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Burning, breaking and finding your way back to God: Examining the intimacies of care in a Verulam temple

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Abstract:

This project seeks to unpick the systems of care available to domestic violence survivors through the lens of Hinduism. The research hinges on the experiences of abuse survivors and the aim is to understand how care is given and received inside and outside the setting of the Shri Siva Subramaniar Alayam in Verulam, which is a small town in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Care within South African Hindu Indian communities has largely been under-theorised due to its minority religion status in South Africa and its decentralised formulation. The vast amount of literature focussing on trauma care and spirituality references a Christian framework of knowledge. The structures of care flowing through and around the temple will be examined in greater detail through interviews with temple congregants who are survivors of domestic abuse, and the intimacies of care of the temple-going community is highlighted by this research.

Key words and terms: care, Hinduism, domestic abuse, Tamil, temple, intimacies of care, indenture, spirituality