

### Introduction

Let us explore the life of a favoured Companion of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, whom the Messenger nurtured to become his interpreter, the greatest scribe of revelation, a master of many sciences of knowledge, the laws of inheritance in particular, and an expert judge.

This article highlights the manner in which Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ unearthed his strong potential and fostered him into a great scholar of Islam, to whom the entire Ummah is indebted and upon whom the Ummah relies. His accomplishments are testaments to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ being truly the Messenger of Allah. It highlights the value Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ gave to the Ummah as well as prominent personalities of the Ummah's appreciation of his services, a Sunnah which ought to be revived.

### Background

**Zayd ibn Thābit ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Zayd was born sa'īd (fortunate) and therefore adopted an agnomen reflecting this, i.e. Abū Sa'īd (the fortunate one.)**<sup>1</sup> He hails from the Banū al-Najjār, the family of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ—the maternal uncles of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ praised them, **“The best tribe of the Anṣār are the Banū al-Najjār.”**<sup>2</sup> Zayd was orphaned at a young age. His father, Thābit, was killed during the Battle of Bu'āth<sup>3</sup>, five years before the Hijrah, when he was only six years of age.<sup>4</sup>

### Manifestation of Excellent Retention

After Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ arrival in Madīnah Munawwarah, Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was brought to him with the exciting news that **he had committed seventeen Sūrahs of the Glorious Qur'ān to memory.** Joyful at the news, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ bade him to recite. Zayd recalls that memorable moment, **“I recited [them] to him which pleased him.”** He was eleven years of age at the time.

### Challenging him after Discerning Mighty Potential

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ detected mighty potential in this blossoming youth and thus challenged him, **“Learn how to write Hebrew, for I do not trust the Jews with my letters.”**

**This youngster's mighty potential which Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ determined was primarily owing to him mastering seventeen Sūrahs at that time. Furthermore, the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ realised that the lad's mind and heart were developed, nurtured, and refined by the sublime words of the Almighty. He therefore saw him a perfect candidate for an amazing task, to be shouldered by none besides him.**

1 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 428.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3790; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2511.

3 A major battle between the Aws and Khazraj—the two Arab tribes of Madīnah—which claimed the lives of many of their leaders, thus facilitating Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ entry into Madīnah and leadership of the city.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 490, 491; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 30; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 424

**Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ took up the challenge and in about half a month, or seventeen days to be precise, mastered the Hebrew language – its understanding, reading, and writing.** He would then write for him to the Jews and when they would write, he would read it to the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.<sup>1</sup>

### The Prowess and Mastery of the Messenger

Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ became the official interpreter of the Muslim State at the age of eleven. Admire the maturity of this lad and the trust placed in him by Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the Messenger of Allah. **Marvel at how Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ unearthed the lad's hidden talent and developed it into something extraordinary. Look at how he channelled it to be of benefit to the lad as well as the entire Ummah. This only reaffirms our conviction that he was the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and those around him became lanterns of guidance and exemplary men owing to his nurturing and development. He turns an ordinary orphan into a distinctive interpreter and translator.**

### The Ṣaḥābah are Men of Integrity

We, the Ahl al-Sunnah, determine the Ṣaḥābah as men of integrity. This report substantiates this determination. **Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not trust the Jews, yet trusted this young Ṣaḥābī to handle his correspondence. This very trust that he placed unrestrictedly on this Ṣaḥābī validates the Ahl al-Sunnah's belief.** This action of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ served as a green signal to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to select Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to compile the Qur'ān. More of that later.

### Scribe of Revelation

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ appointed Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ a scribe of revelation.<sup>2</sup> Although, there were many other scribes, **Sayyidunā Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was the main scribe.** Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ confirms this in his *Fath al-Bārī*, while commenting on the chapter of Imām al-Bukhārī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ: 'Chapter on the Nabī's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ scribe,' under which the author cites two narrations, both affirming Sayyidunā Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ as the scribe. Ibn Ḥajar رَحِمَهُ اللهُ upholds, **"In Madīnah, Zayd was the main scribe. Owing to his excess in receiving it [revelation], he was called al-kātib (the scribe) as in the ḥadīth of Barā' ibn 'Āzib, the second ḥadīth of the chapter. Therefore, Abū Bakr told him: You would certainly write revelation for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ."**<sup>3</sup>

This determination is further corroborated by Zayd's report on the authority of his grandson, Sulaymān ibn Khārijah ibn Zayd, who reports from his father from his grandfather [Zayd], **"Whenever revelation would descend upon Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, he would call for me and I would pen it down."**<sup>4</sup>

1 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 491; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 31; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 428; *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 309.

