

Misconception: Women receive less than men in issues of inheritance



Background: Some think that women are inferior to men in Islam and a commonly cited example is that women receive less share in inheritance than a male. allowed .

This is only true if there is no recorded will for the deceased. Shares of inheritance should be stated in a will, and can be done in any way a person chooses [2:180, 5:106-108] however in cases where there is no will or a will leaves leftover wealth/property/etc The Quran has a default system that can be used for such cases [4:8, 4:11-12, 4:176]. In this default system, a male receives more than a female because they have a wider duty of care for maintenance of the family/household [2:228, 2:233, 4:34, 65:6]. Also they have other financial obligations, e.g. payment of a dowry before marriage [4:4, 4:24 and compensation after divorce if applicable [2:241].

If no default backup system such as this existed, this opens the possibility to much argument, hostility, legal action, delays and the outcome would likely favour those with more power/wealth/influence, thus leaving the disadvantaged even more disadvantaged.

It should also be noted that in the case of a widow, it is necessary that providing of maintenance for a year be granted (if the house was bequeathed to another for example and not the wife):

And for those of you whose lives are terminated and if they leave widows behind; a testimony to them that they may enjoy for one year without being made to vacate. If they leave then there is no sin upon you for what they do to themselves in goodness; and God is Noble, Wise. [2:240]

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