But if they are more than two, they share a third, after any bequest which was made or debt, as long as there is no detriment [caused]. [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is Knowing and Forbearing}

[an-Nisa' 4:12].

But if a person shares ownership of something with someone else, his share will be set aside after he dies, then distributed to his heirs.

Based on that, if the spouses both contribute to buying an apartment from their wealth, each one contributing half, then the husband dies, half of the apartment will belong exclusively to his wife and the heirs will have no share of it, and the other half is to be distributed among the heirs, including the wife.

What the woman does of contributing and helping her husband with the household expenses and living costs is kindness on her part for which she will be rewarded, but that is not obligatory for her, hence it does not affect her share of the estate.

See also the answer to question no. [14357](#).

And Allah knows best.