2 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 491.

3 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 15 pg. 43.

4 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 429; Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail: *Tashīl al-Rusūm*, pg. 25.

## Profiting from the Blessed Prophetic Company

Sayyidunā Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ being selected as an interpreter and a scribe shaped the future of this ordinary youth to becoming a magnificent scholar. He now had the privileged opportunity to sit in the blessed company of the cream of creation and the most knowledgeable Messenger, the fountainhead of goodness, blessings, and knowledge. From this blessed company, he learnt and mastered the glorious Qur’ān, the science of Qirā’ah, the laws of inheritance, the art of issuing verdicts, and many aḥādīth. Furthermore, the qualities of a genuine, sincere believer were developed in his heart and further refined. He would soon grow to become the Imām of Madīnah, as determined by Imām Mālik ibn Anas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.<sup>1</sup>

## Proficiency in the Glorious Qur’ān

**Sayyidunā Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is among the handful who are recognised as having memorised the entire Qur’ān during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.**<sup>2</sup> He recited the Qur’ān, either a major portion or the entire Qur’ān, to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.<sup>3</sup> He learnt the various Qirā’āt directly from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and rose to become an authority in the field.

Added to this was his presence at the final revision of the Glorious Qur’ān between Sayyidunā Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ during the last Ramaḍān of the latter’s stay in this transitory abode.<sup>4</sup> We are reminded of the sublime ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ which applies aptly to him, **“One proficient in the Qur’ān will be with the scribes, noble and obedient.”**<sup>5</sup>

Attachment to the Glorious Qur’ān earns one a lofty rank in Islam. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stated, **“The best of you is he who learns the Qur’ān and teaches it,”**<sup>6</sup> and **“Allah exalts many owing to this Book.”** Interestingly, this latter ḥadīth was narrated by ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ when he was informed by Nāfi’ ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥārith—his governor over Makkah—that he appointed Ibn Abzā—one of their freed slaves—over the forest due to him being a proficient reciter of the Glorious Qur’ān and knowledgeable of the laws of inheritance.<sup>7</sup> We just learnt of Zayd’s proficiency in the Glorious Qur’ān and we will soon come to learn about him being the greatest expert of this Ummah in the laws of inheritance.

## Honour and Special Consideration by the Messenger

His attachment to the Glorious Qur’ān earned him honour in the eyes of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. This was quite natural, when Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ himself stated, **“Certainly, part of showing honour**

1 *Al-Istī‘āb*, pg. 539; *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 436.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3810, 5003, 5004.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 427.

4 *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, vol. 4 pg. 526; *al-Itqān*, pg. 113.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 798.

6 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 5027.

7 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 817.

to Allah is honouring an elderly Muslim, the bearer of the Qur’ān who is not an extremist nor one aloof from it, and honouring a just sultan.”<sup>1</sup>

### Superior Treatment by the Elite of the Ummah

One manifestation of this unique honour was during the Battle of Tabūk, when the flag of the Banū al-Najjār was held aloft by Sayyidunā ‘Umārah ibn Ḥazm رضي الله عنه. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم took the flag from him and awarded it to Zayd. When ‘Umārah enquired whether something negative about him reached the Messenger, the latter replied, **“No, but the Qur’ān deserves precedence. Zayd memorised more Qur’ān than you.”**<sup>2</sup>

Zayd رضي الله عنه joyfully recalls another episode of this special treatment he received, **“Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم allowed me [to participate in battle] on the Day of the Trench and clothed me with a Qibṭiyyah (a fine white Egyptian garment).”**<sup>3</sup> In yet another narration, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم verbally expressed his honour for him by describing him as an excellent lad.<sup>4</sup>

This preferential treatment extended beyond the life of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه consulted with Zayd رضي الله عنه in important matters and awarded him a high rank. Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه appointed him as judge and allocated for him a remuneration.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, whenever he journeyed out of Madīnah, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه would appoint Zayd as his deputy over Madīnah. Nearly every time he returned, he apportioned for him an orchard of date-palms as a token of his appreciation.<sup>6</sup> Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه would also appoint him as deputy over Madīnah when he performed Ḥajj.<sup>7</sup> And the pinnacle of this preferential treatment was assigning to him the compilation of the Glorious Qur’ān.

