

WELCOME REMARKS AT THE IUS SEMINAR – 2008

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Good morning.

It is my distinct pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to the 2008 Conference of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the auspicious day when our holy scripture – Guru Granth Sahib – was bestowed the Guruship in eternity by our tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708. On behalf of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism, its members and executives, I would like to convey my best wishes to everyone on this joyous occasion. This declaration by our tenth Guru was indeed, not only a significant event for the Sikhs, but for mankind in general, as there is no other example documented in history where such high honor, respect and reverence has been accorded to religious writings. From that day onwards, our Granth, and the message contained therein, the Sabd became our spiritual guide forever, embodying the spirit, message and vision of our Gurus and other saints who contributed to this effort. Befittingly, therefore, the Institute for Understanding Sikhism has chosen “Sabd Guru” as the theme for this year’s conference.

The day’s events are divided into separate sections. Following the welcome remarks, Dr. Parminder Singh Chahal will provide a brief overview of the Institute’s activities and achievements since its inception, which is also celebrating its Tenth Anniversary this year. This will be followed by the Inaugural Address by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism.

Session 1 commences immediately thereafter, in which 4 papers will be presented dealing with the 300th Gurugadi Divas. The luncheon session will include a presentation on the mystery of Naam Simran. The four papers to be presented in the afternoon, in Sessions 2 and 3, will all deal with Sabd Guru.

Each paper is allocated 40 minutes – 25 minutes for the presenter plus 15 minutes for a discussion on the topic immediately following the presentation. It is my sincere request to each presenter to respect this time limit to ensure that the proceedings can progress on schedule. There will be plenty of opportunity to have more detailed discussions outside of the formal sessions throughout the day.

The conference will conclude with the closing remarks by the president of the IUS. It will be followed immediately by a reception and dinner. Before dinner Dr Kulbir Singh Thind will demonstrate how to use Gurbani CD for research work on Gurbani. Thereafter, Poetic Symposium will be handled by Mr Surjit Singh Pahwa with local poets.

Once again, welcome to the conference, and for the many of you who are from out of town, welcome to Montreal. We can all look forward to an intellectually stimulating and rewarding day ahead.

Thank you.
