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Coordinatore del Dottorato
ch. prof. Nicoletta Pesaro

Supervisore
ch. prof. Ute Hüsken

Supervisore cotutela
ch. prof. Antonio Rigopoulos

Dottorando
Anna Scarabel
Matricola 838195

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Abbreviations

AV = Atharva Veda
BhG = Bhagavādgītā
BhP = Bhāgavata Purāṇa
GoBr = Gopathabrāḥmaṇā
MS = Manusṃṛti
Nbh = Nyayasūtra Bhāṣya
NiDBh = Nirukta with Durgācārya Bhāṣya
PB = Prasthānabheda
ṚV = Ṛg Veda
ṚVBB = Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā
ŚaBhMīSū = Śabara Bhāṣya of the *Mīmāṃsa Sūtras*
SamV= Saṃskāravidhi
SDS = Sarvadarśanasaṃgrāha
ŚiP = Śiva Pūrāṇa
SP = Satyārtha Prakāśa
SuSa = Suśruta Saṃhitā
VāP = Vāyu Pūrāṇa
YaSm = Yajñavalkyasṃṛti
YV = Yajur Veda
YVSDBh = Yajurvedabhāṣya with the commentary of Svāmī Dayānanda
YVMaBh = Yajur Veda with Mahīdhara's commentary

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Primary Sources 5

1.1.1 General Remarks 7

2. Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī in 19th- and 20th-century India 9

2.1 Contextualizing Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī 9

2.2 Constructionist and Contra-Constructionist Theories 17

2.3 Final Remarks 21

3. Svāmī Dayānanda: Life, Hagiography, and Program 25

3.1 The Formative Years 26

3.1.1 Śivarātri 26

3.1.2 Renunciation 29

3.1.3 Virajānanda and the Authoritative Literature 31

3.1.4 Svāmī Dayānanda's First Recorded Meetings With Missionaries 32

3.1.5 The Śāstrārtha In Varanasi 33

3.1.6 Meetings with the Brahmo Samāja 36

3.2 The Reformative Years 38

3.2.1 Publications and the foundation of the Ārya Samāja 38

3.2.2 Svāmī Dayānanda in Punjab 38

3.2.3 The Theosophical Society 40

3.2.4 Svāmī Dayānanda's Reformative Program 41

3.3 Final Remarks 43

4. Early Indology and Svāmī Dayānanda 44

4.1 European Studies on the Subcontinent 47

4.2 Vedic Religion vs. Modern Hinduism 51

4.3 Vedic Exegesis 57

4.4 Icon Worship 64

5. Sanātana Dharma: Movements and Conception 71

5.1 Sanātana Dharma Movements in 19th- and 20th-century India 72

5.2 Sanātana Dharma 76

5.2.1 Family Resemblances of Sanātana Dharma 78

5.2.2 Sanātana dharma in opposition to other dharmas 81

5.2.3 Analysis of the constancy of Sanātana Dharma 83

5.3 Final Remarks 85

6. Svāmī Karapātrī 88

6.1 Svāmī Karapātrī: between biography and hagiography 91

6.2 Svāmī Karapātrī: Dharma, Dharma, Dharma 97

6.3 Svāmī Karapātrī and Politics 102
6.3.1 The Preservation of the Caste System 103
6.3.2 The Protection of Cows 104
6.4 Final Remarks 105
7. The Vedārtha Pārijāta and the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma Debates 107
7.1 The Debates Between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs 107
7.1.1 Undated works 113
7.1.2 Works By Kālūrām Śāstrī 114
7.1.3 Works Exclusively Concerning Mūrtipūjā (Sanātanī rejoinders) 114
7.2 The Vedārtha Pārijāta 116
7.3 Final Remarks: Why the Vedārtha Pārijāta? 121
8. Mūrtipūjā in Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī 125
8.1 Scholarly Discourses on Mūrtipūjā 126
8.2 Svāmī Dayānanda and Mūrtipūja 129
8.2.1 Svāmī Dayānanda's Theological Discourse and the Worship of God 132
8.3 Svāmī Karapātrī's Understanding of Mūrtipūjā 137
8.4 Final remarks 143
9. The Worship of the Non-conscious 145
9.1 The Presence or Absence of an Injunction to Mūrtipūjā 149
9.2 The Presence or Absence of Prohibitions to Mūrtipūjā 150
9.3 The meaning of the word pratimā 152
9.4 The Worship of the (Nirguṇa)-Nirākāra Brahman 159
9.5 The Statements from the Manusmṛti 165
9.6 Instances of Ārya Samāja's Mūrtipūjā 168
9.7 Final Remarks 170
10. The Nine Mantras for Planet Worship and Textual Traditions 172
10.1 The Meanings of the Mantras 175
10.2 Authoritative Statements on Planet Worship 181
10.3 Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis of YV 36.12 192
10.4 Final remarks 200
11. Conclusion 202
12. Bibliography 212
12.1 Primary Sources 212
12.1.1 Canonical sources 212
12.1.2 Books by Dayānanda Sarasvatī 213
12.1.3 Books and articles by Svāmī Karapātrī 214

12.1.4 Samājī and Sanātanī publications 214
12.2 Secondary Sources 216
12.3 Websites 224

1. Introduction

In my research, I explore how the concept of orthodoxy in Hindu traditions was shaped, challenged, and redefined throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. At the heart of this inquiry lies a significant yet overlooked debate between two prominent groups: the Ārya Samāja and the Sanātana Dharma. The Ārya Samāja emerged in the 19th century as a reformist force, challenging established conventions—including the Hindu textual canon, the caste system, and the practice of *mūrtipūjā*, or icon worship. In contrast, Sanātana Dharma groups upheld traditional values and resisted such changes. My primary focus is on the controversy surrounding icon worship in the writings of Svāmī Dayānanda (1824–1883), the founder of the Ārya Samāja, and Svāmī Karapātri (1907–1982), who, almost a century later, served as a spokesperson for the Sanātana Dharma and opposed Svāmī Dayānanda's positions, the ideological foundation of the Ārya Samāja.

Svāmī Dayānanda claimed to derive his reformist program—including the ban on icon worship—from the *Vedas*. He posited that modern texts and commentarial traditions had mistaken the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, which, instead, he claimed to be able to retrieve. Svāmī Karapātrī challenged this stance, advocating for the interconnectedness of the *Vedas* and subsequent commentarial and textual traditions, suggesting that the former could only be understood through the latter. Consequently, he examined Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretations, criticizing them for being arbitrary and lacking proper authority, as they overlooked the established canonical texts. Rather than merely countering Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis, Svāmī Karapātrī's discourse on icon worship evolves into a broader discussion about the proper application and potential misappropriation of the *Vedas* for authority purposes.

Thus, in my work, through the case of the debate on icon worship, I aim to illustrate the presence of contrasting voices, even among those advocating for a return to Vedic injunctions, regarding the formation of social, religious, and political programs based on textual authorities. Both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī emerge as proponents of religious and social conservatism. Consequently, their voices could easily be aligned with or assimilated into right-wing and nationalist movements. While Svāmī Dayānanda is recognized as a forerunner of Hindu nationalism and the ties between his Ārya Samāja and the Rāṣṭrīya Svayaṃsevak Saṅgh (RSS) are well-known, Svāmī Karapātrī, despite his resistance to the reform and secularization of the state, vehemently criticized nationalist viewpoints.

I began my research with an examination of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, which features Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought. The core of my study is anchored in the translation and analysis of this text and, therefore, on Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought, particularly as it is found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* being primarily a punctual analysis and critique of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*). While in the initial stages of my research, I thought I would primarily engage in exegetical analysis, I soon realized the need to broaden the scope of my study to contextualize the discourse of the two scholars on *mūrtipūjā* properly. Svāmī Dayānanda's opposition to icon

worship is allegedly based on his interpretations of the *Vedas*. Nevertheless, upon analyzing Svāmī Dayānanda's position on icon worship as presented in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, the assertion that his stance arose solely from Vedic material seemed untenable. Therefore, I studied the life and socio-cultural context of Svāmī Dayānanda and broadened my research focus to the entirety of his thought, particularly as articulated in his *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. I applied the same approach with Svāmī Karapātrī and then examined the distinct perspectives on Hindu identity held by the two scholars, exemplifying them in the century-long debate between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs. I thus contribute to the understanding of the contested nature of Hindu identity formulations during the colonial and post-colonial periods, the exegetical conflicts among modern Hindu thinkers, and their engagements with textual traditions, as well as the discourse of the use and misuse of authoritative sources.

My work is organized in nine thematic chapters, along with an Introduction and a Conclusion. In chapter 2, I consider the personas of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within the intellectual landscape of 19th- and 20th-century India. I begin by examining the scholarly works of Paul Hacker (1978), Wilhelm Halbfass (1990), Kenneth Jones (1989), Hans Krämer (2019), and Vasudha Dalmia (1997) on the Hindu responses to colonial power and reform movements, and I attempt to contextualize Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within their scholarship. In the second part of chapter 2, basing myself on the works of Lorenzen (1999; 2010) and the contributions to the volume *Rethinking Religion in India* (Bloch et al. 2010), I delve into the constructionist and contra-constructionist theories, particularly the discourses surrounding the formation of Hindu identity in India, thereby exploring the extent of colonialism's influence on the construction of Hindu identity during the 19th and 20th centuries and its relation to Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī.

In chapter 3, I explore the life of Svāmī Dayānanda through the lens of biographies and hagiographies. While presenting his story, I highlight key events from his life, interpreting these episodes, as he recounts them in his *Autobiography* (in *SP*, Prasad 1908), through an allegorical lens. I emphasize the significance of these narratives in shaping Svāmī Dayānanda's persona, with a special focus on his aversion to icon worship. Svāmī Dayānanda's work and the history of the Ārya Samāja have been the subject of numerous academic studies, above all those of Jones (1976; 1989), Jordens (1978; 1998), and Salmond (2004). However, certain aspects, such as a thorough comparison between Svāmī Dayānanda's thought and 18th- and 19th-century European scholarship on the subcontinent, remain underexplored. This significant gap in the literature motivated me to conduct an investigation to clarify the origins of Svāmī Dayānanda's views on *mūrtipūjā*.

Thus, in chapter 4, I explore the leading theories proposed by European scholars during the 18th and 19th centuries regarding the subcontinent and the similarities and connections of these with the thought of Svāmī Dayānanda. My analysis reveals that Svāmī Dayānanda's positions bear a striking resemblance to European scholarship and Protestant Christianity. I thus argue that Svāmī Dayānanda developed a social and spiritual program that not only emulated the European model but also sought to transcend it.

In chapter 5, I analyze the responses of 'Hindu orthodoxy,' or Sanātana Dharma groups, to the rise of the Ārya Samāja. Specifically, in 19th-century India, the spread of the Ārya Samāja provoked a response from orthodox circles. These orthodox circles put significant efforts into establishing umbrella organizations for the defense of *dharma*. Most proponents of orthodoxy designated themselves as Sanātana Dharmīs, or Sanātanīs, meaning 'those of the Everlasting Dharma,' in contraposition with the newly founded Ārya Samāja, whose adepts were often referred to as simply 'Samājīs.' The Sanātanīs thus opposed the claims of Svāmī Dayānanda, as they wished to preserve the status quo and resist reforms. This pivotal phenomenon in 19th- and 20th-century Hindu religious discourses remains significantly understudied. While scholars such as Zavos (2001; 2010), Jordens (1998), and Dalmia (1997) have explored this topic, their valuable contributions are not exhaustive regarding the history of this debate, which is extremely variegated. To take a further step towards a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, I analyze Svāmī Karapātrī and his program as part of the Sanātanī trend and examine his understanding of Sanātana Dharma as 'Everlasting Tradition.' One of the major challenges faced by Sanātana Dharma groups is presenting a unified religious identity amid a diversity of *saṃpradāyas*, which have developed literary traditions that emphasize their distinctions rather than a common religious identity. Thus, seeking identity within plurality remained one of the main challenges for Sanātana Dharma groups. Several scholars, such as Lorenzen (1999; 2010), Oddie (2010), and Zavos (2001; 2010) have analyzed the processes of Hindu identity formulations in colonial and post-colonial India. Thus, as I explore Svāmī Karapātrī's postulation of a Sanātana Dharma unity within plurality and against a conceptual 'other,' I contribute a step further to the understanding of colonial and post-colonial identity formation processes. To present Svāmī Karapātrī's thought, I borrow Ferro-Luzzi's concept that composite realities like Hinduism cannot be described with clear-cut definitions and examine Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma along three main lines of thought: (i) the identification of family resemblances, or overlapping similarities (see Ferro-Luzzi 1989) within the multiplicity of Sanātana Dharma; (ii) the definition of Sanātana Dharma in opposition to other *dharmas*; and (iii) the emphasis on the uniqueness of Sanātana Dharma based on the postulated constancy, or *sanatanatā*, of the tradition.

In chapter 6, I present the polyhedric figure of Svāmī Karapātrī and his program and activities; I show how his endeavors are not limited to the critique of the Ārya Samāja and attempt to contextualize his activity within the broader social, religious, and political context of his time. Pellegrini (2009), Marchetto (2009), Gabin (2009), and B. D. Tripathi (1978), among others, have all contributed to the biography of Svāmī Karapātrī. Notably, Pellegrini has compiled a list of all known publications by and about Svāmī Karapātrī and included it in his volume *L'Uomo e il Sacro in India: Svāmī Karapātrī* (2009), where Marchetto's article is also contained. While basing myself on these works, I contribute to the existing literature by introducing additional hagiographical material, analyzing it, and providing information on the two magazines funded by Svāmī Karapātrī, along with insights from my fieldwork material (see sub-chapter 1.1).

In chapter 7, I present the canonical debate styles among *saṃpradāya* traditions, as outlined by Matilal (1986) and R. Tripathi (2016), and analyze and compare them with the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and earlier Sanātanī publications. To better understand the vast dimensions of the

Samājī-Sanātanī debate, I provide a list of several publications predating the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, which attest to the significance of this phenomenon. The volume and scope of these publications—each often inspiring reactions that lead to further responses—illustrate the breadth of this dialogue. Although scholars such as Jones (1976) and R. Tripathi (2016) have already highlighted the existence of some of these publications, this remains a heavily understudied field of study. Therefore, I present my analysis of a section of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* as a step forward in the exploration of this literature. In my view, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* serves as a systematization of this debate; in his work, Svāmī Karapātrī does not introduce significantly new criticisms but rather 're-uses' already known elements of the controversy and inserts statements deriving from the authoritative textual traditions.

