

Web of Ganga

Part 3: Cyclical Nature

WORDS SUSAN M. GRIFFITH-JONES

I am once again grateful to mighty Ganga for causing me to muse upon her cycle, thus offering me basic teachings of life. For when I see droplets of water jumping out of the sky with no idea where they'll end up, natural conditions governing their gravitational freefall within this system, either linking them up with others so that they pool together and become one collective of water, or dissolving into the earth and nourishing it, or putting out fire wherever it may be out of control, and some that never even make it to the ground, but dissolve back into space on their way down, I connect the dots.

For we, too, land in a family, meet up with people who become part of our lives, our friends, our greater community, forming larger streams that join with ever larger rivers, and again, expanding as we mature, we swell, merge, and become a much larger vessel encompassing a greater amount of energy. In the meantime, we nourish our surroundings with our participation and quell issues causing trouble. But, just as local fishermen in the mid stream of Bihar have to pay mafia elements for everything related to the river, so we too encounter taxation and karmic debtors and are subject to barriers and pollution.

Sightings of the Gangetic dolphin seem to start a little downstream from Haridwar, when Ganga is already flowing along the flat plains of North India. Here, the Bhimgoda Barrage that was built around 100 years ago blocks them from swimming any further upstream. And before that had been built, I'm told there'd also been a weir there. I shift perspective. Is it possible that Ganga, who is herself a huge manifesting body, has her own sense of conscious understanding of what she's doing on Earth and is not just blindly following a path according

to the laws of the Universe... the ones that we too are also churned around by? Is this the aspect of Ganga that people have come to recognize as the so-called 'deity', or greater consciousness, who has, let's face it, a greater vessel from which to provide so much, to many?

Is this tiny act of us wee humans placing a weir or a barrage at this part of her stretch, Ganga herself expressing the limitation of the path of the dolphins through us? In this simply an action of hers, performed by men, one of whom may have picked up on her desire to do so through his consciousness, which is not ultimately separated from hers? Even though the program itself keeps on turning out self-predicted episodes, the past and future swinging like a pendulum to keep the process ticking into the present, despite his otherwise robotic existence stemming from his DNA, man also owns the quality of 'free will' that allows him to make choices and override the decisions of others from within the limitation of 'human programming'.

Or is it simply humans controlling the river in their desire to re-channel her into the Great Ganga Canal at Haridwar at the Bhimgoda barrage, siphoning off 80% of her flow in order to use her great volume for drinking water and to irrigate the growing food supply? But, does he remember that in gaining one thing, he's also losing another? For downstream from Haridwar, her depth is often less than a meter in many parts. Or, coming back to the days of the weir, was this simply the process to keep her clear of larger objects before she entered the stage of transporting all that fine soil she's collected along the way, right from the highest peaks, to where she'd lovingly deposit it onto the flat lands of this region, making them fertile, healthy, and ready for the crop?

The question stretches way further downstream, to the controversial Farraka Barrage in West Bengal that quite simply put, diverts much of what is now an averagely 5-km wide river into a tiny, by comparison, feeder canal that will forty kilometers later join her up with the Bhagirathi-Hoogly River that flows through Kolkata to the Bay of Bengal. Experts say they need her strong flow here, to flush out the silt that's clogging up the riverine port of Kolkata, but in reality, the majority of the larger, ocean-going ships are parked up at the mouth, at Haldia, which is itself in the Bay of Bengal. Is this simply to keep the mighty River Ganges inside the territory of India, as natural flow would have it, just a couple of kilometers downstream from the Farraka Barrage, she enters Bangladesh and her same waters suddenly turn into the mighty Padma?

Professor Chaudhery from the University of Bhagalpur says that the Ganges is facing a crisis as in 2016, the government declared 111 major rivers of India as 'national waterways' for the transportation of goods—Ganga being marked as Waterway Number 1—in order to relieve the aching and swollen train routes of their bulging cargos.

"If you slice the river into a cross-section, you'll see that it looks like a large lake, averaging 2.5-3 m, with the deepest parts of it reaching 50 meters. The ocean-going cargo must traverse the deeper parts of the river, and that's where they'll have to dredge to maintain a continual depth for the ships to pass through. This will be a disaster for the dolphins, who tend to live in the deeper parts, not only this, but the sound that the vessels make disturbs the natural resonance system of these cetacean creatures, thus disorientating them."

For traditional fishermen, dolphins are an indicator of where the fish are



hanging out. This reminds me of the enormously interconnected chain that we're a part of and how the river plays her role, too. Small to start off with, then growing in size, with the massive energetic movement of her downward flow and increasing magnitude as she interacts with other streams, pulling them into her main path through her gravitational advantage, offering her the jewels of their flow, which she doesn't keep for herself, but impartially distributes wherever she goes. Finally, tired and groaning with the weight of her path, she merges with the great planetary body of water.

In this sense, her source is the root, and the ocean, the fruit. Albeit logical, somehow, this way round doesn't seem altogether accurate, and to gauge the potential difference, I mentally switch her flow 180 degrees—"What if the ocean is the root, and her source, the fruit?" Metaphorically speaking, like a tree rooting itself into one place and sucking the nutrients out of the ground, producing a main trunk and many branches of a tree, right along to the twigs and flowers, she does exactly this. Her flow that enters the ocean, merges with it, and is thus swept up into another dimensional aspect, carried by the wind that sucks her across to the mountains in gaseous, atomized form, then deposits her upon the tops of them, released once

again upon the earth with all the nutrients of the ocean within her. Hereby, she's then transported and processed by river bodies following the natural gradient of the land that ferry them all over the place in a brilliant system, bringing nourishment, the fruits of the ocean, to the whole land.

All the qualities of the elements are playing together here, from the space of the sky above her, holding her gaseous form as clouds, from which she congeals to become the liquid rain water, which falls and becomes a solid form of ice, cradled by the earth, the whole performance being orchestrated by the quantity of heat of the fire, the master of transformation that causes water to change form.

In this way, like a mighty river, we may also be inexplicably useful to the path we course along, sometimes as a source of refreshment to others, sometimes as a transportation mode, or even as life force, unconditionally so, until we reach the ocean of our life, at death, and again get swept into evaporated form, come into being and drop again upon another shore, grow, swell to maturity, do our job, and pass on once again into the ocean...

"This is the ultimate message of Ganga," I whisper to myself, incredulous that she should hide such a deep coded message of altruistic service and compassion in plain sight, before our eyes.



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