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Title of dissertation: The Night Jasmine of Vedic Meanings. Svāmī Karapātrī and Dayānanda Sarasvatī: two competing discourses on icon worship.

Brief Summary: Icon worship is a widespread ritual practice in the Hindu traditions. In the 19th century, Dayānanda Sarasvatī, the founder of the Ārya Samāja, challenged this practice and opened the debate on its ‘authenticity’ within Hindu traditions. Dayānanda claims that the Vedas, ‘the only source of knowledge’, do not prescribe icon worship as correct religious practice. However, several orthodox scholars of the Śaṅkarācārya lineages (here ‘Sanātana Dharmī’) oppose Dayānanda’s opinion and defend this tradition, citing evidence of such practices even in the Vedas. The main focus for the present study is the work of Svāmī Karapātrī (1907-1982), a very influential figure of the ‘Sanātana Dharma’, who devoted several compositions, such as the *Vedārthapārijāta* (‘The Night Jasmine of the Vedic Meanings’) to comment on the Ārya Samājin’s standpoints. In particular, this project looks at a ‘traditional’ response to a new religion, that of the Ārya Samāja, illustrating how the adaptation of old systems of thought can be a means to confront (and refute) new religious interpretations.