Mūrtipūjā is one of the main points of conflict in the Samājī-Sanātanī debates. Thus, in chapter 8, I make a few clarifications on *mūrtipūjā* as it is understood by Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī outside of the exegetical and debate contexts. In the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda derives his ban on icon worship from Vedic exegesis. Svāmī Karapātrī draws upon Svāmī Dayānanda's definition of icon worship, as the worship of the non-conscious, and, based on this understanding, he contends that Svāmī Dayānanda inadvertently enjoins the same in his texts, and that the *Vedas* too enjoin the veneration of non-conscious objects. Thus, in this chapter, on the one hand, I explore Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective on icon worship independent of the limited framework of Vedic exegesis found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. On the other hand, I also present Svāmī Karapātrī's position on icon worship in a broader context, free from the constraints of ongoing debates. Here, through an analysis of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, I demonstrate that Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to *mūrtipūjā* is influenced by European factors and based on social and political considerations rather than theological and spiritual beliefs or Vedic exegesis. Additionally, based on fieldwork material, I discuss the significance of *mūrtipūjā* for Svāmī Karapātrī outside the polemical context of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, thereby showing that his understanding of icon worship is entirely absent in the debate.

In chapters 9 and 10, I report my translation of Svāmī Karapātrī's section on "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*) from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Svāmī Karapātrī wrote this section based on Svāmī Dayānanda's discussion on "The falsity of *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*) and "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvaṃ*), found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. Thus, I report the original statements by Svāmī Dayānanda and then present them again as they are examined and commented upon by Svāmī Karapātrī. Svāmī Karapātrī primarily criticizes Svāmī Dayānanda because his stances lead to self-contradiction, resemble a child's reasoning, and contradict authoritative statements. This last point holds paramount importance for Svāmī Karapātrī. While Svāmī Karapātrī acknowledged the authority of the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Itihāsas*, and *Purāṇas*, Svāmī Dayānanda dismissed the majority of Hindu textual traditions and accepted only the authority of the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*. Consequently, he rejected the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* and claimed to be the one capable of retrieving their 'original' meanings, the ones intended by their compilers—this being the same claim made by the first Indologists. Thus, part of Svāmī Karapātrī's discourse in support of *mūrtipūjā* is somewhat transformed into a

discussion about the extent of the authoritative Hindu textual canon and Vedic exegesis, as well as the use and misuse of the textual traditions. I also highlight how, in this section, Svāmī Karapātrī reuses existing textual sources in his argument against Svāmī Dayānanda's positions. After presenting the text in micro-thematic areas, I draw my conclusions.

Until now, I have referred to the conflict between Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī as a debate. However, it is important to clarify that there has been no actual debate between the two in the sense of a dialogue or exchange of ideas. This is simply because Svāmī Dayānanda lived in the 19th century, while Svāmī Karapātrī lived in the 20th century. Despite this, I continue to use the term 'debate' (as a translation of *śāstrārtha*) because when Svāmī Karapātrī engages with the teachings of Svāmī Dayānanda, he addresses the ideological foundations of the Ārya Samāja, which continues to be an active association at his time. There are two additional reasons for framing this as a debate. Firstly, Svāmī Karapātrī's criticism is not an isolated phenomenon but part of the broader trend of criticism between the Samāñis and the Sanātanīs. Secondly, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* triggers a chain of reactions: the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ*, published in 1984 by the Ārya Samājī Viśudhānanda Miśra, which is a three-volume publication in confutation of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. In return, this Ārya Samājī publication is countered by the Sanātanī *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ*, published in 1988/89 (*vikraṃ* 2045) by the Śaṅkarācārya of Purī Svāmī Niranjandeva Tīrthā.

1.1 Primary Sources

In addition to the academic studies previously referenced and those cited throughout this dissertation, I drew upon a range of primary sources, which I briefly introduce here. The main textual source for my research is the *Vedārtha Parijāta* by Svāmī Karapātrī. Additionally, I focus on Svāmī Dayānanda's *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, on which the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is primarily based, and the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, where Svāmī Dayānanda reported most of his program. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* are both written in Sanskrit. While there is only a Hindi translation or paraphrase of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* has been translated into English. When examining the position of Svāmī Dayānanda as expressed in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, I primarily analyzed the Sanskrit original while also considering the translated version. Regarding the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, I relied on both an English translation (*SP*, Prasad 1908) of the text and the original in Hindi (2015). In general, the textual material concerning or by Svāmī Dayānanda is also available in English translations, while Svāmī Karapātrī's material is, for the most part, either in Sanskrit or Hindi. In addition to the mentioned three key texts, I also explored other primary sources in relation to Svāmī Karapātrī.

In February and September 2024, I conducted archival research at the Library of the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice, where a significant number of issues of the two magazines founded by Svāmī Karapātrī, *Sanmārga* and *Siddhānta*, are preserved in the Alain Daniélou Archive. From this material, I have chosen two articles that I report here in segments: "Hamāre Dharm ke Sāmāny Siddhānt," authored by the 68th Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcīpūraṃ, Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī, published in *Sanmārga* in July 1940; and "Prācīn Vedbhāṣy aur

Ādhunik Anusandhān" published by Svāmī Karapātrī in *Siddhānta* on 31 August 1943 (*bhādrapad śukl. 1 vikraṃ saṃ 2000*). Additionally, I examined selected sections of *Rāṣṭrīya Svayam Sevak Saṅgh aur Hindu Dharm* (Karapātrī 2013 [1970]). I also referred to biographical and hagiographical material on Svāmī Karapātrī from two Hindi sources: *Abhinava Śaṅkara – Svāmī Karapātrī jī Mahārāj* edited by Śarmā (1988), and the *Pujy Svāmī Śrī Karpātrī jī Mahārāj kī Ṣaṃkṣipt Jīvnī* (1988) by Vedānti Svāmī, contained in Śarmā's edited volume.

In addition to textual and archival research, I undertook fieldwork in India. Given that Svāmī Karapātrī passed away only in the 1980s, I sought to connect with people who knew him and had collaborated with him to gain a deeper understanding of his persona and his relationship with the Ārya Samāja. I was fortunate to establish contact with one of the last surviving figures who knew him well: Svāmī Svarūpananda Sarasvatī. Svāmī Svarūpananda served as the Śaṅkarācarya of Jyotirmath from 1973 and of Dwarka Pitha from 1982 until his passing in 2022. Svāmī Svarūpānanda, born Pothiram Upadhyay in 1923 in Dighori, Seoni District, Madhya Pradesh, was seventeen years younger than Svāmī Karapātrī. Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpananda met in their youth at the court of Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, where they became *gurubhāī* (students with the same *guru*). They both received the *daṇḍī saṃnyāsa* (lit., the staff-bearing renunciation) from Svāmī Brahmānanda, who was Śaṅkarācarya of Jyotirmath from 1941 till 1953. Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda were both freedom fighters who participated in acts of boycotting the British Raj. When Svāmī Karapātrī founded a political party, the Rāma Rājya Pariṣada, Svāmī Svarūpānanda served as its first president. Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda collaborated and lived together for nearly 40 years; additionally, they spent about 20 *caturmās* together (lit., the four months, corresponding to the rain season during which *saṃnyāsīs* usually stay at a fixed location, usually for two or four months, and do public readings). Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda shared their attention towards the *śāstras*, cow protection, caste system, and Hindu education, as well as the contempt for Hindu nationalism. Like Svāmī Karapātrī, Svāmī Svarūpānanda disregarded the philosophy of Ārya Samāja because he considered it not in conformity with the *Vedas*. He argued that the Ārya Samājīs are not part of Sanātana Dharma, as they do not believe in gods or *mūrtipūjā* and do not read the *śruti* according to textual traditions. The bond between Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda was notably strong, grounded in their shared spiritual teachers, enduring friendship, and ongoing collaboration. Thus, Svāmī Svarūpānanda was the most prominent living source for my research.

From October 2019 to October 2020, I participated in an exchange program at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. During this time, I got in touch with Svāmī Svarūpānanda. When free from university duties, I visited the Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, where he used to stay for relatively long periods (otherwise, Svāmī Svarūpānanda maintained the rule of the wandering monks). At that time, I was still at a relatively early stage of my research. For this reason, the nature of the questions I posed to Svāmī Svarūpānanda was quite general. However, it often happened that after posing my questions, Svāmī Svarūpānanda continued discussing the topic, adding information that I later revisited at a more advanced stage of my research. For this reason, occasionally, when I report portions of my interviews, I omit referencing my original question, which has no direct connection to the content I present. Additionally, in August 2020, I attended the celebrations for the anniversary of Svāmī

Karapātrī's birthday at Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram. Svāmī Svarūpānanda celebrated this event every year with public programs that included storytelling and performances of *bhajans*, although that year the celebrations were conducted on a very small scale due to COVID-19 restrictions. Whenever the contingencies permitted it, I was careful to record Svāmī Svarūpānanda's discourses so that at a later date I could listen again to the recordings and properly translate his discourses from Hindi. In 2022, Svāmī Svarūpānanda fell severely ill and on the 11th of September 2022 passed away at the age of 99.

After Svāmī Svarūpānanda's demise, when I was in India again in December 2024, I approached Svāmī Sadānanda Sarasvatī, the successor of Svāmī Svarūpānanda to the seat of Dwarka. Svāmī Sadānanda was in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram for the inauguration of a temple dedicated to Svāmī Svarūpānanda on the spot where his body was buried (*samādhisthāl*). On this occasion, I asked him a couple of questions regarding the meaning of *mūrtipūjā* in relation to Svāmī Karapātrī. Additionally, already in 2019, I met in Varanasi Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda Sarasvatī, the successor of Svāmī Svarūpānanda to the Jyotirmath seat. On this occasion, I asked him about the present state of the debate between Samājīs and Sanātanīs. I also recorded the answers of the two Śaṅkarācāryas and later translated their interviews from Hindi. I found it reasonable to also address Svāmī Sadānanda and Svāmī Avimukteśvara, who have been Svāmī Svarūpānanda's pupils since childhood and possess knowledge of the relationship between their *guru* and Svāmī Karapātrī. Furthermore, in his youth, Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda served (*seva*) the older Svāmī Karapātrī. Moreover, both Śaṅkarācāryas now, in addition to acknowledging their *guru*, frequently reference the writings and actions of Svāmī Karapātrī in their public teachings.

1.1.1 General Remarks

While I aimed to address a broad range of topics in this dissertation, space and time constraints necessitated a narrower focus. In what follows, I outline the areas of research that I considered but did not explore in depth, and explain the rationale behind prioritizing certain themes over others.

When I analyze Svāmī Dayānanda's program and the ideological pillars of the Ārya Samāja, I do not explore the detailed developments of the Ārya Samāja, nor do I discuss its inner workings, schisms, and varying perspectives. I also refrain from engaging with the Ārya Samājī scholars from the time of Svāmī Karapātrī, keeping my focus on Svāmī Dayānanda. I made this choice because Svāmī Karapātrī himself thoroughly examined Svāmī Dayānanda's statements, rather than those of his contemporary Ārya Samājīs. In fact, two chapters within the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* are dedicated to analyzing the thoughts of two contemporary Ārya Samājī scholars, Brahmadatta Jijñāsu (1882–1964) and Bhagavat Datta (1893–1968). Yet, Svāmī Karapātrī's interest in them remains limited compared to his interest in Svāmī Dayānanda. Certainly, as the ideator and founder of the Ārya Samāja, Svāmī Dayānanda's perspectives are extremely relevant, and this is why I also focus on him. Secondly, when introducing Svāmī Karapātrī, I avoid delving into the intricate details of his collaborations and confrontations with other notable figures of the time, such as his interactions with Indira Gandhi or his views on the work of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. I also refrain

from getting into details of Svāmī Karapātrī's interactions with other scholars and spiritual leaders of his time, although I highlighted his strong ties with the Śaṅkarācārya lineages. Due to time and space constraints, I could also not delve into the details of Svāmī Karapātrī's critique of right-wing ideologies and nationalist movements. Moreover, I do not discuss the political repercussions of the Ārya Samāja's activities, such as their role in highlighting the contrasts between Hindus and Muslims and the analysis of the Ārya Samāja as a precursor to Hindu nationalism. Additionally, while I illustrate the dimensions of the literary corpus attesting to the debate between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs, I do not delve into details. In a similar vein, I do not discuss in depth the specifics of the publications prompted by the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ*, and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ*. Lastly, in delineating the Ārya Samājā-Sanātana Dharma debate, I primarily focus on the controversy surrounding *mūrtipūjā*. While there are several more points of disagreement, such as the caste system and the education of women, I chose to prioritize the topic of *mūrtipūjā* because of its relevance in the lives of most practicing Hindus.

I would like to offer a few additional observations regarding terminology and the application of diacritics. I pondered over the term *mūrtipūjā* and how to translate it. *Mūrtipūjā* is composed of the words '*mūrti*' and '*pūjā*'; thus, it is often translated as 'idol worship,' 'idolatry,' 'image worship,' or 'icon worship.' However, I ultimately excluded the first two options, as the terms 'idol' and 'idolatry' evoke a pejorative connotation historically associated with Christianity. I therefore opted for 'icon worship,' from the ancient Greek '*εἰκόνισμα*,' or its abbreviation '*εἰκόν*,' which means 'representation,' 'image,' resemblance.

In this work, I use the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) for Sanskrit terms, while for Hindi, I use the same system but with the schwa deletion. In the context of Hindi sources, when I reported original terms, I present them according to Hindi transliteration; in the other instances, I use the Sanskrit term. However, I retained the Sanskrit transliteration for Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, as I refer to them in the context of a debate conducted in Sanskrit. Names of places are presented without diacritics in their anglicized form.

2. Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī in 19th- and 20th-century India

In this chapter, I provide context for the activities of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within the intellectual history of 19th- and 20th-century India. Overall, scholars like Hacker, Halbfass, and Dalmia seem to agree that in colonial and post-colonial India, there is a polarization in the reactions of Indian intellectuals to the European presence in the subcontinent. These reactions are categorized as 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' and 'acculturative' responses on one side, and 'traditionalist,' 'Sanātana Dharma,' and 'transitional tendencies' on the other. I explore these labels and how scholars have characterized them, then assess whether they can frame the personas of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī. It might seem that Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī roughly fit into the categories of 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' and 'acculturative' responses on one side, and 'traditionalist,' 'Sanātana Dharma,' and 'transitional tendencies' on the other. However, after thorough analysis, I must conclude that their profiles do not clearly align with these labels. This is primarily because these labels cannot successfully pinpoint and define the complex phenomenon of Indian colonial and post-colonial intellectual productions while theoretically capturing a plurality of empirical realities.

In the second part of this chapter, I explore the constructionist and contra-constructionist theories, specifically the discourses surrounding the conception of a Hindu identity in India and whether this stemmed from colonial discourses or has pre-colonial roots. In other words, before Europeans labeled Hindu traditions as 'Hinduism,' was there a shared feeling of a 'Hindu community' among the *saṃpradāyas* in India? Constructionist theories reflect on how the colonial world influenced Indian self-understandings of 'religion.' For example, in subchapters 4.4 and 8.2, I demonstrate how Svāmī Dayānanda's construction of a Vedic monotheism, namely, Ārya Dharma, reveals European influences. In contrast, contra-constructionist theories demonstrate the existence of traces of pre-colonial pan-Hindu identities. Therefore, Svāmī Karapātrī's efforts to represent and preserve orthodox Hinduism, or Sanātana Dharma,[1] can be linked to a series of historical and conceptual precedents and understood within the context of colonial and post-colonial settings (see subchapter 5.2).

