

# BEING A SIKH - A STATUS OR A RESPONSIBILITY?

Being a father, is it the name of a status or a responsibility? If you are a father, you will have to make a living not only for yourself and your wife, but also for your children. You being a father will have to make efforts to educate your children, fulfil their day to day needs, provide them nutritional food and drink and guide them to be brought up with good values. So, is being a father the name of a status or a responsibility – a responsibility, otherwise you will sit at home all day with that status and not be able to provide for your family and children.

Let's look at being a teacher. Is it the name of a status or a responsibility? The teacher has been through years of education and become a professor at a university. But then he takes regular time off from his job because he thinks being a professor is a status which he has gained through his years of education and hard work. All the students in his class fail because the professor sees his role as a status and doesn't see the need for him to go and teach his students. Who will the parents of the students blame for their failure? The professor, because he did not fulfill his responsibility of being a professor and educating his students. He saw his credential of being a professor as a status and not a responsibility.

Now, being a Sikh - is it a status or a responsibility? **It is indeed a responsibility too!** Today we have become status Sikhs. We become Singhs and Kaur, we start wearing Kirpans, and start writing 'Khalsa' after our names to achieve the status of being a Sikh – we are not saying this shouldn't be done - but who will stand up to the responsibility of being a Sikh?

Being a Sikh is no status. Not everyone can write 'professor' before their name, because it requires a lot of hard work and years of education. How can we write professor before our name without the education? People will laugh at us! But, we have labelled ourselves as Sikhs, we have put Khalsa after our names. We have taken the status of being a Sikh very quickly, yet we have forgotten our responsibilities of being a Sikh.

When we look into our history, those who used to label themselves as Sikh's would understand, "from today onwards I have a responsibility on my shoulders which I have to fulfill of being a Sikh" they would think. Today we take Amrit and think our duty as a Sikh has finished, but that is the very day our responsibility as a Sikh starts. It is a responsibility in the form of instilling the values of Guru Granth Sahib Ji into our friends, families and society.

In the same context, being a Guru was a responsibility. When Guru Angad Dev Ji were given Gurgaddi, they were given a responsibility by Guru Nanak Dev Ji to spread the word of Gurbani, make people understand Gurbani and to become a sacrifice for Gurbani, the truth - like Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji did.

Is being a Parchaarik (preacher) the name of a status or a responsibility? A responsibility! Until such time one has the hobby of being a Paarcharik and thinking of it as a status, there will be loads of people who will become Parchaariks. But the day they find out being a Parchaarik is a responsibility, to guide people towards truth and righteous living, and not a status, then there will be a lot less Parchaariks around. These are all very big responsibilities which we have watered down into being mere statuses.

**So what is our responsibility of being a Sikh?** We believe everyone, men and women, have equal status before God who created all of the universe and everything within it. Human beings are encouraged to develop their moral character through generosity, humility and self-reliance. Self-evidently these values, when embraced, will create harmonious tolerant communities who care for their fellow citizens. Sikhs throughout history are respected for having sacrificed their own lives, so that people of other religions may have freedom to worship in the manner of their choice. Instilling these values into the younger community, whose mother tongue may not be Punjabi, will benefit society as a whole.

Consequently, when we see our role of being a Sikh as a responsibility, all the values and teachings from Gurbani will create people with no hate, jealousy, ego, anger or oppression. But there will only be compassion, dedication, love and support for everyone.