

## LIVING ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE

This controversial image of the razor's edge is given in the texts as an analogy of the path of yoga.

Yoga is o.k. on the mat but of course that is a teeny element of what yoga is. Yoga is engagement with the moment in all its facets: work, relationship, society and mind. What we do on the mat is transformative but what we do in the moment of life is demonstrative of that transformation. The former without the latter is not whole, the later without the former is, as you know, shallow and pointless. So we tread the razor's edge. YogaLiving is specifically a community of people who are doing this within the context of the practice of Atma Vichara. As everybody knows Atma Vichara on the mat is "Who am I"? but Atma Vichara when we step outside into daily routines is engagement and flow (who works?).

In preparation to walk the razor's edge the conversation may go like this:

**I came into yoga to find peace of mind.**

Have you found it?

**Yes when I am with friends and doing my practice.**

And at other times?

**It's difficult; people, problems and things disturb it and get in the way.**

That is inevitable and is good.

**How can it be good?**

Because it confronts you with attachments and assumptions and spurs you on to greater freedom.

**What must I do?**

In all its circumstance, life is here. Face it and make sense of it.

To deny it is impossible.

To waste it is foolish.

Plunge in to the adventure.

**How can it be wasted? Surely that's judgemental?**

To live a life without encounter, to not explore and discover, to merely feed basic desires and whims, to be confined in old assumptions and habits and to go on and on, in mundanity -

That is a waste.

**But that's all some people can do.**

Do not look to the habits of others -

Look to yourself.

**So what's the alternative?**

Aliveness, openness and risk.

**Risk?**

Do you know of any crucial discovery, any real adventure that does not skirt risk and danger?

The unsafe sparkles with possibilities.

Do you know what it is that is at risk?

**Well if I am not careful, my life, my work, my livelihood, my relationships.**

No, none of those things - that is all practical.

And it is your duty to live a well-ordered, practical life.

I take that for granted and expect you to fulfil it.

**What do you mean a well-ordered life?**

Work, relationship, self-sufficiency and contributing to society effectively. These are pillars of citizenship. There is creativity in them best described as selfless service from which comes the flow of reward and efficient circumstance.

**Well what else is in danger then?**

Identity, habits and constraints.

The safety of old assumptions.

Stifling behaviours.

And mediocrity.

**Well if my behaviour changes surely that will affect the practical things in my life?**

Yes for the good.

But in any event those things, whilst important, are not the most vital part of living.

**And what is the most vital part of living?**

Finding the permanent and from that position allowing the impermanent to play with grace and skill.

Enjoy this life as it plays.

Clinging to nothing, loving everything.

**I don't understand.**

Plunge into life with an open heart.

**How do I cultivate an open heart?**

By living and acting from a basis of generosity of spirit, non-resistance, friendliness, non-rigidity and affection.

Openness is the most important quality of all, it means you are receptive to the moment in all its aspects. Free to be responsive as required. It means free attention and is a most adventurous condition. It should be cultivated.

**How can I protect myself from being hurt?**

Take a purposeful and powerful approach to maximise opportunities not a passive approach that leaves you vulnerable. Discrimination is essential and should be applied. It is the mark of intelligence to avoid harm and exploitation.

Exercising choices to order your circumstance is essential, otherwise there is chaos.

But also consider honestly what it is you are trying to defend?

If this question is properly evaluated and rigorously answered, you will find it is old sensibilities, attitudes and assumed needs. These things are more of a barrier than they are a reliable measure of what is. Some actions you will accept and participate in and some you will reject. If the basis for doing that is prejudice, timidity and constraint then it is stifling. If the basis is integrity, adventure and the choices you make for living an honest, decent and pure life then it is liberating.

**I am not sure I can do all this.**

Now that is an example of limitation.

Abandon it and go out and dance (along the razor's edge).