2.1 Contextualizing Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī

There is a span of 83 years between the births of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī. Therefore, as mentioned in the Introduction (p. 5), I am not researching a debate between two scholars but rather the 'starting point' and the 'systematization' of a century-long controversy, beginning with the diffusion of Svāmī Dayānanda's ideas. In particular, the late 19th and early 20th centuries are marked by significant interactions, publications, and disputes between supporters of the Ārya Samāja and the Sanātanīs who sought to defend

[1] Svāmī Karapātrī mainly refers to 'Hinduism' as 'Sanātana Dharma,' 'Hindu Dharma,' or 'Vaidik Dharma.'

their 'orthodoxy' while upholding the practice of icon worship. A few decades later, Svāmī Karapātrī assumed a pivotal role in this debate as a representative of the Sanātanīs. In fact, Svāmī Karapātrī criticized Svāmī Dayānanda's rejection of *mūrtipūjā* based on many considerations and arguments that other Sanātanī scholars had made before him (see chapters 7 and 8). In this way, in his *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī proposed an organic systematization of a decades-long critique. Secondly, Svāmī Karapātrī not only analyzed Svāmī Dayānanda's Vedic exegesis but also undertook the task of editing a commentary on the *Vedas* to rectify Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis (Karapātrī 1986-1992, see Pellegrini 2009: 45–50). Svāmī Karapātrī's effort to resolve the debate is further evidenced by the fact that he tried to organize a *śāstrārtha* with the Samājīs to bring to a solution the famous 1869 *śāstrārtha* between Svāmī Dayānanda and pandits of Varanasi over the dispute of *mūrtipūjā* (see sub-chapter 3.1.5). Although Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis triggered a series of reactions from the Ārya Samāja side, which in turn led to a further response from scholars who shared Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective, these responses did not hold the same significance as Svāmī Karapātrī's work (see sub-chapter 7.3). For this reason, I argue that the intense debate activities between Samājīs and the Sanātanīs (the 'orthodox' Hindus) find in Svāmī Karapātrī's *Vedārtha Pārijāta* an important milestone (see sub-chapter 7.3).

In chapter 4, I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's program is strongly influenced by European scholarship; however, thinkers like Rammohan Roy and Tagore might have been better targets for Svāmī Karapātrī if, as I discuss in chapter 6, one of his main concerns was to eliminate 'Western' intellectual influences from India. Nevertheless, characters like Rammohan Roy and Tagore, though of Indian origin, could easily be recognized as products of English education. Therefore, Svāmī Dayānanda represented a more dangerous rival for Svāmī Karapātrī: Svāmī Dayānanda was a *brāhmaṇ* initiated into the Daśanāmī Saṃpradāya, who did not speak English and received a traditional education (see chapter 3). Svāmī Dayānanda sought not only to reform significant aspects of 'Hindu traditions,' such as the śāstric corpus, the caste system, and icon worship, but also claimed to base these reforms primarily on Vedic injunctions. He challenged the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* and engaged in a new commentary on the *Vedas* with the aim of eradicating the meanings transmitted by centuries-old commentarial traditions (see sub-chapters 3.1.3, 3.2.4.1, and 4.3). Thus, his work is less recognizable as a product of European influence and could easily be seen as an 'orthodox' interpretation of the *Saṃhitās*. I argue that it is primarily for this reason that Svāmī Karapātrī, though not exclusively, extensively engaged with the thought of Svāmī Dayānanda.

Considering their scholarship, I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī are both integral to the streams of thought emerging among Indian intellectuals during the colonial and post-colonial eras in 19th- and 20th-century India. In the following pages, I will contextualize Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within the existing scholarship that examines this phenomenon.

The rise of colonial power and the intellectual curiosity of European scholars in the subcontinent compelled Indian scholars to engage with the European 'other' and respond to their assumptions and objectifications (see Halbfass 1990). It seems that the process of

addressing European postulations about India significantly impacted Hindu self-awareness, which subsequently articulated itself in relation to and in opposition to the European 'other.' According to Halbfass, European domination in India was not merely a case of foreign domination but rather "an encounter between tradition and modernity, i.e., an exposure to new forms of organization, to unprecedented claims of universality and globalization, to rationalization, technology, and a comprehensive objectification of the world" (Halbfass 1990: 217). The scholar argues that this was the first time in history that India underwent a process of self-assertion against a foreign entity, one stemming from the necessity to defend 'Hindu identity' from its 'foreign understandings.'[2] According to Masuzawa (2005: 17), colonized societies lost their ability and authority to portray their heritage independently of European scholarship. Similarly, Halbfass suggests that Hindus tried to "disengage themselves from the status of mere objects or instruments of Western curiosity, and they took more distinctive initiatives to interpret their identity for the Europeans and to defend and affirm it against them" (Halbfass 1990: 173). The necessity to draw borders against the 'other' prompted the development of new forms of self-representation, characterized by the struggle to grasp the 'essence' of 'Hindu cultural identity.'

Discourses on cultural exchanges and identity definition and protection of cultural boundaries bring about the problematization of the concept of 'culture.' Scholars in transcultural studies have emphasized the fluidity of this concept, concluding that 'cultures' cannot be depicted as monolithic blocks, as they continuously evolve and adapt over time and space (Abu-Er-Rub et al. 2019: xxiii). Additionally, the creation of boundaries between 'imagined' cultures is a significant process of defining and redefining 'culture.' As a result, the intense intellectual exchange driven by colonial rule and the pressing need to differentiate 'the Hindu' from 'the others' transformed 19th- and 20th-century India into a 'contact zone' for a profound shaping and reshaping of 'Indian identity.'[3]

Overall, Indian intellectual responses to colonialism were complex and diverse in their expressions, leading to several internal conflicts. According to Zavos (2001; 2010: 64), the rise of societies and assemblies in the 19th century that aimed either to reform or preserve Indian

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[2] According to Halbfass, even during the Mughal Empire in India, there was "no serious philosophical or religious debate with Islam in traditional Hindu literature" (Halbfass 1990: 182). While he acknowledges that encounters and exchanges occurred at the level of literature and art, he claims that "Hindu Dharma" was never a topic of discussion with the Muslim 'other.' Halbfass' assertion may be viewed as somewhat extreme, as the emergence of pre-modern religious sects (e.g., that of Kabir) could suggest otherwise. Nonetheless, Lorenzen (1999) notes that Sanskrit religious literature displays a clear disregard for anything Muslim or 'foreign' in general. In this regard, one should look into Dalmia's and Faruqui's volume on *Religious Interactions in Mughal India* (2014) and Dalmia's and Fuchs' *Religious Interactions in Modern India* (2019). In this latter publication, Dalmia and Fuchs discuss two distinct sets of tendencies, which characterize the encounters of 16th–17th and 19th–mid-20th century India, respectively. Both scholars agree that the Mughal period, particularly during Akbar's reign (1556–1602), was marked by an intense religious dialogue, the exchange of religio-cultural ideas among various groups, and the exploration of alternative religious paths, alongside a tendency to more clearly differentiate among beliefs that appeared most similar.

[3] These processes were not one-sided. However, the evident power disparity between Europe and India created 'asymmetrical tensions' and 'hierarchies,' resulting in the subcontinent being more heavily shaped (see Pratt 1992). Yet, due to colonial intellectual exchanges, even Europe experienced processes of self-reassertion, such as the postulation of the Indo-Aryan theory (see sub-chapters 4.2 and 4.3) and the Theosophical Society (see sub-chapter 3.2.3).

religious traditions was facilitated, and possibly encouraged, by Queen Victoria. During the coronation ceremony in 1858, Queen Victoria proclaimed that religion and religious practices were fundamental rights for her colonial subjects. This fostered and legitimized the formation of societies (*sabhās*, *samājas*, *saṅghas*, and *maṇḍalas*), articulating new forms of Hinduism[4] or preserving and redefining Hindu religious traditions. According to Zavos (2010: 64), much of the effort of these societies was directed at delineating 'Hindu identity' and constructing cultural boundaries.

According to Dalmia and Fuchs (2019), the struggles of Indian identity in the 19th and 20th centuries prompted "inward-looking" and "self-expanding" postulations, which redefined the boundaries between a 'Hindu self' and 'others.' These formulations revealed the tendency to seek identity within one's group, to emulate a shared religious model, and to organize and formalize concepts and practices to create new canons (Dalmia and Fuchs 2019: xiv-xv). In short, 19th- and 20th-century Indian scholars aspired to establish, expand, and redefine communities and their boundaries while also forging larger alliances and overarching frameworks. The process of creating and defining communities on one hand and forming broader alliances and overarching frameworks on the other has been described by Paul Hacker as the 19th- and 20th-century tendencies of "neo-Hinduism" and "surviving traditional Hinduism" (Hacker 1978: 580–608; Halbfass 1990: 219–222). According to Hacker, these two attitudes manifested in the formation of the 'neo-Hindu' and 'traditionalist' or 'Sanātana Dharma' movements. These are fictitious categories useful for framing and theorizing the intellectual conflicts rising in colonial India among Indian scholars, as they classify thinkers from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as *sabhās*, *samājas*, *saṅghas*, and *maṇḍalas*, while allowing for a significant plurality of thought and a diversity of goals and agendas within the same category. Despite their differences, Halbfass argues that "neo-Hindu" movements shared the inclination to reinterpret Hindu textual traditions in the light of European influence.

> Neo-Hinduism invokes the tradition, tries to return to it, and hopes to find in it the power and context for its response to the West. […] More important than the fact that foreign elements have been added to the tradition is that basic concepts and principles of this tradition have been reinterpreted and provided with new meanings as a result of the encounter with the West (Halbfass 1990: 220).

Similarly, 'traditionalist' groups, although far from being a united entity, maintained "a certain unbroken continuity with the tradition" (Halbfass 1990: 220), particularly with the textual traditions and certain features of the establishment, including *mūrtipūjā*. While *mūrtipūjā* is accepted by most groups labeled as 'traditionalist,' it faces strong criticism from 'Neo-Hindu' groups like the Brahmo Samāja and Ārya Samāja. Additionally, Paul Hacker argues that 'neo-Hindu' and 'traditionalist' groups were not mutually exclusive and that organizations and individuals could embody both 'neo-Hindu' and 'traditionalist' features. Conversely, it seems that the two tendencies classify scholars and groups so fundamentally

[4] With the expression "new form of Hinduism," I refer to the "vertical restructuring" of 'Hinduism,' identified by Zavos (2001) as a fundamental tendency of neo-Hindu groups such as the Ārya Samāja.

opposed to each other that the origins of several 19th-century 'traditionalist' movements are primarily attributed to the desire to counter the spread of the Ārya Samāja, which is allegedly considered a 'neo-Hindu' or 'reformist' organization (Jones 1976: 108). According to the observations of Hacker and Halbfass, it would appear that Svāmī Dayānanda could fit into the 'neo-Hindu' category because of his 'Western' influences and reformist imprints. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī could be seen as a representative of 'traditionalist' tendencies because of his close relationship with textual traditions and his efforts to 'preserve' Hindu religious traditions.

Similarly, Kenneth Jones (1989: 39) identifies two broad types of responses: 'acculturative' and 'transitional' movements, which roughly correspond to Hacker's and Halbfass's 'neo-Hindu' and 'traditionalist' movements, respectively. In Jones's analysis, 'acculturative' movements originate from the colonial milieu. Their leaders and members emerge from cultural interactions and are deeply concerned with the colonial world and its categories while also maintaining a connection to the pre-colonial milieu and aiming to restore an 'indigenous heritage.' In contrast, the 'transitional' movements have their roots in pre-colonial India and operate in opposition and resistance with little to no influence from the colonial world. Its leaders and members were not English-educated and exhibited a distinct disinterest and opposition to adapting to colonial concepts and programs. However, in contact with the colonial environment, they eventually made adjustments. Vasudha Dalmia suggests (1997: 4–5) that the founders' backgrounds of one or another type of organization did not necessarily reveal their approach to Hindu identity building. She further observes that most associations of Hindu origin did not openly showcase their divergences from existing traditions but instead argued for their continuity with them. For instance, Svāmī Dayānanda had a traditional education and claimed to recover the lost meanings of the ancient *Vedas*. However, considering his substantial 'reformist' program, Ārya Samāja should be classified as 'acculturative' (Dalmia 1997: 4–5).

In the Introduction to *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, Dalmia considers using the terms 'reformist' and 'revivalist' to describe Indian intellectual responses to colonial domination. Ultimately, she concludes that the terms 'reformist' and 'revivalist' could lead to a misconception that 'revivalist' groups were largely immune to their surroundings (Dalmia 1997: 5–7). Consequently, she argues that both 'reformist' and 'revivalist' realities interacted with foreign contexts and were ultimately, to varying degrees, influenced by these encounters. For this reason, she problematizes the term 'revivalist' because it appears to imply a notion of pure 'indigenous' concepts and overlooks the potential for transcultural changes, not to mention that it has a negative connotation. Dalmia is also dissatisfied with Hacker's and Halbfass's 'neo-Hindu' label, as it "reeks of inauthenticity," and prefers the term 'reformist' instead (Dalmia 1997: 6). Yet, she recognizes the appropriateness of the term 'traditionalist,' as it emphasizes these groups' inclination to assert the "constancy of tradition" or *sanātanatā* (Dalmia 1997: 7). Thus, Vasudha Dalmia proposes the labels 'reformist' and 'traditionalist' to categorize 19th- and 20th-century Indian intellectual productions, scholars, and organizations based on how they respond to the following five issues (Dalmia 1997: 8):

i. Textual authority: The 'traditionalists' recognize the authority of *śruti* and *smṛti* and regard the *Purāṇas* and the *Itihāsas* as legitimate developments within the textual tradition. In contrast, the 'reformists' select only a portion of the scriptural canon, typically the *Vedas*, and dismiss the rest as non-authoritative.
ii. Religious and civil law: While the 'traditionalists' regard the *Dharmaśāstras* as scriptural authority for both religious and civil law and uphold the institution of *varṇāśramadharma*, the 'reformists' favor the authority of their leaders.
iii. Ritual practice: The 'traditionalists' gather around established ritual practices and temple activities, whereas the 'reformists' create their own rituals.
iv. Validation of tradition: Both 'reformists' and 'traditionalists' utilize similar methods to validate their traditions. Furthermore, the 'traditionalists' support their positions not only through the authority of the *śāstras* but also by employing rationalist arguments and historical scholarship, particularly that of Western orientalists.
v. Popular religious practices: Both 'reformists' and 'traditionalists' diminish the value of "popular religious practice," labeling it as superstitious (Dalmia 1997: 8).

