

The History of the Thaqalayn Muslim Association

Seeing followers of the Thaqalayn (the Holy Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bayt) scattered and lost amidst a sea of university students left a feeling of emptiness in the hearts of many. For a long time, there was no organized body that either united or represented these students fully. Not knowing who their fellow brothers and sisters on campus were made it virtually impossible to coordinate and organize themselves as a united body. There was a lack of both formal and informal programs that would not only encourage the refinement of proper Islamic ideologies in their hearts, but also provide an environment whereby they could meet and socialize. Ultimately, this vacuum hindered the drive towards a strong unified community of brotherhood and sisterhood.

Given this situation, an obvious solution was to form an organization catering to the needs of the followers of the Thaqalayn. However, not wanting to cause disunity with our Sunni brothers and sisters, attempts to coordinate events with the MSA (Muslim Students' Association) were made on several occasions. At UTM, during the 2000-2001 academic year, a group of students met consistently with the MSA in order to both try and coordinate events once again, and address a number of concerns. These concerns included having certain Jum'a khateebis speaking ill of the Shia both directly and indirectly, ultimately presenting misinformation and false accusations; having Muslim brothers denied the privilege of leading the Jum'a on grounds that they are Shia; unwillingness to invite speakers who are of the madhab of Ahlul-Bayt, and among other concerns, hindrance in being able to provide books and other literature during Islamic Awareness Weeks. During the academic year of 2001-2002, similar meetings were held at St. George campus with the same concerns presented.

After months of discussion, no significant agreement could be made with the MSA. It was now evident that using the resources available, this vacuum could never be filled. The idea of forming an organization to meet these needs had been lingering in the minds of many for several years now. Given these circumstances, this idea could now conceivably become a reality. The benefits of forming an organization would now be twofold. In addition to providing a sense of community and potentially filling this ever-present vacuum, it would ultimately serve to allow for proper representation of Shias at the university, and in due course, present a united voice.

It was at this time that Allah (SWT) introduced these individuals to another group of youths bearing similar concerns. Using cyberspace to collect and network brothers and sisters throughout the university, these students began to lay a foundation. Now, what should one call this electronic tree house? A unique name was sought after. It had to be a name with meaning, one that truly represented the followers of the Holy Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt. On January 13, 2001, with the ever-present guidance of Allah (SWT), Thaqalayn "the two weighty things," representing the Holy Qur'an and the Ahlul-Bayt as mentioned in the Hadith of Thaqalayn was chosen. The Thaqalayn Electronic Tree House became officially established hence.

In order to maximize what could be achieved on campus, and act as a united front, these two groups of students merged together, forming an official student organization with a cyberspace network. The cycle was now on its way to being broken. A voice was now coming into existence. The vacuum was now being filled, slowly but surely, day by day. On the glorious day of Ghadeer 1421 A.H. (March 14, 2001) the Thaqalayn Muslim Association was formally established and became a physical reality at UTM. Although TMA is an organization established at the University of Toronto, many Mo'mineen and Mo'minaat from a variety of institutions welcomed TMA and attended this inaugural meeting. Masha Allah, all three campuses of the University of Toronto, Ryerson University, York University, Sheridan College, as well as various high schools in the region were represented. The following year, the other two campuses, St. George & Scarborough, established TMA with the same foresight as UTM. The goal of these two campuses, just as UTM, is to create harmony and unity within the Muslims and Humanity.

Despite being another Muslim organization at the University of Toronto, the creation of TMA was by no means intended to compete with the MSA. It's primary objective was, and still is, to complement not substitute the MSA. TMA would thus support the various Islamic causes and efforts of the MSA while simultaneously fulfilling its own objectives. TMA will always have its hands extended to the Sunni brethren with love and brotherhood, and strive for unity and understanding.

Alhamdulillah, TMA has been growing since that day. With new activities came new members. Given the help and blessings of Allah (SWT), a sense of unity and community is now beginning to rise and flourish, and insha Allah, so has our Iman. We can only move forward now. With a united voice, and a sincere heart, we can all move towards growing both physically and spiritually. The sky is the limit, and it is all of us collectively, that determine how fast we get there.