

Making Mistakes

29th July 2004

A man who has made no mistakes has learnt nothing at all

Are you embarrassed by mistakes that you make?

Mistakes can be embarrassing, but also upsetting especially when others are hurt by your actions. However learning from your mistakes helps reduce embarrassment.

When do we make mistakes?

We are not super human and will make at least one mistake in our lifetime.

We make mistakes when we become selfish and forget that God is all pervading: when we think He is unable to see our actions. Remembering that He is formless and all pervading reduces the risk of making mistakes.

Do you reach a stage in your life where you feel you shouldn't be making a mistake?

Everyone makes mistakes; a spiritual person can make a mistake till their last breath. There was once a devotee who continuously stated that when he died, bells would ring throughout the village as he was such a dedicated individual who remained attuned with God at all times. One afternoon, whilst lying underneath a tree laden with fruit, his attention wandered to a juicy piece of fruit on the tree when all of a sudden, he died. On hearing of the death of the devotee, the villagers wondered why bells had not rung. They then looked up at the tree, which had caught the devotee's attention during his last breath and saw an insect on the juicy piece of fruit. They concluded that forgetting God during his last breath was the result of him turning into a minute insect. We must remain attuned with God at all times, ensuring that our attention does not wander as this is when we are most prone to making mistakes.

We can never truly be faultless and will err, and maybe by the time we fix one mistake, we have already made another. Making mistakes is like breathing for humans: its part of our nature, BUT IT CAN BE CONTROLLED!

Do we 'pay' for our mistakes and are we easily forgiven?

We should accept responsibility for our mistakes and turn to our True Master for forgiveness.

When we receive God Knowledge, we are forgiven for our sins, but we must be conscious of not repeating those wrong actions::

"It is unacceptable to stumble twice against the same stone." Satguru Baba Gurbachan Ji

We need to consider whether we will be repeatedly forgiven. Should God realised souls 'know better' and if we continue to make mistakes, will we be forgiven, knowing full well the difference between what is 'right' and 'wrong'?

Some believe that we are forgiven approx three or four times and then it is up to the True Master to decide whether he wishes to forgive us again. However, the True Master is ever merciful and washes our sins. Imagine that you are in a courtroom and awaiting sentence for a serious crime. The judge looks at you and sentences you to death, however he then takes off his robe and approaches you. To your surprise, he calmly reaches out, unlocks your handcuffs and tells you, you're free to go. You stand there mystified, not really sure whether you should believe him. "But why?" you stammer. "I will pay the penalty in your place because I am your father and I love you," he says. He hugs you and allows himself to be led away by the guards.

The benefits of many 'good' deeds are washed away instantly with one 'bad' deed. For instance, a whole tub of natural yoghurt made at home can be turned sour with one drop of lemon juice.

Have you ever made an 'intentional' mistake?

There is a fine line between making mistakes and intentional actions. An action deliberately intended is not a mistake. With mistakes, you don't realise you are making them until it is too late: it is only when we have made the mistake that we realise it has been made: (*"I wish I hadn't done that...I've made a really big mistake"*)

There is a difference between knowing you're doing something wrong and not knowing that you're doing something wrong. This is the difference between making and not making a mistake.

Can making mistakes be used as a learning curve to challenge our mind and thinking?

Mistakes add to our learning experience. You cannot change a mistake once it has been made other than recognise it, accept it and learn to move forward i.e. attempt to learn from your actions. The mistake becomes a problem when it is repeated and is only rectified when we learn from it.

" To admit that being human, I am bound to make mistakes, but to make as few as possible and try to avoid making the same mistake twice." - Wilfred A. Peterson