**This Sunnah, of awarding honour to individuals based on their attachment to the Qur’ān and knowledge of its teachings and injunctions, must be revived in our circles.** Awarding honour on the basis of superficial aspects like the possession of worldly amenities, secular knowledge, and futile talents should be shunned.

A final example presented is of Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه—the cousin of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and the best commentator of Qur’ān. It was on the occasion of Sayyidunā Zayd’s mother’s—Nawwār bint Mālik ibn Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنها—demise. After he performed the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah over his mother, his animal was brought. **Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه held the stirrup of his conveyance, as an expression of respect for him. Zayd رضي الله عنه entreated him, “Leave it, O nephew of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم,” to which Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه submitted, “This is how we treat our scholars and elders.”**<sup>8</sup>

1 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Ḥadīth: 4843. Ḥasan.

2 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 2 pg. 490; Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 424.

3 Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 432; al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, Ḥadīth: 4743.

4 Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 424; al-Istī‘āb, pg. 537.

5 Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 2 pg. 310; Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, pg. 32; Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 435.

6 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 2 pg. 492; Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 434.

7 Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 425; al-Istī‘āb, pg. 538.

8 Al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, Ḥadīth: 4746; Majma’ al-Zawā’id, vol. 9 pg. 345; al-Iṣābah, vol. 2 pg. 491; al-Mustadrak, Ḥadīth: 5808.

## Erudite Scholar

The profound teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ nurtured Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ into an erudite scholar. **He mastered many sciences and rose to be an authority in four: Qirā'ah, inheritance, issuing verdicts, and passing judgement.**<sup>1</sup>

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ cousin, Ibn 'Abbās, رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ testifies, “The protected Ṣaḥābah of Muḥammad know very well that Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is from those firmly grounded in knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> Tābī'īn like 'Āmir al-Sha'bī and Masrūq reckon him as one of the 'Ulamā' (expert scholars) of the Ummah and experts of knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

**His rank in knowledge is so lofty that he is among the six distinct individuals to issue verdicts during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and is counted an authority in the field.**<sup>4</sup>

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would consult men of insight and intelligence when faced with dilemmas and difficult situations, and one of these men were Zayd. Zayd was among the very few to pass verdicts during the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He continued passing verdicts till the end of his life.<sup>5</sup>

**He rose to the position of judge in Madīnah Munawwarah.** 'Āmir al-Sha'bī reckons him as one of the four [greatest] judges of this Ummah.<sup>6</sup> 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ appointed him as judge and allocated for him a remuneration.<sup>7</sup> He continued passing judgement during his entire stay in Madīnah till his demise in 45 AH.<sup>8</sup>

## Master in the Law of Inheritance

Coupled with his extensive knowledge in other fields, he gained a special competence when it came to the laws of inheritance, a science regarded as half of knowledge by the Messenger ﷺ.<sup>9</sup> Rasūlullāh ﷺ testified to his expertise in this field declaring, **“Zayd ibn Thābit is the expert of the laws of inheritance.”**<sup>10</sup> Practicing upon this ḥadīth, al-Shāfi'ī has taken Zayd's views in inheritance.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ instructed the people to consult with Zayd in issues regarding inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 32.

2 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 492; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 437.

3 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 303.

4 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 302-303; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 492; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 32; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 433.

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 302, 310.

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 303; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 434.

7 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 32; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 435.

8 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310.

9 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Ḥadīth: 2719. Ḍa'īf.

10 *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī*, Ḥadīth: 2096; *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 3790; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Ḥadīth: 154, 155. Albānī declared it ṣaḥīḥ in *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, Ḥadīth: 1224.

11 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 425.

12 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310.

