

Song of Solomon 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

Analysis

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies (shney shadayikh kishnsey apharim te'omey tseviyah haro'im bashoshim, שְׁנֵי שְׂדֵיךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֲפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צִבָּה הָרוֹעִים בַּשּׁוֹשִׁימִים)—this comparison to twin fawns celebrates symmetry, grace, and natural beauty. Young roes (apharim, עֲפָרִים, young deer) are gentle, beautiful, innocent creatures. "Twins" emphasizes perfect matching, while "feed among the lilies" creates imagery of beauty feeding on beauty—purity sustained by purity.

This verse unashamedly celebrates physical intimacy and erotic beauty within covenant marriage. The modest metaphor (fawns rather than explicit description) maintains propriety while affirming sexuality as God's good gift. The lilies represent purity—even erotic love within marriage remains holy and pure (Hebrews 13:4). Church tradition saw the bride's breasts as the Old and New Testaments, or faith and love—spiritual nourishment the Church provides to believers.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern love poetry frequently employed animal imagery from the natural world. Deer were prized for grace, beauty, and gentle innocence—making them appropriate metaphors for intimate beauty. The Song consistently celebrates physical attraction and sexual intimacy within marriage, countering both ascetic denial and pornographic exploitation of sexuality. Early church interpretation

struggled with this verse's physicality, often allegorizing it. Origen saw the breasts as Old and New Testaments nourishing believers; Bernard saw them as Christ's compassion and love. The Reformers recovered appreciation for the literal celebration of marital intimacy—Luther argued the Song celebrates God's gift of sexuality. The Puritans taught that marital sexual pleasure is God's good gift, not merely for procreation but for mutual delight and covenant bonding.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Scripture's celebration of physical intimacy within marriage challenge both prudish embarrassment and cultural pornographic obsession?
2. What "spiritual nourishment" does the Church provide to believers—and are you regularly feeding on sound doctrine and Christian fellowship?
3. In marriage, how can you cultivate the beauty and purity the lilies represent—keeping intimacy both passionate and holy?

Interlinear Text

כְּשֵׁנִי י	שֵׁן יָךְ	כְּשֵׁנִי י	עֶפְרַיִם	תְּאוֹמֵי י	צִבְיֹה	הָרוֹעִים
Thy two	breasts	Thy two	young	that are twins	roes	which feed
H8147	H7699	H8147	H6082	H8380	H6646	H7462

בְּשׂוֹשַׁנִּים:

among the lilies
H7799

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 2:16: My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

Song of Solomon 7:3: Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

Song of Solomon 6:3: I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

Proverbs 5:19: Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

1 Peter 2:2: As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Song of Solomon 8:10: I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

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