I now analyze these categories in relation to Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī: (i) like the 'traditionalists,' Svāmī Karapātrī relies on the authority of *śruti* and *smṛti* and considers the *Purāṇas* and the *Itihāsas* as legitimate evolution of Hindu textual traditions. Differently, like the 'reformists,' Svāmī Dayānanda recognizes only the authority of the *Vedas* and a few other texts. (ii) Svāmī Karapātrī relies on the authority of the *Dharmaśāstras*. In contrast, while Svāmī Dayānanda claims to base his arguments on the statements found in the Hindu legal digests, his interpretation of the texts actually reflects the imposition of his own authority over these very texts (see sub-chapters 4.3 and 8.2, and chapters 9 and 10). (iii) In line with the 'traditionalists,' Svāmī Karapātrī emphasized the importance of ritual practices and temple activities, while Svāmī Dayānanda developed his rituals—a radically transformed version of those already present in the textual traditions (see sub-chapter 8.2). (iv) While Dalmia claims that the 'traditionalists' corroborate their position also on the basis of European scholarship, this does not appear to be the case of Svāmī Karapātrī, who prioritized śāstric injunctions over human reasoning and depended on the *śāstras* and textual commentarial traditions to understand the *Vedas*. Conversely, even though he was influenced by European scholarship in outlining his program (see chapter 4), for the most part, Svāmī Dayānanda did not acknowledge it. Lastly, (v) Dalmia does not clarify what she means by "superstitious practices." If she referred to *mūrtipūjā*, as seems likely, this assertion could be applied to Svāmī Dayānanda, who viewed icon worship as a popular superstitious practice. However, this does not apply to Svāmī Karapātrī, who instead aimed to preserve *mūrtipūjā*. Thus, up to the third criterion, Dalmia's analysis highlights key traits of both Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's scholarship, and could, therefore, place the two scholars within the categories of 'reformist' and 'traditionalist.' However, the fourth and fifth statements do not adequately represent their profiles.

Hans Krämer (2019: 378) postulates 19th-century patterns of religion-building.[5] He identifies three tendencies: (i) conservative reassertion and defense of beliefs and practices, (ii) adoption of new and foreign ideas, and (iii) replacement of old institutions with new ones. Svāmī Dayānanda aimed to abolish old institutions and embrace new and imported ideas (see sub-chapter 3.2.4). On a theoretical level, Svāmī Dayānanda could also reflect a tendency toward conservative reassertion and defence of practices and beliefs; however, in reality, he advocated for a thorough systemic transformation of old institutions. Thus, while theoretically working to reinstate a Golden Vedic Era and ancient practices, he designed new ritual traditions and beliefs under the guise of 'true' and 'ancient' Vedic religion (see sub-chapters 3.2.4 and 8.2). In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī advocated a conservative reassertion of principles, beliefs, and practices.

Dalmia and Fuchs postulate "three conceptualizations of Hindu unity" in 19th- and 20th-century India (Fuchs and Dalmia 2019: xvi-xvii), viz., three main identity-building patterns:[6]

i. The focus on "Vedic origins:" contemporary Hindu practices, such as icon worship, and Purāṇic traditions are recognized as either evolving from Vedic roots or as deviations from Vedic roots, thereby implying the need for correction.
ii. The "monistic neo-Vedantic Advaitic paradigm:" the idea that Vedānta comprises and subsumes all the other religious and philosophical positions.
iii. The "Pan-Indian *bhakti* movement:" the idea that *bhakti* embodies the vital essence of Indian culture.

Svāmī Dayānanda posited a divide between Vedic and modern Hindu practices. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī viewed modern Hinduism (including its practices, such as *mūrtipūjā*) as a natural progression from the *Vedas*. He regarded Advaita Vedānta as the doctrine that encompasses all philosophical perspectives, and he saw *bhakti* as a key expression of Hindu religiosity. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda's case is underrepresented, and the general nature of these theories fails to comprehensively explain the specificities of the empirical cases of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī.

Zavos (2001) examines the Ārya Samāja in contrast to 'traditionalist' groups and discovers a polarity in how they approached self-formulation and reorganization. He describes these processes as 'vertical' and 'horizontal' attempts to restructure the contemporary religious and social establishment. Zavos describes 'vertical' restructuring as the Ārya Samāja's effort to reform key aspects of Hindu communities, particularly the caste system and *saṃpradāyas*. He views these as essential regional entities functioning like micro-orthodoxy complexes. In other words, Zavos argues that the caste system and *saṃpradāyas* form the backbones, or the vertical structures of Hindu communities, and therefore a reinterpretation of these

[5] I consider this study about 19th-century India also in reference to Svāmī Karapātrī, even though he was active only a century later.
[6] The two scholars point out that while these three formulations arise from 'Western' scholarship, they trace back to the earlier pre-colonial ideas and constructs.

corresponds to a 'vertical' restructuring of the establishment (Zavos 2001: 117).[7] In contrast, 'traditionalist' or Sanātana Dharma groups sustained the relevance of the caste system and *saṃpradāyas* while seeking to reorganize Hindu communities into functional systems. Their activities theoretically aimed to preserve the 'backbones' of Hindu religious and social traditions, focusing instead on redefining practices and beliefs as symbols of Hinduism[8] in a pan-Indian manner. The main transformation processes of 'traditionalist,' or Sanātana Dharma, movements focused on building identity boundaries and defending practices and beliefs threatened by 'reformist' influences. For instance, *mūrtipūjā*, which was one of the most targeted practices by the Ārya Samāja and other 'reformist' groups, became a primary symbol of Sanātana Dharma (see sub-chapter 5.1). Zavos (2001: 117) describes this process of 'reorganization' and 'defence' of the establishment as 'horizontal' restructuring. Accordingly, 'traditionalist,' or Sanātana Dharma, groups sought to organize as cohesive entities capable of standing up against other distinct identities. Zavos's theory closely parallels the Ārya Samāja case, as his research focuses on it, and it partially aligns with Svāmī Karapātrī's endeavor to 'horizontally' restructure Hinduism by organizing existing religious traditions together and constructing a common identity and boundaries (see sub-chapter 5.2 and chapter 6).

While I have so far implied that Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī are largely antagonist scholars, I should note that both worked for the defense of 'their own' against 'the others.' However, their interpretations of the categories of 'their own' and 'others' differed. The contrasting attitudes of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī may also partly stem from the fact that Svāmī Dayānanda lived during colonial times, while Svāmī Karapātrī lived in the pre- and post-independence era. Thus, while Svāmī Dayānanda primarily sought to inspire Indians to free India, Svāmī Karapātrī was actually part of that movement (as a 'freedom fighter') and aimed to shape the future for the subcontinent and the newly independent state. For Svāmi Dayānanda, 'the other' was above all the European man, the colonialist, the missionary, and the Indologist, but also the 'modern Hindu,' who practiced 'modern Hinduism,' a 'superstitious' religion that made Indians 'idle' and unable to rise against the colonial power. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī's 'others' were not just the colonialists, the missionaries, and the Indologists, but also the followers of the Ārya Samāja and all those individuals and groups that introduced 'foreign ideas' into the Indian context, seeking to reform Hinduism and thereby endangering the establishment. Thus, if Svāmī Dayānanda's postulations are a reaction to colonialism (see chapter 4), several groups emerge in response to the spread of the Ārya Samāja (Jones 1976: 108) and other reform movements.

While it may seem easy to identify the identity boundaries of Ārya Samāja, given that we are dealing with a 'new' organization, it appears significantly more challenging to pinpoint Svāmī Karapātrī's identity framework: the entirety of the Hindu community, or Sanātana Dharma. Svāmī Karapātrī tends to advocate for a pan-Hindu community and defend its

[7] According to Zavos (2001), there is no single definable center of orthodoxy in Hinduism. 'Orthodoxy' is a consistently awkward concept to reconcile with Hinduism because of the association of orthodoxy with a centralized, controlling institution, as in the Christian tradition.
[8] Here, I mainly refer to the *śāstras*, the caste system, and icon worship.

boundaries, even though they are quite blurred. Thus, before analyzing Svāmī Dayānanda's construction of Ārya Dharma (see chapters 3 and 4) and Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma (see sub-chapter 5.2), I first address the scholarly debate on constructionist and contra-constructionist theories. I engage with the academic discourse on pre-colonial Hindu identities, specifically regarding whether traces of a pan-Hindu consciousness existed before colonialism and how European scholarship influenced colonial and post-colonial Indian religious formulations. This will allow me to better understand Svāmī Dayānanda's program and investigate Svāmī Karapātrī's activities and the extent to which colonialism influenced their thoughts.

2.2 Constructionist and Contra-Constructionist Theories

The scholarly debate on constructionist and contra-constructionist theories revolves around whether a consciousness of 'Hindu' or Sanātana Dharma identity existed in pre-colonial India.[9] Contra-constructionist scholars generally recognize the profound impact of the European encounter on the understanding of Hindu religious traditions and that European scholarship significantly influenced and shaped Indian responses. Yet, they reject the postulation that Hinduism and the idea of Hindu unity are colonial creations. They also posit that Hinduism is 'polythetic' in nature and cannot be described as "a religious system with a core of common characteristics, but one with separate instances that share family resemblance" (Bloch et al. 2010: 9–10).

Tracing examples of pre-colonial Hindu identity is a considerably intricate endeavor because of the lack of evidence for shared doctrines among the various *saṃpradāyas*. However, contra-constructionist scholars (e.g., Lorenzen) have traced the idea of a common identity among the Hindu *saṃpradāyas* in pre-colonial India. In my opinion, contra-constructionist theories effectively demonstrate the existence of forms of pre-colonial pan-Hindu consciousness.[10] However, I do not wish to endorse the notion of a Hindu or Sanātana Dharma identity that remains unaltered across time and space (this assumption is far from the views of contra-constructionist scholars as well).[11] In the following pages, I address a few

[9] In 1999, Lorenzen (1999: 630) lists the names of the main scholars putting forward constructionist arguments. These are Vasudha Dalmia (1995), Robert Frykenberg (1989), Christopher Fuller (1992), John Hawley (1991), Gerald Larson (1995), Harjot Oberoi (1994: 16–17), Brian Smith (1989), and Heinrich Stientencron (1989, 1995). Among the scholars identifying traces of pre-colonial Hindu identity and, therefore, upholders of the contra-constructionist theory, he identifies himself (1995, 1999), Lawrence A. Babb (1986), Wendy Doniger (1991), Gabriella Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi (1989), Alf Hiltebeitel (1991), Cynthia Talbot (1995: 694), Thomas Trautmann (1997), and Peter van der Veer (1994). In 2010, Bloch et al. engaged in the debates around the construction of Hinduism and showed that the line that in the nineties divided constructionist from contra-constructionist scholars has become blurred (see Bloch et al. 2010).

[10] On this, Lorenzen writes: "The idea that colonial outsiders can somehow invent, construct or otherwise create a new religion, Hinduism, held not by themselves but only by those with whom they have come into contact, is clearly an unlikely hypothesis" (Lorenzen 2010: 30).

[11] I will further explore this concept in sub-chapter 5.2, where I focus on Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma.

aspects of the constructionist and contra-constructionist theories that are pertinent to this case research.

Constructionist scholars posit that 'Hindu identity' is a colonial creation that combines a variety of religious and cultural features that have no common denominator (Viswanathan 2003: 27). The term 'Hinduism' itself is likely to be an English neologism. The earliest recorded use of the term dates back to September 1787, in the private correspondence of Charles Grant (1746–1823) with British merchant Thomas Raikes (Oddie 2006: 71).[12] About twenty-nine years later (in 1816 and 1817), Rammohan Roy was likely the first Indian scholar to use the term 'Hinduism' or rather 'Hindooism' (see Killingley 1993: 62–62). However, as Wendy Doniger points out, while the term 'Hinduism' is a European invention, it is quite "Eurocentric" to assume that "when we made the name we made the game" (Doniger 1991: 36). Despite the term's origins, as Lorenzen (2010: 29) also notes, 'Hinduism' serves as a synonym for 'Hindu religion' or 'Hindu Dharma,' which have much earlier usages. In Stietencron's view (1989: 11–12), the word 'Hindu' lacked a religious meaning before the 19th century. Initially, the term had primarily geographical implications, as it was coined in the Persian and ancient Greek worlds to refer to the people living beyond the Sindhu River, now known as the Indus River. Yet, according to Lorenzen (1999: 634), the "ethnic and geographical sense" of the term 'Hindu' has long overlapped with a religious connotation, as evidenced in the works of al-Biruni (1964) and Vidyāpati, who used this term with religious connotations at the beginning of the 15th century (Lorenzen 1999: 651). Nevertheless, in Stietencron's view (1995: 51), the 'construction' of 'Hindu identity' was primarily an European product. Similarly, Wilfred Cantwell Smith writes:

> Hinduism refers not to an entity, it is a name that the West has given to a prodigiously variegated series of facts. It is a notion in men's minds—and a notion that cannot but be inadequate (Smith 1991: 144).

Thus, constructionist theories suggest that the 'construction' of 'Hindu identity' emerged from a dialogical process in which Hindu pandits conveyed aspects of their religious traditions to European scholars. Specifically, when European scholars learned the Brahmanical traditions and practices from their interlocutors, they confused "a part for the whole" (Bloch et al. 2010: 4) and theorized a pan-Indian religion based on a digested version of Brahmanism. They created a framework of the doctrines, texts, practices, and deities of 'Hinduism,' organized to align with their understanding of religion, influenced by the Christian model. On this, Richard King (2010: 105–106) postulates six basic assumptions moving Christian and, more specifically, Protestant scholars in the detection of 'religion' (to these six, I add one more assumption according to Oddie's thought, (vii), Oddie 2010: 46). European scholars posit that (i) religion is a distinct domain of human societies and (ii) relies on faith and a system of beliefs. (iii) Religions are based on textual sources and are (iv) "discrete entities" in that they are meant to maintain distinct boundaries. Religions have (v) pure origins and (vi) exhibit "centripetal dynamics," in the sense that they compete and

[12] "Hindooism is a very good system, that is, that the few moral precepts which glimmer amongst its infinity of absurdities and enormities, are a sufficient Code for future happiness" (cited in Oddie 2006: 71).

conflict with one another ("exclusivism") while sharing a common core ("inclusivism"). Religions (vii) have priestly classes governing from the top down. In sum, these assumptions shaped the criteria by which European scholars detected religion in India and formulated their understanding of a pan-Hindu religion. This fictional systematization of Hinduism and the chosen disinterest in the multifaceted reality of the phenomenon served to classify and organize the subcontinent for more effective colonial rule (Bloch et al. 2010: 4). Allegedly, over time, due to European influences, the Hindus came to accept Hinduism a single religious identity (Oddie 2006: 100, Bloch et al. 2010: 7–9). According to Brian Smith,

> […] Hinduism was probably first imagined by the British in the early part of the 19th century to describe (and create and control) an enormously complex configuration of people and their tradition found in the South Asian subcontinent. "Hinduism" made it possible for the British, and for us all (including Hindus), to speak of a religion when before there was none or, at best, many" (Brian Smith 1989: 5–6).[13]

Bloch et al. (2010: 12) note that a significant merit of the constructionist theory is its emphasis on the discrepancies between major theorizations of Hindu religions and the everyday composite reality. According to Lorenzen, the efforts of European researchers to define 'Hinduism' should be seen as a process of prioritizing certain features over others, rather than creating a new identity. Accordingly, books such as Monier-Williams' *Hinduism* (1911 [1877]) attempt to define 'Hinduism' through a "process of selective emphasis rather than invention" (see Lorenzen 1999: 637).[14] This suggests that while colonialism was significantly relevant in shaping colonial and post-colonial Hindu representations, it could not have possibly created a new religious identity from scratch. Similarly, Pennington (2005: 3–4) states that ascribing to the British the invention of Hinduism would be "a severe historical misrepresentation" (Pennington 2005: 4). The scholar argues this because, especially during the 'Indophobia' orientalist phase (see chapter 4, especially sub-chapter 4.1), the Hindus actively responded to the Europeans' objectifications with innovations, modifications, attempts at preservation, and identity reassertion.