Al-Zuhrī commented, “Had Zayd ibn Thābit not recorded inheritance, I feel that it would have left the people.”<sup>1</sup> He also commented, “Had ‘Uthmān and Zayd passed away at one point, the knowledge of inheritance would cease to exist. A time came upon the people when none besides them was knowledgeable of it.”<sup>2</sup> Al-Sha’bī states, “**Zayd has surpassed all people in two sciences, inheritance and Qur’ān.**”<sup>3</sup>

### Service to the Glorious Qur’ān

The demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was the most devastating event in the life of mankind. Yet, the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ remained fortified and steadfast on their religion, adhering to Allah’s command in this regard. In the storm of apostasy, the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ remained steadfast and fought the apostates and manifested the prophecy of Allah ﷻ in the Glorious Qur’ān—Allah raising a nation whom He loves and who love Him, who are humble to the believers, stern against the disbelievers, who fight in the path of Allah, and do not fear the critic’s criticism in the way of Allah.<sup>4</sup>

The Battle of Yamāmah was the most lethal of all these battles, claiming the lives of many sons of Islam, including a number of those dedicated to memorising the Qur’ān, like Sayyidunā Sālim Mawlā Abī Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Sayyidunā Zayd participated in this decisive Battle and was struck by an arrow, however, it did not cause him any harm; and praise be to Allah.<sup>5</sup>

Due to the large number of casualties among the Ḥuffāz, ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ implored Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to arrange for the compilation of the Glorious Qur’ān. After much hesitation and debate, the Khalīfah agreed. He summoned Zayd ibn Thābit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to shoulder this mammoth task. **The selection of Zayd by Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was nothing but a reflection of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ selection of this young lad a decade earlier. The Messenger ﷺ tasked him with handling all his correspondence with the Jews and appointed him a scribe ten years earlier which guided Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to make this choice.**

The report of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī records the exact words of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, “**You are a wise young man and we do not have any suspicion about you; and you would write the Revelation for Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. You should thus search for (the fragmentary scripts of) the Qur’ān and collect it in one book.**” The onerous task demanded meticulousness; hence he expresses, “By Allah, had they ordered me to shift one of the mountains, it would have been easier for me than ordering me to collect the Qur’ān.”

**Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ exerted himself in collecting the Qur’ān, ensuring that only that is recorded which was written in the presence of Rasūlullāh ﷺ with the testimony of two witnesses**

1 Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 436.

2 Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 436; Sunan al-Dārimī, Ḥadīth: 2894. Ṣaḥīḥ.

3 Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, pg. 31; Tadhīb al-Tadhīb, vol. 3 pg. 399; Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 2 pg. 432; al-Istī’āb, pg. 539.

4 Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 54.

5 Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 425.

**to the same. He completed the collection of the Glorious Qur’ān, each Sūrah in a separate manuscript, and thus accomplished one of the greatest milestones in the preservation of the Glorious Qur’ān. He was in his early twenties at the time. And glory be to Allah!**<sup>1</sup>

Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه remarked about Abū Bakr, “The one to receive the most reward in the compilation will be Abū Bakr. May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى have mercy on Abū Bakr, he was the first to gather the Book of Allah.”<sup>2</sup> We affirm the same for Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه as he was the individual who shouldered the responsibility of the compilation of the Glorious Qur’ān. Al-Dhahabī affirms, “**No Qur’ān remains on the surface of the earth besides the one Zayd wrote and Zayd copied with the other three men of Quraysh.**”<sup>3</sup> He thus receives all the reward of every recitation of the Qur’ān.

In 25 AH, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه selected Zayd, along with three other scribes, to make copies of the master copy Zayd had prepared a decade earlier. The difference was that in this compilation, the entire Qur’ān was recorded in one manuscript and the Sūrahs were given sequence as concluded by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. A few copies were written and sent to the various cities with an expert Qāri’ to teach the people.<sup>4</sup>

