

Imām Abū Ḥanīfa ؓ was known for his keen foresight (*firāsa*). He said to Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī: "You are going to devote yourself entirely to worship." He said to Abū Yūsuf: "You will have much to do with the world." The story of his prediction of Abū Yūsuf's princely future is famous. The latter narrates:

My father died when I was little and my mother placed me with a bleacher. But I used to pass by Abū Ḥanīfa's circle and sit there. My mother would follow me, take me by the hand, away from the gathering, and return me to the bleacher's shop. Then I would escape again and, against her wishes, sit with Abū Ḥanīfa. One day she had had enough and went to him, shouting, "This boy is an orphan with nothing to his name except what I feed him from my spinning, and you are spoiling him and causing my ruin!" Abū Ḥanīfa said, "Woman, be quiet! He is right here, learning the Science, and he shall be feasting on flour and honey pastries (*fālūdhaj*) with pistachio butter in dishes of turquoise (*fayrūzaj*!)" She replied, "You are an old man who has lost his senses!" Later, when I became a judge, I was with [Hārūn] al-Rashīd one day when they brought flour and honey pastry in a dish of turquoise and Hārūn said to me, "Eat from this!" Seeing this, I smiled. When he pressed me to say why, I told him what Abū Ḥanīfa had said. He replied, "Truly, knowledge raises one's state both in life and in the hereafter. Allāh have mercy on Abū Ḥanīfa! He used to see with the eyes of the mind what cannot be seen with the eyes of the head."¹

It is narrated that Abū Ḥanīfa recommended Mālik – whom he first saw when he went on pilgrimage – among the scholars of Madīna: "If there is any excellence in them it lies in the fair-haired, blue-eyed youth." Another narration states: "I saw great knowledge spread in it [Madīna], and if any single person possesses it all it is the fair-skinned youth."²

Ibn Ḥabīb narrates in his '*Uqalā' al-Majānīn* that Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mis'ar [ibn Kidām al-Hilālī al-Kūfī (d. 153)], Abū Ḥanīfa, and Sharīk ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Nakha'ī (d. 177) were arrested and taken to al-Manṣūr [who wanted to force one of them to be chief judge]. Abū Ḥanīfa said: "I will use ruse to save myself, Sufyān will escape on the way, Mis'ar will act the madman, and Sharīk will fall." On the way, Sufyān said to his guard: "I need the privy." The guard waited behind a certain wall but Sufyān hailed a passing barge, telling them: "The man behind the wall wants to kill me!" They hid him and took him. The guard came back without him and his chief beat him up. The remaining three entered to see al-Manṣūr. Mis'ar walked up to him, shook his hand, and said: "How are you, Commander of the Believers after me? How are your female slaves? How are your beasts of burden? You will make me chief judge, yes?" A man standing next to the Caliph said: "This is a madman!" Al-Manṣūr replied: "You are right. Take him out!" They let him go. Abū Ḥanīfa was summoned next. He came forward and said: "Commander of the Believers, I am al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit the son of the slave silkmaker in al-Kūfa. The people of al-Kūfa will never accept that the son of a slave silkmaker be judge over them!" He said: "You spoke truly." Sharīk began to speak but the Caliph said: "Shut up! No-one but you remains, so give your pledge!" Sharīk said: "Commander of the Believers, I have memory lapses." He said: "Chew resin gum!"³ Sharīk said: "I joke too much." The Caliph said: "We will make honey pastries for you to eat before you sit in your chair to judge!" Sharīk said: "I will judge whoever comes and goes!" The Caliph said: "Judge, be it myself and my own son!" Sharīk said: "Then I will."

It is related that Abū Ḥanīfa said: "Most of the cases in which faith (*al-īmān*) is removed from a person is at the time of death and its cause is the commission of injustice."⁴

Like al-Shāfi'ī after him, Abū Ḥanīfa practiced physiognomy. He said: "If you see a man with a long head, know he is a fool"; "If you see a person who is both tall and intelligent, hold on to him for they are rare!"

Main source: al-Ṣāliḥī's '*Uqūd al-Jumān* (p. 248-250).

¹In Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* (10:180).

²Both reports narrated by al-Gharnāṭī al-Mālikī in *Intiṣār al-Faqīr al-Sālik lil-Imām al-Kabīr Mālik* (p. 139) as cited by Abū Ghudda in *al-Intiqā'* (p. 43).

³The mountain shrub *lubān* or *olibanum* (=frankincense, used to strengthen memory) resembles the mastic tree.

⁴Narrated in *al-Tadhkirat al-Mu'azzamiyya*?