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Risks

"To achieve anything big in life,
you should be prepared to risk your all
and take a leap of faith for whatever you believe in."

Deendayal Upadhyaya*, 'Dao lagaao zindagi pe' (Put a stake on your life)*

According to one source, risk is defined as "The potential that a chosen action or activity (including the choice of inaction) will lead to a loss (an undesirable outcome) … Any human endeavour carries some risk, but some are much more risky than others." So there you have it!

On a bright, sunny day last week, before the weather turned somewhat Autumnal, I watched a group of young lads swimming at the mouth of our village harbour. With no wetsuits or flotation aids, the boys were jumping off the harbour wall 20 feet or so into the sea, swimming round to the steps, climbing out, and jumping in again and again. The harbour itself was fairly calm, but at the mouth of the harbour, with the beginnings of a squall brewing, the waves were rising, and the swimmers were being worryingly tossed about. The potential danger didn't seem to bother them, *or* the two old fishermen leaning on a fence, for the screams of glee and the continued jumping and swimming indicated that, despite the obvious risks, the whole thing was great fun.

I'm a dad and grandad, and I wouldn't let kids in *my* care do that. I'm no great shakes as a swimmer, so I wouldn't do it either. Too risky by far. The possibility of an "undesirable outcome" … And yet, having weighed up the risks, or maybe even disregarding the risks, the boys had made a choice, and their choice clearly gave them much enjoyment.

I believe that the 20th century Indian politician, Deendayal Upadhyaya, was right when he said: "To achieve anything big in life, you should be prepared to risk your all and take a leap of faith for whatever you believe in." Was that what was in the mind of a bunch of lads on a harbour wall on a sunny day, or were they just being stupid?

I would never describe myself as a risk-taker, in personal or professional matters, or even in articulating my beliefs and passions. But then, if I believe in something strongly enough, might the leap of faith from the safety of *my* harbour wall not be a risk worth taking?

A prayer for today

If the Incarnation is a risk taken for me, might I take the odd risk in return?

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