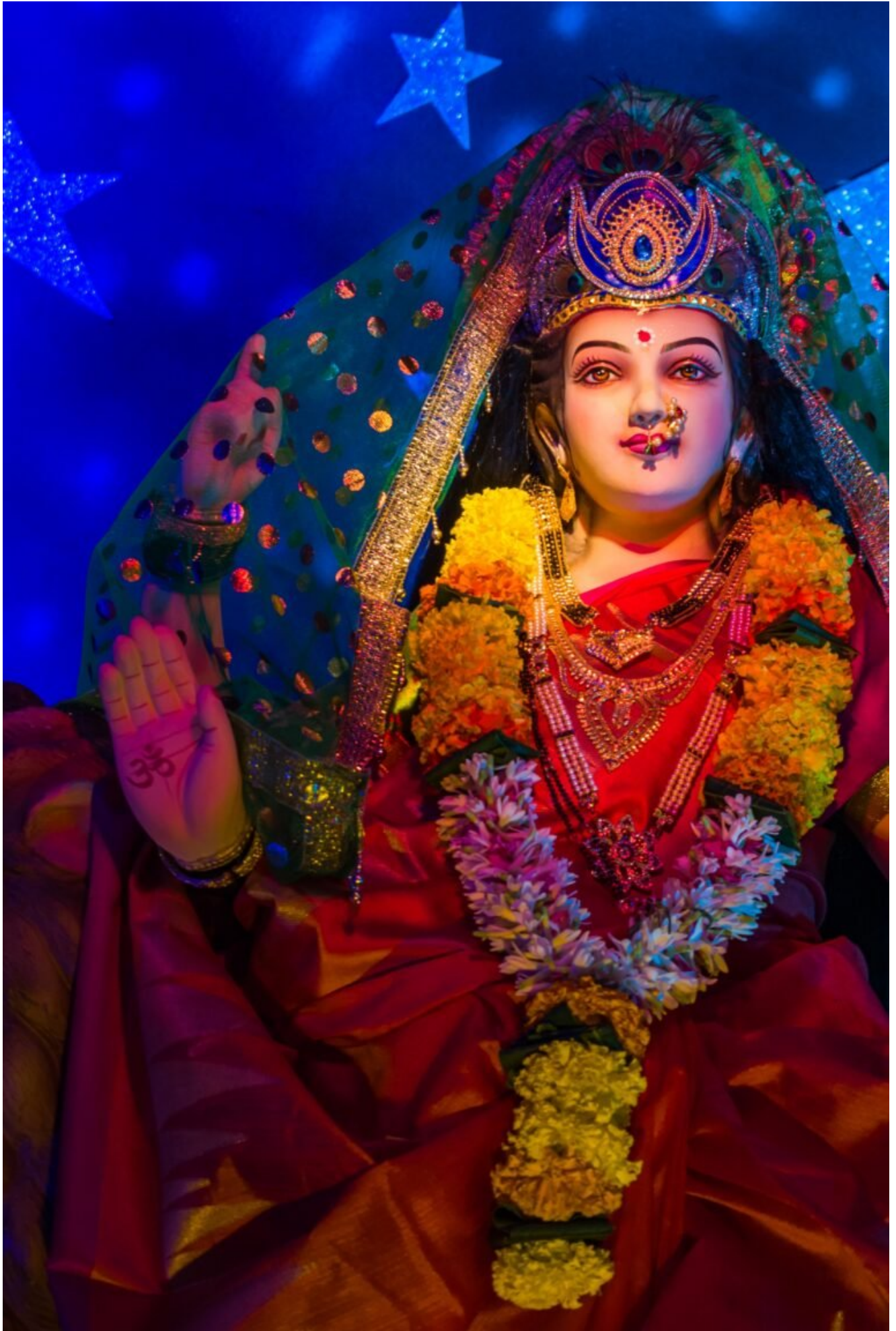


SANDHI PUJA: 8th Day of Shardiya Navratri

Category: Religion

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Navratri, the nine-day festival dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga, is one of the most significant festivals celebrated in India. Each day of Navratri holds special significance and is dedicated to a different form of the goddess. On the eighth day of Navratri, known as Ashtami, a unique and powerful ritual called Sandhi Puja is performed.

Sandhi Puja is a combination of two words, 'Sandhi' and 'Puja'. 'Sandhi' refers to the juncture or the meeting point between two days – the eighth and ninth days of Navratri. 'Puja' means worship. So, Sandhi Puja is the worship performed at the exact juncture when the eighth day ends and the ninth day begins.

The significance of Sandhi Puja lies in the belief that during this juncture, Goddess Durga takes on the form of Chamunda, who is considered to be the most fierce and powerful form of the goddess. It is believed that at this moment, the goddess is at her peak of strength and can fulfill the wishes of her devotees.

The ritual of Sandhi Puja is performed at the exact time when the Ashtami Tithi (eighth day) ends and the Navami Tithi (ninth day) begins. This time is considered to be extremely auspicious and is believed to be the best time to seek the blessings of the goddess.

The preparations for Sandhi Puja start well in advance. The puja area is cleaned and decorated with flowers, rangoli, and diyas. The idol of Goddess Durga is adorned with new clothes and jewelry. Special offerings like fruits, sweets, and coconut are prepared to be offered to the goddess.

During the puja, the priest performs various rituals and chants mantras to invoke the blessings of the goddess.

Devotees offer prayers and seek her blessings for prosperity, good health, and protection from evil forces. The atmosphere is filled with devotion and spirituality.

After the puja, the prasad is distributed among the devotees. It is believed that consuming the prasad brings good luck and blessings from the goddess. People also exchange sweets and gifts with their friends and family as a symbol of love and togetherness.

Sandhi Puja is not just a ritual, but a celebration of the divine power of Goddess Durga. It is a time to connect with the divine and seek her blessings for a better future. The energy and enthusiasm during this puja are infectious and bring a sense of joy and positivity to everyone.