In pre-colonial times, Hindus identified themselves as distinct from Muslims. For instance, in vernacular literature, Lorenzen (1999: 648–653) provides numerous examples of negotiating identity boundaries between collective Hindu and Muslim identities. Lorenzen argues this based on his research on the works of Kabīr, the Rāmānandī Anantadās, the Vārakarī Ekanāth, and the Kṛṣṇa *bhakta* Vidyāpati, citing examples from the *nirguṇī* saints Raidās, Nānak, Dādu Dayāl, Rajjab, Palaṭu Dās, and so forth (Lorenzen 1999: 648–653). Halbfass (1990) and Lorenzen (1999: 647) also observe that Sanskrit literature displayed a deliberate disregard for foreigners and foreign religions. Chattopadhyaya (1998: 89–90), who investigates Muslim

[13] According to Bloch et al. (2010: 3), "To Smith, the term 'Christianity' does not capture the religious phenomena of Christians any more than 'Hinduism' does for those of Hindus. The alternative he suggests is to study religious phenomena not as systems of doctrines but rather as faiths and cumulative traditions."

[14] Similarly, Lorenzen (1999: 640–646) notices that European pre-colonial accounts of Indian society resemble in their contents the 19th century productions. Therefore, while pre-colonial accounts of India were undoubtedly influenced by the Christian backgrounds of their authors, Lorenzen argues that these scholars primarily reorganized elements presented to them by their brahman interlocutors regarding their own religious traditions. Thus, in Lorenzen's view, colonial agency in the formation of Hindu identity is limited to that.

representations in Sanskrit sources, argues that the Muslim 'other' is primarily referred to as an 'outsider,' whose morality, values, and practices are incompatible with the caste system (*varṇāśramadharma*). Furthermore, Chattopadhyaya (1998: 89) notes that wariness towards 'others' has been a long-standing characteristic in brahmanical literature, stemming from the fear that the social order might be threatened by 'foreigners.'

Hindus also acknowledged their internal differences, thereby affirming unity within plurality. For instance, in the 14th century, Mādhavācarya presented an account of the sixteen main "philosophical systems" in South India in his work, *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, systematically organizing them in a hierarchical order with Vedānta at the top (*SDS*, Cowell and Gough 1882: vii). Similarly, in the *Prasthānabheda* (*PB*, 1987), the 16th-century doxographer Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (c. 1540–1640) arranged the existing Indian philosophical schools into a hierarchical framework, classifying them as either *āstika* (orthodox) or *nāstika* (non-orthodox) and asserting a clear divide between the two categories. Nicholson (2010: 167) asserts that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, along with Vijñānabhikṣu, "endeavored to show that the differences between *āstika* and *nāstika* were real and unbridgeable, while differences among *āstika* schools themselves were small or nonexistent" (Nicholson 2010: 167).

With these examples, Lorenzen (1999: 648–653; 2010: 30) presents conceptions of Hindu identity characterized by terms such as Hindu Dharma or Sanātana Dharma, which existed long before colonial rule in Sanskrit and Tamil texts. Although Lorenzen does not assert the existence of an unchanged Hindu unity and entity over the centuries, he identifies a Sanātana Dharma-loose identity as distinct from Jainism, Buddhism, and materialism, as well as from the religions of the *mlecchas* (Lorenzen 2010: 30). This positions Svāmī Karapātrī's effort to present a Sanātana Dharma identity as a continuation of the works of Mādhavācarya and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. It also reveals that, although Svāmī Karapātrī's postulations were certainly triggered by the 20th-century tendency to reach overarching formulations of Hindu or Sanātana Dharma identities, these are not merely reactions to colonial discourses but are also rooted in pre-colonial thought.

In addition to examining the initial instances of pan-Hindu identity claims, there remains a lack of consensus on what the terms 'Hinduism' and 'Sanātana Dharma' actually entail. According to Viswanathan (2003: 27), the view that Hinduism is not a religion because it does not present an organized system of practices and beliefs reveals a conceptual framework that aligns with a monotheistic (and Christian) concept of religion. In other words, constructionist scholars may not recognize Hinduism as a pre-colonial concept, as this differs significantly from the Christian model of religion, and, based on these premises, they consider it incoherent as a religion.[15] Ferro-Luzzi (1989: 187) calls for a "polythetic" approach to the

[15] Viswanathan further argues: "The notion that modern Hinduism represents a false unity imposed on diverse traditions replays a western fascination with – and repulsion from – Indian polytheism. In this enduring perception, the existence of many gods must surely indicate they were the basis of many smaller religions, and therefore to describe them under the rubric of "Hinduism" as if they constituted a single religious system must be false, a distortion of heterogeneous religious practices. The reluctance of many scholars to call Hinduism a religion because it incorporates many disparate practices suggests that the Judeo-Christian system remains the main reference point for defining religions" (Viswanathan 2003: 28).

study of Hinduism. She suggests abandoning the idea that concepts can be defined solely based on "common attributes" and "clear-cut boundaries." She further argues that composite realities like Hinduism can hardly be pinpointed by closed definitions but rather described as "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (Wittgenstein 1976: 66, cited in Ferro-Luzzi 1989: 187). In this context, rather than creating a list of practices and characteristics common to Hinduism—a task that is impossible and prone to massive generalizations—Ferro-Luzzi proposes searching for "family resemblances" or "overlapping similarities" among Hindu religious phenomena. Acknowledging that the boundaries of such concepts are fuzzy, she briefly examines analogies across seemingly antithetical worship traditions, concepts of *saṃsāra*, *mokṣa*, and purity and pollution (Ferro-Luzzi 1989: 190–191).

Similarly, Geoffrey Oddie (2010: 42–43) identifies three main threads running through Indian culture over the centuries, which may characterize a certain commonality among Hindu religious traditions. These are: (i) The institution of the caste system and related concerns on purity matters. (ii) The widespread practice of undertaking pilgrimages throughout the subcontinent (along with the resulting establishment of centers for pilgrims, accommodation, and banking systems), and (iii) the relevance attributed to the brāhmaṇs in many parts of India. Oddie (2010: 42) argues that although disagreements and conflicts between Hindu *saṃpradāyas* often reached harsh tones, this does not undermine the existence of common ideas and practices among the Hindus.[16] Oddie (2010: 43) further claims that, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a growing consciousness of the boundaries delineating Islamic groups from Hindus. The Muslim presence in India thus strengthened the "feeling among *some* Hindus that they shared with others in a common socio-religious system" and that their practices, although different and variegated, differed even more from those of the Muslims (Oddie 2010: 43).

Balagangadhara (2010: 140) argues that Lorenzen's point regarding the existence of a pre-colonial Hindu identity in opposition to Muslims does not necessarily demonstrate the presence of a genuine Hindu collective identity. Instead, it illustrates improvised attempts at identity formation driven by necessity. In contrast to this, Wendy Doniger (1991: 36) claims that we define our identities by distinguishing ourselves from what we are not, and the understanding of "who we are not" undergoes constant changes. Thus, while refusing to problematize the credibility of an identity-building out of the necessity to create borders against 'foreigners,' she hypothesizes various 'others' in the 'Hindu history,' as, for instance, a '*Ṛgveda*-we' against Dravidian populations.[17]

2.3 Final Remarks

In this Chapter, I positioned my research within the context of post-colonial studies and the research on 19th- and 20th-century Hindu identity formulations. In an effort to contextualize the persona and activities of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, I primarily considered

[16] Here, Oddie (2010: 42) primarily refers to the Vaiṣṇavite-Śaivite conflict in South India.
[17] In sub-chapter 5.2, I present Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of a Hindu, or better, Sanātana Dharma, identity.

the works of Paul Hacker, Wilhelm Halbfass, Kenneth Jones, Hans Krämer, and Vasudha Dalmia. I confronted their postulations with Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī and attempted to position the two scholars within the categories of 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' or 'acculturative' and 'traditionalist,' 'Sanātana Dharma,' or 'transitional tendencies.' To some extent, I could see a certain relation between Svāmī Dayānanda and the formulations of 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' or 'acculturative tendencies.' Conversely, Svāmī Karapātrī appeared as a 'traditionalist,' 'Sanātana Dharma,' or 'transitional' scholar.

Yet, these labels are not perfect fits, as each definition fails to do justice to the complexities of the two cases. This is because these labels, which arrange multiple empirical data within binary categorizations, struggle to effectively portray a variety of scholars and associations, resulting in massive generalizations. Even Paul Hacker and Vasudha Dalmia, while presenting their categorizations, noted that their constructs were somewhat fictitious, as empirical analyses revealed the artificiality of such constructs. Clearly, these theories rely on a limited number of case studies and cannot fully represent the diversity of individual cases. For instance, Vasudha Dalmia's characterization of 'reformist' and 'traditionalist' scholars is presented in her book *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, centered on Bharatendu Hariścandra. Thus, it is likely that Vasudha Dalmia built her position on 'reformists' and 'traditionalists,' basing herself on Hariścandra's case study and generalizing some of his traits as macro-tendencies. In summary, although one could argue that, on a certain level and for practical purposes, Svāmī Dayānanda acts like a 'reformist' and Svāmī Karapātrī like a 'traditionalist,' such claims hold little value since these categories fail to portray complex realities.

The literature discussed in this chapter regarding identity formulations in the 19th and 20th centuries effectively showcases the streams of thought circulating during this period and illustrates several ranges of responses from Hindu scholars to colonialism and reform movements in India. These studies have, therefore, helped to identify these trends. However, using these labels to categorize individual scholars and their movements now appears to be an oversimplification and an imposition of categories from the top down. There is, however, a self-labeling process and self-conscious polarization among the 19th- and 20th-century supporters of the Ārya Samāja and defenders of 'orthodoxy,' namely, those who opposed the implementation of Svāmī Dayānanda's positions. This contrast emerged through public debates and publications, with the two factions identifying themselves as respectively Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs. For instance, in the 1891 Punjab Census Report, the Census Superintendent noted that a large number of people registered themselves as "Sanáthan-dharmi" in contradistinction to the followers of the Ārya Samāja (Zavos 2001: 114). The Census Superintendent further noted:

> […] in opposition also to the developments of the Brahmo and Arya Samajes […] the orthodox Hindus have in many instances been careful to record themselves as orthodox by sect. Some have returned themselves Brahmachárí, that is, as students going through the orthodox course of instruction; others as Smártak, followers of the instructions laid down in the orthodox body of laws known as Smrti. Others still are entered as Karm Kándi, followers of the Hindu body of ceremonial which is known as

> "Karm-Kánd." A still larger number were entered as Sanáthan-dharmí, but I have not thought it worth while to record their numbers: the term merely implies that they belong to the "old school," and it is generally used in contradistinction to the followers of the Arya Samáj. In Lahore City I found at the commencement of the preliminary enumeration that almost everybody who was not an Arya was being recorded as a Sanáthan-dharmi, which was a view of the meaning of our 'sect-column' that would have deprived it of its main interest. The term is generally used now-a-days in contradistinction to the Aryas, and there are numerous societies and clubs which under this title do what they can to maintain the orthodox faith (Maclagan 1892: 171–172).

The conflict between the followers of the Ārya Samāja and the Sanātana Dharmīs is reflected in a lengthy tradition of debates and literature highlighting the contrasts between these groups. On one hand, Svāmī Dayānanda, being the founder of the Ārya Samāja, clearly identifies himself as an Ārya Samājī. On the other hand, Svāmī Karapātrī identifies both himself and the community of orthodox Hindus he aimed to represent as the Sanātana Dharmīs, or more succinctly, the Sanātanīs. Theoretically, the Ārya Samāja could be defined as an organization dedicated to promoting the Ārya Dharma—that is, the theological, social, and political thought of Svāmī Dayānanda. Similarly, those who adhere to the Ārya Dharma can be recognized as individuals who perform the Ārya Samāja rituals and/or identify as Ārya Samājī.[18] In the sub-chapters 4.4 and 8.2, I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's concept of an Ārya Samāja identity is similar to European religious frameworks. In other words, the Ārya Samāja identity is crafted in a way that fits within Eurocentric systems of classification (one book, one God, and so on). Consequently, European religious and cultural paradigms can clearly define Svāmī Dayānanda's vision, especially since they influenced it. Dayānanda Sarasvātī and the Ārya Samāja have also been central to numerous academic works and have been extensively studied (e.g., Jones 1976, Yadav et al. 1990).

Conversely, the Sanātanī response is understudied, and Svāmī Karapātrī has been at the center of very few scholarly works (see chapter 6). Svāmī Karapātrī advocated for the preservation of Sanātana Dharma and the Hindu community, which are identities consistently difficult to circumscribe. Thus, in the following chapters, I give particular attention to Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective on Svāmī Dayānanda's ban on icon worship and attempt to understand what Svāmī Karapātrī meant by Sanātana Dharma and Hindu orthodox community (see sub-chapter 5.2).[19] To do so, I envision Svāmī Karapātrī carrying

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[18] Yet, even in this case, it is difficult to identify an Ārya Samāja community. For instance, I have met several Indian people who told me they married using the Ārya Samāja wedding ritual. Their choice did not stem from an interest in Dayānanda Sarasvatī's writings and programs, but was because the Ārya Samāja ritual—they said—is faster, simpler, and less expensive than the traditional ones. However, when I asked, they did not refer to themselves as Ārya Samājīs, but identified as Sanātanis. This proves that even the Ārya Samāja, an organization of relatively recent creation, has fuzzy identity boundaries. Similarly, Saunders (2011) shows how, in contemporary society, the boundaries of everyday life between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs are blurred, with the only noticeable difference being the performance of *mūrtipūjā* and the participation in other ritual practices.