**Sayyidunā Zayd رضي الله عنه was appointed to teach the people of Madīnah Munawwarah from the manuscript kept in Madīnah while his student, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, was sent to Kūfah to teach the people of that area.**<sup>5</sup> ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنهما did not give preference to anyone over Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه in the field of Qirā’ah.<sup>6</sup> If we look at the ten Imāms of Qirā’ah, we find that four of them, viz. Imām Nāfi‘, Imām Ibn Kathīr, Imām ‘Āṣim, and Imām Abū Ja‘far studied Qirā’ah from the students of Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه.<sup>7</sup> Aḥmad al-‘Ijlī asserts, “People adhere to the Qirā’ah of Zayd and the inheritance of Zayd.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Battles & Noteworthy Stances**

His pursuit of knowledge did not prevent him from participating in Battles during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Due to his tender age, he was not allowed to participate in Badr and Uḥud. **He participated in Khandaq and all the battles thereafter, including Tabūk**—which differentiated the genuine believers from the hypocrites. Not only did he participate in this Battle, he held the banner of the Banū al-Najjār. He participated in the Battle of Yamāmah, highlighted previously, as well as the epic Battle of Yarmūk, the spoils of which he distributed.<sup>9</sup>

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4986.

2 *Al-Itqān*, pg. 130; *al-Maṣāḥif*, pg. 11, 12; *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 15 pg. 23.

3 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 441

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4986.

5 Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail: *Tashīl al-Rusūm*, pg. 30; Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī: *The History of the Qur’ānic Text*, pg. 94; *The History of the Noble Qur’ān*, pg. 149.

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 309, 310; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 32; *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 434.

7 Mufti Nabeel Gulam Valli: *A Glimpse into Qirā’at*, pg. 97 – 125.

8 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 436; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 32.

9 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 491.

One of his noteworthy stances was in Saqīfah Banī Sā'idah shortly after Rasūlullāh's ﷺ demise, when the Anṣār met to discuss the issue of khilāfah. Some of the Anṣārī orators were suggesting a two-khalīfah solution to the dilemma—one khalīfah from the Muhājirīn and one from the Anṣār. It was Zayd ؓ who announced boldly and openly, **“Certainly, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was from the Muhājirīn and we were his helpers. The Imām will thus only be from the Muhājirīn and we will be his helpers.”** Abū Bakr ؓ appreciated and congratulated Zayd's input and diffusion of the volatile situation.<sup>1</sup>

Another stance was his defence of the innocent Khalīfah, Sayyidunā 'Uthmān ؓ when the rebels entered Madīnah to shed his blood. Zayd ؓ entered the house of 'Uthmān ؓ with the firm intention to defend him. 'Uthmān ؓ instructed him to go outside and ward the people off. He complied and announced, **“O Anṣār! Become helpers of Allah twice. Assist him [‘Uthmān], by Allah, his blood is ḥarām (sanctified).”**<sup>2</sup>

### The Value he brought to the Ummah

A speciality of Zayd ibn Thābit ؓ was his total engrossment in knowledge until his demise. He settled in the peaceful, blessed city of Madīnah, occupied in his service to the Muslim Ummah as Muftī and Judge.

Sayyidunā 'Umar ؓ acknowledged, **“The people of the city [Madīnah] are in need of Zayd due to the knowledge he possesses which he conveys to them, such knowledge which they find by none besides him.”** The Khalīfah, thus, did not allow him to move away from Madīnah Munawwarah, fully cognisant of the value he brings to the capital of the Muslim State and its blessed residents.<sup>3</sup>

Zayd ؓ left behind a legacy of knowledge with Abū Hurayrah, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Ibn 'Umar, Anas, Ibn 'Abbās, Sahl ibn Sa'd, Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, and 'Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Khaṭmī ؓ from the Ṣaḥābah together with Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (the Qārī'), 'Ubayd ibn al-Sabbāq, 'Aṭā' ibn Yasār, Ṭā'ūs, 'Urwah, Khārijah ibn Zayd ibn Thābit, Sulaymān ibn Zayd ibn Thābit, Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, Sulaymān ibn Yasār, Abān ibn 'Uthmān, and Bishr ibn Sa'īd from the Tābī'īn as his students.<sup>4</sup>

### Official Posts

Here is a list of the official positions he held:

- Interpreter and scribe of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.
- Scribe of Revelation.

1 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 433; *Musnad al-Ṭayālīsī*. Isnad is ṣaḥīḥ.

2 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 435.

