

The digital ‘Durga’: tracing religio-cultural development through Willaim Blake’s mythopoeic structures

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“Our cultural values, which often include particular religious beliefs, shape our way of living and acting in the world. Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainability explores the importance of indigenous values and spirituality in providing guidance for sustainable living. Such principles and values encourage a spirit of harmony between people, their natural environments and their spiritual identities. The principles for living sustainably that flow from these and other cultural and religious beliefs vary between groups and countries. They have also changed over time as circumstances demand. Despite this diversity, many principles for living sustainably are shared, not only among indigenous peoples, but also between different religious traditions.”

This is what the preface of a UNESCO report says and this is what has been found to be true through the ages. This paper will explore the traditional worship of the Goddess of ‘shakti’ or power in India who embodies a lot of other related concepts as well. Though the roots can be traced as far back as the Vedic ages, and this is predominantly a festival marked on the Hindu calendar, it has evolved into a community celebration where people regardless of culture, creed, religion and economic backgrounds participate in the festivities.

We also find that the goddess has left the shores of India and has leapt into global focus with the diasporic communities celebrating ‘Durga Puja’ with great gusto.

Strangely similar figures of symbolic and mythopoeic unities of religion and culture and an advocacy of development for mankind in general through such structures are to be found in late 18th century English poet-painter William Blake’s works.

One finds global development inherent in all religions and cultures of this world. This paper will trace a parallel between such beliefs, cultures and development to uphold the theme of the conference.

Key words: *Durga, Religio-cultural development, Willaim Blake, Mythopoeic structures*