[19] Especially in 19th- and 20th-century India, terms like Sanātana Dharma and Hindu community are employed by many scholars with many different meanings (e.g., Svāmī Karapātrī, Madame Blavatsky, Savarkar,

on the pre-colonial efforts to define the boundaries of the Hindu community but within the context of post-colonial India. Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of Svāmī Karapātrī's interpretation of Sanātana Dharma, I adopt Ferro-Luzzi's suggestion to embrace "polythetic definitions" based on family resemblances among Hindu religious traditions. I, therefore, argue that Svāmī Karapātrī is a Sanātana Dharmī not only in the context of the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma debate but also as a scholar consciously trying to support a Sanātana Dharma identity vs. 'others.'

With these premises, I can move on to discuss Svāmī Karapātrī's reaction to Svāmī Dayānanda's positions and the reasons that led him, a century later, to engage with Svāmī Dayānanda's writings and his condemnation of *mūrtipūjā*. Before doing this, in the next chapter, I introduce the persona of Svāmī Dayānanda.

Golwalkar). For this reason, I hold that the results of my research on the meaning of Sanātana Dharma are valid within Svāmī Karapātrī's and his entourage's environments, while other scholars and groups might have a different understanding of the concept.

3. Svāmī Dayānanda: Life, Hagiography, and Program

Svāmī Dayānanda is considered one of the fathers of modern India and, along with Rammohun Roy, one of the main opponents of *mūrtipūjā* in 19th-century India. Svāmī Dayānanda asserted the absolute authority of the *Vedas* and claimed to be able to retrieve their 'original' meanings, in contrast with the contemporary understanding of the authoritative texts, which he viewed as faulty. Svāmī Dayānanda argued that his scholarship and social program were a pure expression of the 'true' Vedic teachings, capable of enabling the instauration of a perfect Vedic society.

I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's intellectual production and social program, 'essentialist' in character, are directed at challenging colonial power and European scholarship on India. The Ārya Samāja's program represents a fully-fledged act of resilience against the foreign military and intellectual domination of the subcontinent.

In this chapter, I illustrate Svāmī Dayānanda's life events and significant encounters, drawing a profile of the reformer. I highlight how his proposition of culture came into being, showing its transcultural character, the appropriations, and re-elaborations that form the foundation of his thought.[20] I focus on a few crucial life events that, in my view, have been amplified—or maybe even invented—to magnify and 'essentialize' Svāmī Dayānanda's doctrine and persona. I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda presented his doctrine as a monolithic revelatory block and that his *Autobiography* recounts the story of his life with the intent of endorsing this perspective—specifically, that his positions derived from the *Vedas* rather than from life encounters. In my opinion, Svāmī Dayānanda's work was triggered and heavily influenced by European thought and models, although he did not acknowledge it and rather exercised strong critical thinking against them (see chapter 4).

The hagiographies and biographies of Svāmī Dayānanda (like the *Autobiography*, and the works of Jordens 2006 and Salmond 2006) portray a smart scholar, confident from a young age, and with a strong personality. Svāmī Dayānanda's life work has already been the subject of study by many scholars; in this chapter, I mainly draw the biographical elements from the scholarly works of Graham (1943), Griswold (1990), Jordens (1978; 1998), Salmond (2006), Jones (1976; 1989; 1998), Lajpat Rai (1967) and the anthology edited by Yadav et al. (1990).

Additionally, I drew the hagiographical material from Svāmī Dayānanda's *Autobiography* as it is published in the second edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśā*, in the translation by Durga Prasad (1908: 1–64; see also Sarda 1946). Svāmī Dayānanda narrated his story at the request of Colonel Olcott, who wanted to publish a biography of Svāmī Dayānanda in the Theosophical journal. In 1879, Svāmī Dayānanda sent Colonel Olcott the transcript of his life story, which he had translated into English and published in *The Theosophist* in

[20] Here, I follow the principle that "If one concentrates on relationships one can focus on processes that show how cultures work and what drives them" (Michaels 2019: 10).

November/December 1880 (Tripathi 2017: 56).[21] According to Sarda (1946: x), this is the sole dependable source detailing the first thirty-six years of Svāmī Dayānanda's life.[22]

Along the lines of Griswold (1990),[23] I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's life could be roughly divided into two chronological phases: (i) a formative one and (ii) a reformative one. In the first phase of his life, Svāmī Dayānanda eagerly wandered (partly literally too) in search of 'truth,' engaging with people along his way and seeking a teacher. These are the formative years, during which he attempted to understand the fragilities of his country and find a remedy for them. In the second phase, Svāmī Dayānanda fully embodied the reformer's role and actively worked to promote his ideas and implement his program. He started preaching his program across the subcontinent, founded the Ārya Samāja, and published books.

3.1 The Formative Years

3.1.1 Śivarātri

In 1824, Svāmī Dayānanda, originally named Mūla Śaṅkara, was born in the town of Morvi, situated in the Kathiawar region of Gujarat. His father, Ambā Śaṅkara, was a fervent devotee of Śiva, a wealthy and prominent *brāhmaṇa*. He held the hereditary office of Collector of Revenue, was a landowner of an extensive estate, and managed a lucrative business of banker and moneylender. In the *Autobiography* (in *SP,* Prasad 1908: 2–3), Ambā Śaṅkara is portrayed as a rigid Śaiva *brāhmaṇa*, rigorous and inflexible, of unwieldy appearance, who forced his son to participate in religious hardships for the propitiation of Lord Śiva from a tender age. On the other side, Svāmī Dayānanda's mother is depicted as a benevolent and sweet woman who repeatedly interceded for the boy's welfare against his father's pretenses. Svāmī Dayānanda's education was in the 'traditional' mold; he was initiated with the sacred thread at the age of eight, and his early education was at the hands of his father (Lajpat Rai 1967: 8–9). Scholars like Salmond (2006: 117) and Lajpat Rai (1967: 9; 11–12) agree on the significant role that the Ambā Śaṅkara played in bringing about Svāmī Dayānanda's uprising against the religious establishment. According to Svāmī Dayānanda (*Autobiography* in *SP,* Prasad 1908: 2–3; see also Rai 1967: 9–12), his disenchantment and loss of faith in *mūrtipūjā* and modern Hindu practices and beliefs began during the Śivarātri celebrations when he was about 14 years old. Following tradition, Ambā Śaṅkara invited his son to observe the

[21] It would be difficult to assess whether Svāmī Dayānanda' narration and the published *Autobiography* differ from one another and to what extent. Although we may not have an answer to that, it is nonetheless important to be aware of the issue.

[22] Sarda (1946: x–xi) notes that other biographical sources for Svāmī Dayānanda's life include: (i) accounts from individuals who interacted with him and heard his life stories, and (ii) a report from one of his lectures in Poona in 1875, where he addressed questions regarding his family (here, however, Sarda hypothesizes that the recording might have been inaccurate). Moreover, in 1888, Pandit Lekhram began gathering materials across India to create an official biography of Svāmī Dayānanda. However, he managed to write only a few chapters before he was killed by Muslim opponents in Lahore in 1897.

[23] Griswold (1990:14) rather speaks of a first period of 40 years of apprenticeship, followed by a period of "public ministry," 1863–1884, during which Svāmī Dayānanda engaged in public speeches and spread his ideas.

customary fast of *Śivarātri* and accompany him to the temple for the night celebrations, where devotees gathered around the icon of the god Śiva, spending the night making offerings and praying to the *śivaliṅga*. On this occasion, however, after many hours, all the devotees fell asleep, including Ambā Śaṅkara, and Svāmī Dayānanda was the only one who remained watchful. It was then, in the dead of the night, that he saw a mouse approaching the *śivaliṅga* and eating some of the food offerings. Svāmī Dayānanda was struck by this image: how could the almighty god Śiva let a little mouse approach him and steal his food? He could not believe that a piece of stone was the almighty god. Regarding this event, he then commented:

> I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an Omnipotent, living God, with this idol, which allows the mice to run over its body, and thus suffers its image to be polluted without the slightest protest (*Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 198: 2; see also Sarda 1946: 5).

Svāmī Dayānanda woke his father up, asking him how that icon could be the almighty God. His father was riled by this question and said that the icon was just a symbol through which they could venerate Śiva. During the *kali yuga*, he said, men could not directly perceive Śiva and the worship of the *śivaliṅga* was the only way to please God. Svāmī Dayānanda reported that he was not satisfied with his father's answer and asked permission to go home. There, despite his father's admonition to keep fasting, his mother fed him abundantly; the following morning, he was severely scolded by his father for his conduct. From this moment on, Svāmī Dayānanda lost faith in his father as well as the orthodoxy he represented (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 3; Sarda 1946: 6). This episode has generally been accepted as the beginning of Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion towards *mūrtipūjā*.

> None could have foreseen that Dayanand's father's piously intended insistence upon his son's earning religious merit at the tender age of fourteen by observing the fast of Shivaratri, was to result in such a tremendous change in the mind of Dayanand turning him into the most virulent and successful opponent of image-worship of his times (Rai 1967: 9).

Lajpat Rai places significant importance on this event. Salmond (2006: 96–99, 117) agrees that the events of that night strongly impacted Svāmī Dayānanda's thought and likely represent the starting point of his aversion toward icon worship. Salmond analyzes the conflictual relationship between the young Mūla Śaṅkara and his father, suggesting a psychological reading of the character of Svāmī Dayānanda. In the accounts of his early years, Svāmī Dayānanda often referred to the rigid orthodoxy of Ambā Śaṅkara and his feelings of constriction when his father forced him to perform religious duties, including icon worship. Svāmī Dayānanda related that the only way to escape them was to show his father that he was busy studying and reading the *Vedas*. In Salmond's view, the account of the night of Śivarātri qualifies as a realistic event which, along with other interactions with his father, possibly led Svāmī Dayānanda to reject Ambā Śaṅkara's persona and everything he represented, namely the 'traditional' establishment and the practice of *mūrtipūjā*.

In addition to the complicated father-son relationship, two traumatic events shook Svāmī Dayānanda's childhood: the death of his young sister and his favorite uncle. These familiar tragedies ultimately caused Svāmī Dayānanda to lose faith in Śiva and the worth of propitiatory acts like *mūrtipūjā*. In his *Autobiography*, Svāmī Dayānanda related about the premature loss of his loved ones and how this created in him the desire to defeat pain and suffering, and take renunciation (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 3–4; Sarda 1946: 6). Although Salmond (2006: 100) does not conclude that Svāmī Dayānanda's "iconoclasm"[24] is a pure result of his childhood experiences, he nonetheless argues that the events of Śivarātri and the traumatic experience of losing two loved ones have been concurrent in his aversion towards icon worship. Salmond identifies Svāmī Dayānanda's childhood life events as a keystone to his future actions and program. The scholar seems to give precedence to the analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda the private person over Svāmī Dayānanda the historical figure, thus emphasizing that personal and private experiences are no less important than historical and social contingencies in shaping a social and religious reformer (Salmond 2006: 117). Although I agree with Salmond on this, I am not convinced that the Śivarātri events portrayed in the *Autobiography* can be identified as the starting point of Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion against *mūrtipūjā*.[25] By all means, nobody can exclude the genuineness of the story, viz., that Svāmī Dayānanda did witness a mouse approaching the *śivaliṅga* on that night, or any night, but at the same time, I am inclined to downsize the original importance of this event. I thus argue that the Śivarātri events are a form of retrospective storytelling through which Svāmī Dayānanda sought to convey that his aversion to *mūrtipūjā* originates from unmediated knowledge derived in part from rational thought and in part from a divine revelation-like event. While Svāmī Dayānanda describes this event as the moment he discovered the 'truth' about icon worship, this rather seems to me like a hagiographical narrative meant to associate a 'revelatory halo' with his aniconic beliefs. The story he relates even includes existing hagiographical narrative patterns, such as the *topos* of the wise man remaining watchful while the rest of the world is asleep. Thus, Svāmī Dayānanda's narration seems to suggest that when the Śiva devotees, the pandits, and, above all, Ambā Śaṅkara fell asleep, they were not just physically sleeping but rather found themselves in a dormant reality. Their minds were asleep, or better, they were put to sleep by the superstitious practices of *mūrtipūjā*. On the contrary, Svāmī Dayānanda was the only one awake, the only one with open eyes who caught the sight of a mouse stealing Śiva's libations and thus realized the 'falsity' of icon worship. Thus, in my opinion, the events of Śivarātri are a representation of a 19th-century dormant traditional establishment opposed to Svāmī Dayānanda's awakening from 'superstition.' The allegory of the wise man who remains watchful in the night corresponds

[24] This is the term used by Salmond.

[25] Similarly, Farquhar (1998: 104) argues that it is implausible that a 14-year-old boy brought up in a rigid Śaiva environment could independently formulate a position against icon worship. He rather suggests that Svāmī Dayānanda was exposed to the influence of the Sthānakavāsis, a group of Jains who, breaking with the main Śvetāmbara sect in the 15th century, had given up icon worship; Svāmī Dayānanda's birthplace was under the direct influence of this religious group. The group was quite prominent at the time—the political establishment of Morvi being closely connected with the Jain sect. For Farquhar, it is not surprising that the young Mūla Śaṅkara may have been exposed to the Sthānakavāsis positions, and eventually elaborated on his aversion towards icon worship, but seems to rule out the possibility that Svāmī Dayānanda reached his conclusions on *mūrtipūjā* all by himself.

to a well-established literary *topos*, a common knowledge with which Svāmī Dayānanda must have certainly been very well acquainted.[26] In other words, the intrinsic allegorical value of this story and the subsequent theoretical implications of Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to *mūrtipūjā* lead me to conclude that Svāmī Dayānanda retrospectively related this story to magnify his position and to make it dependent solely on his critical thinking, rather than on external (or better, foreign) influences.

In the collective imagination, the events of Śivarātri mark the beginning of Svāmī Dayānanda's disenchantment and the onset of his spiritual awakening and desire for reform. To this day, on the annual occurrence of Śivarātri, the followers of Ārya Samāja celebrate this day as Riṣi or Dayānanda Bodhotsava, lit. 'the celebration of the enlightenment of the seer or Dayānanda.'

3.1.2 Renunciation

Svāmī Dayānanda's narration of the events leading to his renunciation follows narrative patterns seen in the lives of other renowned renouncers like Buddha and Ādi Śaṅkarācarya. The conflict between a son pursuing renunciation and the parents who wish him to remain home and marry is a recurring literary theme. His departure, coupled with the struggles for parental permission, resonates with literary tropes (although the parents' anguish about their sons leaving may reflect genuine emotional reactions rather than merely serving as a narrative pattern of hagiographies, or perhaps both).

