

Deuteronomy 22:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

Analysis

They shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver—'anash (אֵנָשׁ, "amerce") means to fine or levy a monetary penalty. One hundred shekels represented a substantial sum, roughly 2.5 pounds of silver, approximately 2-3 years' wages for a laborer. This heavy fine served as restitution and deterrent. **Give them unto the father**—the financial penalty goes to the wronged family, compensating for attempted injury and vindicating their honor.

Because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel—the offense isn't merely personal but covenantal. Slandering betulat Yisra'el (בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, "a virgin of Israel") attacks Israel's covenant purity and community integrity. **She shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days**—the husband permanently forfeits divorce rights, ensuring the woman's economic security despite his treachery. This protects her from future abandonment by the man who already proved willing to slander her.

Historical Context

The hundred-shekel fine was double the standard bride-price (fifty shekels, Deuteronomy 22:29), punishing the husband's malice while enriching the wronged family. The permanent marriage requirement seems harsh by modern standards

but functioned as protection in ancient contexts where divorced women faced destitution. The husband who proved untrustworthy through false accusation lost the privilege of divorce, binding him to provide for his wife regardless of his feelings. This law prioritizes the woman's welfare over the man's convenience, countercultural in male-dominated societies.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the financial restitution combined with permanent marriage obligation demonstrate biblical justice addressing both material and relational harm?
2. What does the husband's loss of divorce rights teach about consequences for covenant-breaking behavior?

Interlinear Text

וְעָנָשׁוּ And they shall amerce H6064	אֶת H853	מֵאָה him in an hundred H3967	כֶּסֶף shekels of silver H3701	וְנָתַנוּ and give H5414	
לָאֲבִי them unto the father H1	הַנַּעֲמָה of the damsel H5291	כִּי H3588	הוֹצִיא because he hath brought up H3318	שֵׁם name H8034	
עַל an evil H7451	בְּתוּלָה upon a virgin H1330	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל of Israel H3478	וְלֹא H0	תְּהִי H1961	וְהָיָה and she shall be his wife H802
לֹא H3808	יֹכֵל he may H3201	לְשַׁלְּחָהּ not put her away H7971	כָּל H3605	יָמָיו all his days H3117	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 22:29 (Parallel theme): Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.