



The Right of God

Q: What should the heirs and/or executor of a will do if the will does not mention Huqúqu'lláh and the deceased has already divided his/her belongings?

A: "... the event of death does not remove from a believer his obligation to pay Huqúqu'lláh. Whatever portion he is due to pay is therefore a debt due from his estate at the time of his death. The cost of the funeral and burial, the payment of the debts of the deceased, and the payment of whatever portion of Huqúqu'lláh remains due from him are prior charges on the estate which must be met before arriving at the amount of the property which the deceased is free to dispose of as he wishes or which has to be divided in accordance with the provisions of the law of inheritance. Thus, whether or not a person makes a will or, having made a will, whether he makes provision in it for the payment of Huqúqu'lláh, the Huqúqu'lláh should be paid, like his debts, before the rest of the estate is divided.

"The application of these principles may well require subsidiary legislation by the Universal House of Justice in future. In the

meantime it falls to the executor or administrator of an estate to apply them to the extent possible, using his best judgement in the light of information available to him." (From a memorandum dated 5 August 1994 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Office of the Huqúqu'lláh)

"As to the calculation of Huqúqu'lláh on the estate of your father in the absence of his will, if it is ascertainable that no Huqúqu'lláh has been paid on any part of the estate by your father during his lifetime, then 19% of his estate after the deduction of relevant expenses and his debts, if any, will be due as Huqúqu'lláh.

"You and your family's noble wish to discharge the Huqúqu'lláh obligation of your late father is indeed meritorious and commendable. It will be the cause of the progress of your beloved father's soul in the Abhá Kingdom, and the source of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations and bounties descending upon the dear members of his family." (From a letter dated 23 December 1999 written by the Office of Huqúqu'lláh to an individual believer)

"... in the case of the estate of a deceased Bahá'í whose liability to Huqúqu'lláh cannot be assessed, there is, as you know, no objection in principle to the heirs agreeing to a payment from the estate to Huqúqu'lláh on behalf of the deceased if they so wish. But this is in no way their obligation, nor should such a payment be accepted from non-Bahá'í heirs. This is different from the case of an estate in respect of which the deceased has left records whereby his liability to Huqúqu'lláh can be computed. In such a case, the executor or administrator should do his utmost to ensure that this Right of God is paid. The provisions of civil law may make it necessary for the executor or administrator to obtain the permission of the heirs to the making of the payment, and in this, the non-Bahá'í heirs should be included, because the payment would be the liquidation of a recognized and clearly computed debt of the deceased, and not a voluntary gift in respect of what is understood to be a spiritual duty."

(Huqúqu'lláh, The Right of God, Compilation, 2007, amended August 2009, #4)



Star design on the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb.

Photo: Bahá'í International Community