Svāmī Dayānanda shares that he began to desire withdrawing from an active life after losing his sister and favorite uncle (*Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 108: 3–4; Sarda 1946: 7). It appears that Ambā Śaṅkara became aware of his son's desire and started considering marrying him off as soon as possible. Svāmī Dayānanda, however, tried to counteract this plan by suggesting the idea of going to Varanasi to study astronomy and physics. As a compromise, it was decided that he could go about 10 km from Morvi to study with a local pandit. The teacher, however, understood Svāmī Dayānanda's enduring desire for renunciation and communicated it to his father. Consequently, Ambā Śaṅkara hurried into wedding preparations; Svāmī Dayānanda tried to persuade his parents to change their minds, but ultimately, he eloped. Ambā Śaṅkara traced his son down in Siddhapur and went to pick him up with the help of a group of sepoys. When he saw his son dressed like a mendicant, he tore his clothes, scolded him, and commanded him to go back to Morvi with him the next day. Ambā Śaṅkara left the sepoys guarding his son and went to sleep. In the night, as the guards fell asleep, Svāmī Dayānanda found a getaway in the darkness and eloped for good.

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[26] This a *topos* found everywhere in the Hindu literature. See, for instance, *Bhagavadgītā 2.69: yā niśā sarvabhūtānāṃ tasyāṃ jāgarti saṃyamī| yasyāṃ jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ||* "*That which is night for all beings, therein is the [self-]controlled awake. That wherein are awake, that is night for the seeing sage*" (*BhG*, Feuerstein 2011: 116). Similarly, *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the title of the treatise wherein Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda's *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, literally means 'The Night jasmine of Vedic meanings.' The night jasmine flower (*pārijāta*) symbolizes the renouncer who remains awake while the rest of the world is asleep (I come back to this in sub-chapter 7.2, see also Pellegrini 2016).

These events reveal the customary struggles faced by well-known renouncers when they choose to leave their homes. Svāmī Dayānanda's narrative shares certain similarities with that of Svāmī Karapātrī (see sub-chapter 6.1). This is not surprising, as both narratives follow the patterns seen in the stories of other notable renouncers, such as Buddha and Ādi Śaṅkarācarya. However, I note a significant distinction between the stories of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, Buddha, and Śaṅkarācarya: the permission for renunciation.

The parents of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī similarly wished to marry their children off to prevent them from taking the monk's staff. The hagiographies of Svāmī Karapātrī recount that he attempted to run away from home several times and was always brought back by his father and older brother. It was only after about the thousandth escape attempt that Svāmī Karapātrī's father promised to let him go as soon as he could provide a progeny. Thus, following the birth of his first child, a baby girl, Svāmī Karapātrī renounced worldly life with the permission of his parents (see sub-chapter 6.1). Similarly, always in the hagiographical context, Ādi Śaṅkarācarya took renunciation only after receiving permission from his mother, albeit in a rather deceptive manner. Buddha too stood still for an entire night before receiving his father's permission. Thus, while the stories of Svāmī Karapātrī, Ādi Śaṅkarācarya, and Buddha depict the struggles of renunciants' families, they also show that all three took such a significant step only after obtaining permission from their parents. Svāmī Karapātrī, Ādi Śaṅkarācarya, and Buddha abandoned their homes, their caste, and the comforts of household life, but only after receiving their parents' concession. This implies that they did not break with 'orthodox' traditions and customs, as they acknowledged the parental rights over them—an aspect even more significant in the case of Buddha, who theoretically broke with 'orthodox' tradition. In contrast, when Svāmī Dayānanda escaped without formal permission from his father, he not only severed ties with his family but also with 'orthodox' traditions, or at least the tradition that Ambā Śaṅkara represented, that of the devotees of Lord Śiva and icon worshippers.

Svāmī Dayānanda took renunciation around 1846, soon after leaving his family home. He was initiated into the monastic order of the Daśanāmīs by a certain Paramānanda,[27] who gave him the name Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī (*Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 1908:7). During these years, Svāmī Dayānanda studied Ādvaita Vedānta and practiced Yoga, and wandered throughout India in search of a teacher who could inspire him. Around 1855, he concluded that Tantric texts and the concepts they presented were fundamentally a lie. This is explained in the *Autobiography*, where Svāmī Dayānanda relates that for some time he had been wondering whether the *chakra-nāḍī* theories (according to Svāmī Dayānanda, these correspond to the nervous system) bore any relation to reality. One day, he saw a corpse floating in a river and decided to take the opportunity to verify the content of the Tantric texts. He took the body and cut it open with a knife from the navel to the ribs and a portion of the head and neck; having investigated the internal organs, he compared what he saw with Tantric knowledge. Noticing the lack of correspondence with the texts, he tossed the corpse

[27] According to Natesan (1990: 33–34), it was a certain Purānanda who gave him the staff, not Paramānanda. The *Autobiography* however refers to a certain Paramānanda.

back into the river along with his books on Tantra. Svāmī Dayānanda states that from that moment on, he gradually began investigating the Hindu textual canon, narrowing down the authoritativeness only to the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Āṣṭādhāyī*, and the Saṃkhyā treatises (*Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 1908: 12–13). As with the events of Śivarātri and the context of his renunciation, it is impossible to determine if and to what extent this event occurred. Nevertheless, this story reveals meaningful allegories illustrating (i) Svāmī Dayānanda's disregard for purity rules and (ii) his rational thinking, or the primacy of 'reason' over 'religion.' Although at this point, Svāmī Dayānanda had already entered *saṃnyāsa* and was thus not compelled to follow purity rules indicated by caste, body dissection remains a very unusual practice for a Daśanāmī monk. This episode reveals Svāmī Dayānanda's tendency to challenge Hindu textual traditions and prioritize 'science' over śāstric authority.

3.1.3 Virajānanda and the Authoritative Literature

In 1860, Svāmī Dayānanda reached Mathura. After searching for years for a good teacher, he finally met his *guru*, Virajānanda. Svāmī Dayānanda portrayed Virajānanda as a great scholar, almost exclusively devoted to the study of the *Vedas* and the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in combination with Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. Svāmī Dayānanda related that his master detected many mistakes in medieval and modern Hindu literature and taught him that only the ancient treatises were truly authoritative and legitimate (*Autobiography*, in *SP*, Prasad 1908: 16). Virajānanda opposed *mūrtipūjā* and instructed Svāmī Dayānanda, who supposedly already disregarded that practice, not to tolerate it either.[28]

According to Jordens (1998: 14), after a life crisis, Virajānanda reached an understanding of a fundamental distinction between (i) the texts composed by the *ṛṣis*: the *ārṣa* literature, and (ii) the texts which were not composed by the *ṛṣis*: the *anārṣa* literature. The *ārṣa* literature had been composed before the Mahābhārata war and revealed a society of spiritual and intellectual greatness. Conversely, Virajānanda viewed the *anārṣa* literature as the work of ignorant men who had lost the capacity to grasp the essence of the *ārṣa* literature. According to Salmond (2006: 112), this position originated from the conviction that the 'degeneration' of the contemporary Hindu world stemmed from the neglect of *ārṣa* texts and the proliferation of sectarian traditions, which created a fragmented religious society. Jordens (1998: 14) further argues that Virajānanda most likely did not create a list of *ārṣa* and *anārṣa* books; however, he developed three main criteria to distinguish *ārṣa* literature from later sectarian works (see Jordens 1998: 15):

i. Only the texts starting with '*auṃ*' and '*atha*' are the books of the *ṛṣis*, while all the others beginning with an invocation to a particular deity are later and non-authoritative treatises.
ii. The texts should have a universal character, addressing not just one specific population, but all of humanity.

[28] Svāmī Dayānanda reported an occasion when Virajānanda publicly threw on the street a *śāligrāma* declaring it to be nothing but a stone (instead of a form of Viṣṇu). As the people of Mathura held the master in high esteem, nobody reciprocated the offense (see *Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 1908: 15–16).

iii. The texts of the *ṛṣis* are provided with commentaries of illustrious scholars like Śaṅkarācārya and Patañjali.

According to Salmond (2006: 112), the city of Mathura likely played a major role in shaping Virajānanda's and Svāmī Dayānanda's thoughts regarding icon worship. Mathura was, in fact, a major center of Kṛṣṇa's *bhakti*, where devotees regularly crowded the urban area while lining up for *darśana*. Such overwhelming masses of pilgrims might have reinforced Virajānanda's and Svāmī Dayānanda's negative appreciation of the effect of icon worship on people. After completing his course of study under Virajānanda, Svāmī Dayānanda took leave from his master, promising that he would revive the study of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* with Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* to enable a correct understanding of the *Vedas*. He also promised to bring to light the 'true' Vedic teachings, and cast away superstitious practices such as icon worship from Indian soil. Jordens notes (1998: 14) that from this moment onward, the *Vedas* started to become Svāmī Dayānanda's center of attention. It is then around 1860 that Svāmī Dayānanda set off on his journey to distinguish *ārṣa* from *anārṣa* texts; with this aim, for about 7 years, he "ransacked" the libraries of Agra, Jaipur, Pushkar, and Ajmer (Jordens 1998: 15). At the beginning of his search, Svāmī Dayānanda rejected the authority of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, while maintaining that of the *Devī*, *Liṅga*, and *Kūrma Purāṇas*. It was only four years later that he came to reject all the *Purāṇas*, as well as the *Rāmacaritamānasa*, the *Bhagavādgītā*, and the *Upaniṣads*. Jordens records that in 1866, Svāmī Dayānanda converted a king to Śaivism;[29] this shows that, although at this point, Svāmī Dayānanda had already discarded all Vaiṣṇava doctrines, it was only after 1867 that he began distancing himself from Śaivism. Eventually, Svāmī Dayānanda resolved to narrow down the concept of infallible textual authority to the four *Vedas* only, while texts such as the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* with Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Manusṃṛti* remained authoritative sources as long as they complied with the *Vedas* and common sense.[30] In fact, Svāmī Dayānanda ultimately concluded that only the texts that did not offend 'reason' and 'morality' could be regarded as authoritative. Conversely, any hint of polytheism, superstition, icon worship, immorality, or contradiction indicated a text's unreliability (see Jordens 1998: 16).

3.1.4 Svāmī Dayānanda's First Recorded Meetings With Missionaries

In 1866, Svāmī Dayānanda had his first registered encounters with representatives of Protestant Christianity, namely missionaries and priests (see Jordens 1998: 38–47). Between 1866 and 1873, Svāmī Dayānanda met at least seven of them through interpreters. According to Jordens (1998: 38–39), these meetings were not conflictual and were initiated by Christian missionaries who were curious about the figure of Svāmī Dayānanda. On the contrary, Leopold (1970: 287) reports that in 1866, Svāmī Dayānanda had a four-day debate in Ajmer with Reverend Gray, Reverend Robson and Reverend T. J. Scott of Bareilly, during which he

[29] This might suggest that up to this point, Svāmī Dayānanda had not fully rejected his ancestral religious traditions. This raises further questions about the actual importance of the *Śivarātri* events and their connection to Svāmī Dayānanda's denial of the religious tradition represented by his father.
[30] In the third chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda lays down a list of the books that in Svāmī Dayānanda's opinion should be part of the curriculum of Indian students (see *SP*, Prasad 1908: 119–125).

harshly ridiculed several statements contained in the Bible (this being one of the seven meetings to which Jordens refers). Yet, for Jordens, the reason why Svāmī Dayānanda pacifically met with the missionaries (if we prefer his reading to that of Leopold) is that at this time, he did not yet recognize the threat that Christianity posed—a reality he only understood a few years later upon arriving in Punjab, a region with many converts to Christianity. At this time, according to Jordens (1998: 39), Svāmī Dayānanda was still in a phase of study and development of what would become his program. Meanwhile, while traveling, he also held public lectures, mostly in villages, and debated with local pandits. For this reason, Jorden (1988: 39) refers to the Svāmī Dayānanda of these years as a "rural reformer," who had not yet attracted large crowds and was not very successful in winning people over. However, his stay in Farukhabad was an exception, as here, his ideas received positive feedback. Allegedly, the *brāhmaṇs* of Farukkhabar fully embraced Svāmī Dayānanda's views on icon worship and cleared their temples of all *mūrtis*. Although Rudolf Hoernle hypothesizes that this account might have been exaggerated (see Hoernle 1990: 3), he confirms that Svāmī Dayānanda converted a very rich merchant of the place. It is likely that several *brāhmaṇs* who were financially reliant on him also followed their benefactor. Svāmī Dayānanda's engagement in debate significantly increased and became a central aspect of his life as a reformer, serving as an important avenue for the expansion of the Ārya Samāja program. Svāmī Dayānanda is considered a pivotal figure in the rejuvenation of debate traditions in modern India (Tripathi 2017: 52).

3.1.5 The Śāstrārtha In Varanasi

One of the most notable events in Svāmī Dayānanda's life is the *śāstrārtha* held in Varanasi on November 16, 1869, revolving around the question of the orthodoxy of *mūrtipujā*.[31] The debate was organized by the king of Varanasi at the time, Mahārāj Iśvarī Narāyaṇ Siṅgh, and occurred in the premises of the Ānand Bhāg, owned by the ruler of Amethi, a follower of Svāmī Dayānanda (Tripathi 2017: 57). Present at the discussion were the king of Varanasi, Svāmī Dayānanda, and a group of pandits led by Svāmī Viśuddhānanda (described by Hoernle as a prominent Vedānta scholar) and pandit Bāla Śāstrī. The debate began at 4 p.m. and ended abruptly at 7 p.m. While recordings of this debate exist, they largely reflect biased perspectives. In his article, "An Evening in Śāstrārtha" (2017), Radavallabh Tripathi examines these recordings, noting that two distinct narratives emerge: one from the Ārya Samāja and the other from the Sanātanīs, with each claiming victory for their side.

Svāmī Dayānanda himself allegedly transcribed the debate under the title *Kaśīśāstrārthaḥ* and released it in the tract *Atha Śāstrārtha aur Saddharmavicār* by Mushi Harvansh Lal and Pandit Gopinath Pathak, published in December 1869 by the Kashi Light Press. Svāmī Dayānanda provided an additional brief version of the debate in his *Autobiography*, which he sent to

[31] Jordens (1998: 15) mistakenly reports that the event took place in 1970. This is on Jordens' part, as the first accounts of this debate were published already in December 1969. Tripathi (2017: 52) notes that this event is among the most significant in the history of Hindu debate traditions.

Colonel Olcott in 1879 for publication, appearing in *The Theosophist* in November/December 1880 (Tripathi 2017: 56).

On the other side, Satyavrat Samashrami, the editor of the Pratna Kampra Nandinī,[32] a Sanskrit magazine, was appointed by the pandits to document the event. He subsequently published his report in the December 1869 issue of his periodical (Tripathi 2017: 56). Additionally, there is another account by Pandit Mathuraprasad Dikshit titled *Kāśī kā Saccā Śāstrārtha*, which is based on Satyavrat Samashrami's recording. This account was first published in January 1916, followed by a second edition in 1969 (see p. 115), and it served as a primary source in Baldev Upadhyaya's *Kāṣī kī Pāṇḍitya Paramparā* (Tripathi 2017: 56–57).

