

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) كتبه لشريح بن الحارث قاضيه

Written for Shurayh ibn al-Hārith (al-Kindī) Qāḍī (judge) (at Kūfah).

وَرَوَى أَنَّ شُرَيْحَ بْنَ الْحَارِثِ قَاضِيَّ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (عليه السلام) اشْتَرَى عَلَى عَهْدِهِ دَارًا بِثَمَانِينَ دِينَارًا، فَبَلَغَهُ ذَلِكَ، فَاسْتَدْعَاهُ، وَقَالَ لَهُ :

It is related that Shurayh ibn al-Hārith (al-Kindī) who was Amīr al-mu'minīn's Qāḍī (judge) at Kūfah during his tenure, purchased a house for eighty Dinars. When it became known to Amīr al-mu'minīn he sent for him and said to him:

بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّكَ ابْتَعْتَ دَارًا بِثَمَانِينَ دِينَارًا، وَكَتَبْتَ لَهَا كِتَابًا، وَأَشْهَدْتَ فِيهِ شُهُودًا؟

I have come to know that you have purchased a house for eighty Dinars, and that you have written a document for it and put witnessing on it?

فَقَالَ لَهُ شُرَيْحٌ : قَدْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، قَالَ: فَنَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ نَظْرَ مُغْضَبٍ، ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ :

Shurayh replied: Yes, Amīr al-mu'minīn, it is so. Amīr al-mu'minīn cast an angry look at him and said to him:

يَا شُرَيْحُ، أَمَا إِنَّهُ سَيَأْتِيكَ مَنْ لَا يَنْظُرُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، وَلَا يَسْأَلُكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَتِكَ، حَتَّى يُخْرِجَكَ مِنْهَا شَاخِصًا، وَيُسَلِّمَكَ إِلَى قَبْرِكَ خَالِصًا.

O Shurayh, beware, shortly one body (the angel of death) will come to you who will not look at the document, nor question you about your evidence but take you out of it far away and deposit you in your grave quite alone.

فَانْظُرْ يَا شُرَيْحُ لَا تَكُونِ ابْتَعْتَ هَذِهِ الدَّارَ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَالِكَ، أَوْ نَقَدْتَ الْأَثْمَنَ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَلَالِكِ! فَإِذَا أَنْتَ قَدْ خَسِرْتَ دَارَ الدُّنْيَا وَدَارَ الْآخِرَةِ! أَمَا إِنَّكَ لَوْ كُنْتَ أَتَيْتَنِي عِنْدَ شِرَائِكَ مَا اشْتَرَيْتَ لَكِتَابَ لِكَ كِتَابًا عَلَى هَذِهِ النُّسخَةِ، فَلَمْ تَرْغَبْ فِي شِرَاءِ هَذِهِ الدَّارِ بِدَرَاهِمٍ فَمَا فَوْقَ. وَالنُّسخَةُ هَذِهِ :

Look! O Shurayh, if you have purchased this, house from money other than yours or paid the price from unlawful source, you have incurred loss of this world as well as of the next. If you had come to me at the time of purchase I would have written for you a document on this paper and then you would not have liked to purchase the house even for one Dirham, not to speak of more. That document is this:-

هَذَا مَا اشْتَرَيْتَ عَيْدَ ذَلِيلٍ، مِنْ مَيِّتٍ قَدْ أُزْعِجَ لِلرَّحِيلِ، اشْتَرَى مِنْهُ دَارًا مِنْ دَارِ الْغُرُورِ، مِنْ جَانِبِ الْفَانِينَ، وَخِطَّةَ الْهَالِكِينَ، وَتَجَمَّعَ هَذِهِ الدَّارُ حُدُودَ أَرْبَعَةٍ:

This is about a purchase made by a humble slave (of Allāh) from another slave ready to depart (for the next world). He has purchased a house out of houses of deceit in the area of mortals and the place of those liable to perish. This house has four boundaries as follows:

الْحَدُّ الْأَوَّلُ يَنْتَهِي إِلَى دَوَاعِي الْأَفَاتِ، وَالْحَدُّ الثَّانِي يَنْتَهِي إِلَى دَوَاعِي الْمَصِيبَاتِ، وَالْحَدُّ الثَّلَاثُ يَنْتَهِي إِلَى الْهَوَى الْمُرْدِي، وَالْحَدُّ الرَّابِعُ يَنْتَهِي إِلَى الشَّيْطَانِ الْمَغْوِي، وَفِيهِ يَشْرَعُ بَابُ هَذِهِ الدَّارِ.