3 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 491; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 425; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 427; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 30, 31.



- Muftī in Madīnah during the Prophetic Era.
- Compiler of the Glorious Qur’ān.
- Member of the Council of the First Khalīfah, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.
- Muftī and Judge during the khilāfah of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.
- Scribe for Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما.
- Deputy of ‘Umar during his journeys out of Madīnah.
- Caretaker of the Bayt al-Māl for ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.
- **Authority in Madīnah in passing judgements, issuing verdicts, Qirā’ah, and the laws of inheritance during the era of ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, and Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنهم until his demise in 45 AH.**<sup>1</sup>

### His Value in the Sight of the Ummah

‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī states: There was no Ṣaḥābī such who had students who learnt from him and adhered to his verdicts in fiqh except three viz. Zayd, ‘Abd Allāh [ibn Mas‘ūd], and Ibn ‘Abbās.<sup>2</sup> This means that his students valued his knowledge so intensely that they adhered strictly to his verdicts. Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab رضي الله عنه, the greatest Tābi‘ī, is one such example. He acknowledges, **“Zayd ibn Thābit is the most knowledgeable of all of the cases brought before him for judgement and possesses the deepest insight in those cases in which nothing has been heard.”** He further states, and this is profound, **“I do not know any view of Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه which is not practiced upon by the consensus of the East and West, or upon which the people of the city [Madīnah] do not practice.”**<sup>3</sup>

Al-Dhahabī introduces him as, **“The grand Imām, the Shaykh of the reciters and masters of inheritance, the Muftī of Madīnah, the scribe of revelation; may Allah be pleased with him.”**<sup>4</sup> He showers upon him these praises, **“He wrote revelation. He memorised the Qur’ān and became a master in the same. He also mastered the laws of inheritance. Al-Ṣiddīq selected him to gather the Qur’ān and he searched for it and tired himself in compiling it. Thereafter, ‘Uthmān chose him to write the Muṣḥaf, having full reliance in his memory, dīn, trustworthiness, and beautiful writing. Ibn ‘Abbās and Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī are among those who recited Qur’ān to him.”**<sup>5</sup>

Muḥammad Sālim Muḥaysin introduces him as, “Zayd ibn Thābit ibn Ḍaḥḥāk al-Anṣārī, of the Khazraj tribe. An intelligent youth who mastered the Syriac language in just nineteen days. He memorised the entire Qur’ān during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and was one of the scribes of revelation.

<sup>1</sup> *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 425; *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 438.

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 311.

<sup>4</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 426, 427.

<sup>5</sup> *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, pg. 30.

He was famed for his honesty, chastity, trustworthiness, knowledge, and understanding of Islam. He became an authority in legal rulings, recitation of the Qur'ān, and laws of inheritance in Madīnah Munawwarah.”<sup>1</sup>

### Family and Demeanour

Sayyidunā Zayd رضي الله عنه had a total of 27 children, 18 sons and 9 daughters, from two of his wives and two of his concubines.<sup>2</sup> He was the most cheerful man at home and the most awe-striking in his gatherings.<sup>3</sup>

### Demise

Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه passed away in 45 AH around the age of 56.<sup>4</sup> His demise was a massive blow to the Ummah. Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه commented after his demise, **“This is how knowledge leaves. Today, an abundance of knowledge has been buried.”**<sup>5</sup> Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, **“He was the scholar of the people and the expert during the khilāfah of ‘Umar. ‘Umar dispersed them in the cities and prevented them from issuing verdicts according to their opinions. Meanwhile, Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه sat in Madīnah and issued verdicts to the people of Madīnah.”**<sup>6</sup> Abū Hurayrah and Ḥassān ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه expressed similar sentiments.<sup>7</sup>

1 Muḥammad Sālim Muḥaysin: *The History of the Noble Qur'ān*, pg. 136.

2 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 428.

3 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 492; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 425; *al-Istī'āb*, pg. 539; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 439.

4 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 425; *al-Istī'āb*, pg. 540.

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 312; *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 484, Ḥadīth: 5810; *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 5 pg. 108 Ḥadīth: 4749; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 439.

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 311; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 pg. 434.

7 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 312; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 pg. 492.