

Hammurabi's Law on Family Relationships

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Hammurabi's Law on Family Relationships was developed in order to protect every member in the family, including the husbands, wives, and the entire family system. Husbands and the wives were given these laws to protect them in every aspect of the marriage from adultery to having a love less marriage. The Hammurabi Law gave husband marital rights to his wife and also protected him when she was at fault in the marriage. On the other hand The Hammurabi Law gave women less rights in the marriage but it also tried to protect them for extreme harsh punishments in the marriage. The family unit was also protected in the Hammurabi's Law.

The husband's rights and responsibilities in the marriage were stated several times in the Hammurabi Law. If a husband wishes to divorce his wife several laws state that he must pay her as a divorce settlement. For example law 138 states: "If a seignior wishes to divorce his wife who did not bear him children, he shall give her money to the full amount of her marriage-price and he shall also make good to her the dowry which she brought from her father's house and then he may divorce her." (James). The husband is also protected if he is a poor man with little money with law 140, which states: "If he is a peasant, he shall give her one-third mina of silver." (James).

The husband also was also given almost complete control in deciding what happens to his wife. The husband was able to spare his wife from death, if she was found having sexual relations with another man. In law 129 it states that "if a women is caught having sexual relations with another man that they both will be throw into the water, but

if her husband wishes to spare her life he may do so, then the king must spare the life of the other man.” (James). If the husband is humiliated by his wife he also may decide to drown her into the water, which is stated in law 143. The husband has complete control over his wife, even though she may not do so in return.

The wife or women has very few rights in the Hammurabi’s Law. If a man decides to have a wife, but does not have a legal contract, then she is not his wife. This protects the women by allowing her to only become a wife to a man whom she has a legal contract binding her to him. A woman’s only benefit from Hammurabi’s Law, was that if she hated her husband so much and declared it she may take her dowry and return to her father’s home. The women first had to prove that she was not at fault in the marriage or hatred, which is stated in law 142. Women were not the only ones protects by Hammurabi’s Law, the family unit was protected as well.

The family unit is indirectly protected by Hammurabi’s Law. If a woman humiliates her husband her neglects her house she will be put to death by drowning, which is stated in law 143. This protects the family unit, but not allowing anyone to embarrass the husband’s family name and anyone else in the family. When a women decides to get a divorce from her husband she is not allowed to have everything. This allows him to be able to establish another family and protect his that he already has. The family unit is important to the life during the time of Hammurabi’s Law.

In conclusion, the husband, wife, and family unit were all consider in the development of Hammurabi’s Law. The husband had the majority of rights during the marriage and was allowed to make the majority of decisions. The women had very few rights with Hammurabi’s Law, but they were essential in the life of women. The family

unit was indirectly protected in Hammurabi's Law, but it was needed to protect the husband and wife. Hammurabi's Law had a great influence on the lives of husband, wives, and the family unit.