The first boundary is contiguous to sources of calamities; the second boundary adjoins the sources of distress; the third boundary adjoins devastating desire; and the fourth boundary adjoins deceitful Satan and towards this opens the door of this house.

اشْتَرَى هَذَا الْمُغْتَرِبُ بِالْأَمَلِ، مِنْ هَذَا الْمُرْعَجِ بِالْأَجَلِ، هَذِهِ الدَّارَ بِالْخُرُوجِ مِنْ عِزِّ الْقَنَاعَةِ، وَالِدُ خَوْلٍ فِي ذُلِّ الطَّلَبِ وَالضَّرَاعَةِ، فَمَا أَدْرَكَ هَذَا الْمِشْتَرِي فِيمَا اشْتَرَى مِنْهُ مِنْ دَرَكٍ، فَعَلَى مِثْلِ أَجْسَامِ الْمُلُوكِ، وَسَالِبِ نَفُوسِ الْجَبَابِرَةِ، وَمَزِيلِ مَلِكِ الْفِرَاعَةِ، مِثْلَ كِسْرَى وَقَيْصَرَ، وَتَبَعِ وَحَمِيرٍ، وَمِنْ جَمْعِ الْمَالِ عَلَى الْمَالِ فَأَكْثَرَ، وَمِنْ بَنَى وَشَيْدَ، وَزَخَرَ وَنَجَّدَ، وَادَّخَرَ وَاعْتَقَدَ، وَنَظَرَ بَزْعَمَهُ لِلْوَلَدِ، إِشْخَا صَهُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَى مَوْقِفِ الْعَرَضِ وَالْحِسَابِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الثَّوَابِ وَالْعِقَابِ، إِذَا وَقَعَ الْأَمْرُ بِفَصْلِ الْقَضَاءِ، ﴿وَوَسِّرْ هَذَاكَ الْمَبْطُلُونَ﴾

This house has been purchased by one who has been waylaid by desires from one who is being driven by death at the price of leaving the honour of contentment and entering into the humility of want and submissiveness. If the purchaser encounters some (evil) consequences of this transaction then it is for him who dismantles the bodies of monarchs, snatches the lives of despots, destroys the domain of Pharaoh like Kistrās [1], Caesars [2], Tubba's [3] and Himyars [4] and all those who amass wealth upon wealth and go on increasing it, build high houses and decorate them and collect treasures and preserve them, as they claimed according to their own thinking, for children to take them to the place of accounting and judgement and the position of reward and punishment. When the verdict will be passed those who stood on falsehood would then be the losers. (Qur'ān, 40:78)

شَهِدَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ الْعَقْلُ إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنْ أَسْرِ الْهَوَى، وَسَلِمَ مِنْ عِلَاقِ الدُّنْيَا.

This document is witnessed by intelligence when it is free from the shackles of desires and safe from the attachments to this world.

Footnotes :

[1] Kistrā, is the Arabicised form of "Khusraw" which means a King whose domain

of rule extends to a vast area. This was the title of the rulers of Iran.

[2] Caesar, was the title of the rulers of Rome, which in Latin means that child whose mother dies before delivery and who is extracted by cutting open her body. Since among the Kings of Rome, Augustus was born like this he was known by this name and after that this word was adopted as the title of every ruler.

[3] Tubba', is an appellation of each of the Kings of Yemen who possessed Ḥimyar and Ḥaḍramawt. Their names have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān in chaps. 44:37 and 50:14.

[4] Ḥimyar, originally, an important tribe in the ancient Sabaean kingdom of south-western Arabia; later the powerful rulers of much of southern Arabia from c. 115 BC to c. AD 525. The Ḥimyarites were concentrated in the area known as Dhū Raydan (later called Qatabān) on the coast of present-day Yemen; thus they were probably aided in the overthrow of their Sabaean kinsmen by the discovery of a sea route from Egypt to India, which deprived the inland Sabaean kingdom of its former importance as a centre for overland trade. The Ḥimyarites (classical Ḥomeritae) inherited the Sabaean language and culture, and from their capital at Ṣafār their power at times extended eastward as far as the Persian Gulf and northward into the Arabian Desert. At the beginning of the 4th century AD the Ḥimyar capital was moved northward to San'a, and later in that century both Christianity and Judaism gained firm footholds in the area. Internal disorders and changing trade routes caused the kingdom to decline, and in 525, after several unsuccessful attempts, Abyssinian invaders finally crushed the Ḥimyarites. A Ḥimyar appeal to Persia for aid led to Persian control in 575. (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica [Micropaedia], vol.5, p.49, ed. 1973-1974)