In March 1870, Rudolf Hoernle (1990) wrote a report on Svāmī Dayānanda for the *Christian Intelligencer* (see *Autobiography* in *SP*, Prasad 1908: 19–20).[33] Here, Hoernle gave a brief record of the *śāstrārtha*. He reported that Svāmī Dayānanda's arrival in Varanasi provoked great excitement, as crowds of people, including several *brāhmaṇs*, started to gather around him at all hours. This preoccupied the king of Varanasi, who organized a public debate between the reformer and the local pandits, representing 'orthodoxy,' to harness the general excitement.[34] Hoernle sympathizes with Svāmī Dayānanda as he voices concerns that the results of the debate had already been decided before the dispute. Thus, when Hoernle registers victory on the orthodox side, he raises suspicions that the procedure had not been fair.

> The public disputation took place on 17th November in the house where the reformer was staying. As soon as the Raja of Benares arrives, the discussion commenced by Dayananda asking Pandit Taracharana, the Raja's court pandit, who had been appointed to defend the cause of orthodoxy, whether he admitted the *Vedas* as the authority. When this had been agreed to, he requested Taracharana to produce passages from the *Vedas* sanctioning idolatry, *Pashanadipujana* (lit. worship of stones, etc.). Instead of doing this, Taracharana for some time tried to substitute proofs from the *Puranas*. At last Dayananda happening that he only admitted the *Manusmriti Sarirakasutras*, etc. as authoritative because founded on the *Vedas*, Vishudhananda, the great Vedantist interfered, and, quoting a Vedanta Sutra from the *Sarirakasutras*, asked Dayananda to show that it was founded on the *Vedas*. After some hesitation Dayanand replied that he could do this only after referring to the *Vedas*, as he did not remember the whole of them. Vishudananda then tauntingly said, if he could not do that he should not set himself up as a teacher in Benares. Dayananda replied, that none of the pandits had the whole of the *Vedas* in his memory. Thereupon Vishnudananda [sic!] and several others asserted that they knew the whole of the *Vedas* by heart. Then followed several questions, quite unconnected with the subject of discussions, but put

[32] Tripathi wrongly refers to it as "*Pratnakamrananadinī*" (Tripathi 2017: 56).
[33] I am careful to confide in the accuracy of this account. Although Hoernle was a renowned scholar, we have no knowledge that he could understand spoken Sanskrit. At the same time, considering the description of the crowd gathering around the debate, it is likely that it was very difficult to hear the words of the contestants. It is not to exclude that Hoernle's brief account of the actual debate was based on the reports of other bystanders.
[34] Hoernle refers to this debate taking place on the 16th of November between 3 and 7 p.m., while Tripathi reports that the debate took place on the 16th of November, starting at 4 p.m.

> by Dayananda to show that his opponents had asserted more than they could justify. They could answer none of his questions. At last some pandit took up the thread of the discussion again by asking Dayananda whether the terms *pratima* (likeness) and *purti* (fulness) occurring in the *Vedas* did not sanction idolatry. He answered that, rightly interpreted, they did not do so. As none of his opponents objected to his interpretation, it is plain that they either perceived the correctness of it, or were too little acquainted with the *Vedas* to venture to contradict it. Then Madhavacharya, a pandit of non [sic!] repute produced two leaved of a Vedic Ms., and, reading a passage (*brahmananitihasak purananai*) containing the word '*Puranas*', asked to what this term referred. Dayananda replied: it was there simply an adjective, meaning 'ancient', and not the proper name. Vishnudananda challenging this interpretation, some discussion followed as to its grammatical correctness; but at last all seemed to acquiesce it. The Madhavacharya produced again two other leaved of a Vedic Ms., and read a passage (*vajnasanaptoi satyan dasame divase purananam patham srinuyat*) with this purport that upon completion of a *yajna* (sacrifice) on the tenth day the reading of the *Puranas* should be heard, and asked how the term '*Purana*' could be here an adjective. Dayanand took the MS. in his hands and began to meditate what answer he should give. His opponents waited about two minutes, and, as still no answer was forthcoming, they rose, jeering and calling out that he was unable to answer and was defeated, and went away. They might certainly have allowed him a little more time, but it is evident that he was puzzled as to an answer; and the answer which he afterwards published in his pamphlet that to the word '*Purana*' was to be supplied *vidya* (science), meaning purani Vidya, that is, the *Veda* is not very satisfactory (Hoernle 1990: 9–10).

I happened to talk about this story with Ajay Pandey, my Hindi teacher in Varanasi and co-founder of the Banaras Cultural Foundation in Varanasi.[35] Mr. Pandey narrated another version of this story, the one popularly known by the inhabitants of Varanasi.

> Īśvarī Nārāyaṇ Siṅgh, the king of Banaras, was a highly learned *kṣatriya* who valued the custom of *śāstrārthas*; his guru was Kasth Jīvan Svāmī. When Svāmī Dayānanda arrived in the city of Varanasi, the king decided to organize a *śāstrārtha* between the traditional pandits and Svāmī Dayānanda on the topic of *mūrtipūjā*. The event occurred in the gardens now known as Ānand Bhāg; here, a large crowd gathered around the speakers. At one point during the debate, one of the 'orthodox' *brāhmaṇs* cited a verse from the *Vedas* that purportedly supported *mūrtipūjā* and asked Svāmī Dayānanda to comment on it. Svāmī Dayānanda was unfamiliar with the quoted verse and requested to see the reference in the printed text. At that moment, the people surrounding the assembly began to stir, booing and shouting at him. Mr. Pandey observed that on that occasion, Svāmī Dayānanda had very few followers, while the supporters of the orthodox pandits were numerous. Reportedly, the crowd's reaction concerned the king of Banaras, who feared that the situation might escalate. As Svāmī

[35] See www.banarasculturalfoundation.org, retrieved on 13.10.2019.

> Dayānanda delayed in responding to the *brāhmaṇs*, the sun began to set, and the crowd grew increasingly agitated. To ensure the safety of all bystanders, the king of Banaras decided to conclude the debate: he proclaimed the victory of the orthodox pandits, the Sanātana Dharma front. Mr. Pandey noted that it is a well-known fact that the debate was never resolved; however, unlike Hoernle, he suggests that the abrupt closure of the debate was due to safety concerns rather than bias.

Mr. Pandey also added that until recently, during the annual occurrences of the *śāstrārtha*, the heirs of both factions—the Ārya Samājīs on one side and the Sanātana Dharmīs on the other—celebrated the anniversary of their victory. Significantly, for the *śāstrārtha* centenary, Svāmī Karapātrī organized a debate in Varanasi, inviting Ārya Samāja scholars to argue about icon worship. With this confrontation, Svāmī Karapātrī wanted to bring to a conclusion the hundred-year-old *śāstrārtha*. However, Svāmī Karapātrī's challenge remained unanswered as no Ārya Samāja scholar showed up to the event.

I assume that the possibility of coming across an unbiased transcript of the Ānand Bhāg's debate is quite unlikely. Yet, the limited information at our disposal demonstrates the significance of the theme of *mūrtipūjā* in the debate between Ārya Samāja and Hindu 'orthodoxy' and illustrates how both sides strived to prove victory on their side on this particular topic. Jordens (1998: 15) states that, at the time of the debate, Svāmī Dayānanda still recognized the authority of the *Brāhmaṇas* and Vedic commentaries, a view he would abandon roughly a year later. Thus, the contents of this debate could have been especially relevant to my research, as they would have illustrated a middle stage in the development of Svāmī Dayānanda's theological positions. Namely, if Svāmī Dayānanda still accepted the authority of the *Brāhmaṇas*, how did he argue against the existence of many gods and that *yajñas* are not offered to them (this being part of his discourse against icon worship)? Unfortunately, as there is no unbiased report of this debate available, this question remains unanswered.

3.1.6 Meetings with the Brahmo Samāja

In December 1872, after meeting Debendranath Tagore in 1870 at the Kumbha Mela of Prayagraj, Svāmī Dayānanda was invited by the Ādi Brahmo Samāj to visit Kolkata. There, he met the so-called Bengali intelligentsia and spent the next four months in the company of the Tagore family, Keshub Chandra Sen, Nabagopal Mitra, Rajnikanta Gupta, and Bhudev Mukhopadhyay.

In Kolkata, Svāmī Dayānanda also met Rajnarayan Basu, an English-educated bhadralok, the "grandfather of Nationalism in India" (Sarkar 1909, cited in Strube 2021: 295) and the grandfather of Aurobindo Gosh too (Strube 2021: 295). Rajnarayan Basu's thought bears many resemblances to that of Rammohan Roy (Strube 2021: 295), particularly regarding theology and the interpretation of Hinduism as a monotheism akin to Christianity. In Rajnarayan Basu's view, Hinduism in its 'purest essence' is the Vedānta described in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma Sūtras*. In an article in the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* (lit., *The Newspaper for the Search of Truth*, the journal of the Brahmo Samāja), Rajnarayan Basu

addressed the criticisms of Vedānta made by the Scottish Presbyterian missionary Alexander Duff. He emphasized that the rediscovery of Vedānta was not a new development but rather the "return to the "Unitarian," monotheistic religion of the ancient Vedas, […] perfectly harmonized with modern rationalism and natural theology" (cited in Strube 2021: 296).

In 1872, Rajnarayan delivered a lecture in Kolkata on 'The Superiority of Hinduism' (*Hindu Dharmer Śreṣṭhatā*), and according to Jordens (1998: 72), he read the transcript of his talk to Svāmī Dayānanda. In his lecture, Rajnarayan listed twelve reasons why 'Hinduism' should be held superior to all other creeds.[36] He also engaged in an apologia for Hindu monotheism, asserting that the Hindu pantheon and *mūrtipūjā* were adaptations of the supreme truth made for those who could not grasp the essence of Vedānta (this corresponding to his ninth reason for Hinduism's superiority, see footnote 36). In his argumentation, Rajnarayan Basu made extensive use of 'Orientalist' sources, quoting among others the works of William Jones (1862), H. T. Colebrooke (1858), James Mill (1817), W. Ward (1815–1817), and Max Müller (1860).

Scholars like Jordens (1998: 17, 72) and Graham (1943: 143) recognize that Svāmī Dayānanda's meetings with the members of the Brahmo Samāja had a significant impact on the reformer, leading to a major shift in his persona. The militant and activist nature of the Brahmo intelligentsia strongly impacted him; Svāmī Dayānanda valued the benefits of an organized society and the influence of the press in disseminating the religious message. However, he observed that the Brahmo Samāja was also divided into many factions, and there was significant dissent among its members. Svāmī Dayānanda identified the cause of their fragmentation as the lack of a common, stable ground: the *Vedas*. In his *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda acknowledged the important role the Brahmos played in saving Hindus from Christian conversions and their engagement against icon worship. Yet, he accused them of xenophilia, imitation, and admiration of Christianity and the 'Western' world (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 467–468). In sum, Svāmī Dayānanda concluded that the Bengali intelligentsia needed to reach a unanimous agreement on the indisputable infallibility of the *Vedas* to overcome their adversities, present a united front, and implement substantial changes in society.

Svāmī Dayānanda's emphasis on the importance and centrality of the *Vedas* grew after his Kolkata days. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda, the renouncer, transformed into a social reformer (Jordens 1976: 34). This transformation also occurred externally; prior to his time in Kolkata, Svāmī Dayānanda donned a loincloth, resembling a religious beggar, partially unclothed and covered in ashes (Hoernle 1990: 1). Yet, from that moment on, Svāmī Dayānanda favored

[36] Here, I briefly summarize these twelve points: (i) Unlike other religions such as Christianity and Islam, Hinduism does not derive from any man. (ii) In Hinduism, there is no need for prophets, and no mediator exists between the worshipper and the worshipped. (iii) In Hinduism, God is the Soul of the soul. (iv) Hinduism implies an intimate communion with God. (v) Worship of God in Hinduism is for God's sake alone, not for the desire of heavenly rewards, as in Christianity and Islam. (vi) Hinduism inspires universal benevolence. (vii) The doctrine of transmigration provides Hinduism with an expiatory system, while Christians and Muslims are forever sent to hell or heaven. (viii) Hinduism is tolerant of other religions, and (ix) it has intermediate stages of beliefs for those who cannot grasp the abstract and universal meanings. (x) Hinduism guides every realm of human action, and (xi) it embraces the entirety of human knowledge. Lastly, Hinduism is extremely ancient (see Basu 1872: i–iii).

urban-style clothing. After meeting with Keshub Chandra Sen, he also shifted his language of choice from Sanskrit to Hindi; in this way, he was finally able to communicate with the masses.

3.2 The Reformative Years

3.2.1 Publications and the foundation of the Ārya Samāja

In 1874, only one year after his Kolkata trip, Svāmī Dayānanda published the first edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* (lit., *The Light of Truth*, *SP*), a work written in Hindi and commonly regarded as the scholar's *opus magnum*. In Jordens' opinion (1998: 97), the writing style of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* bore a remarkable resemblance to Debendranath Tagore's *Brahmo Dharma* (1992 [1848]), which was read to Svāmī Dayānanda during his stay in Kolkata. In the *Brahmo Dharma*, Tagore noted his thoughts, quoting and loosely translating excerpts from the *Upaniṣads*, the *Manusṃṛti*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*. Both the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* and the *Brahmo Dharma* were designed to serve as guides to 'correct' thinking and action.

In Mumbai 1875, Svāmī Dayānanda founded the cultural reformist movement Ārya Samāja. In its early years, the Ārya Samāja operated almost exclusively in Mumbai. During this period, Svāmī Dayānanda dedicated himself to studying the *Vedas*, and between 1876 and 1877, he began publishing the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyābhūmikā* (*ṚVBB*) in 16 separate issues. The first volume was published in 1876 by the Lajras Press in Varanasi, while the last two issues were released in 1877 by the Nirnnaya Sagar Press in Mumbai. The *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyābhūmikā* was intended as an introduction to Svāmī Dayānanda's envisioned commentary on the *Vedas*; however, he passed away before he could complete his work. Yet, Svāmī Dayānanda could publish 51 monthly fascicules that included portions of his commentary on the *Ṛg Veda* and *Yajur Veda*. Additionally, he had completed (though not yet published) the commentary on the *Yajur Veda* and had advanced in his commentary on the *Ṛg Veda* up to the *mantra* 8.4.60. After Svāmī Dayānanda's demise, within a span of 22 years, the Ārya Samāja published the unedited portions of Svāmī Dayānanda's commentary on the *Ṛg Veda* and *Yajur Veda*. Considering the start date of this work, Jordens (1998: 18) calculates that to meet the end, Svāmī Dayānanda must have been writing about 1200 pages of commentary per year for approximately 6 years, which translates to about three pages each day. Considering that Svāmī Dayānanda was also active in other endeavors, debates, and the propagation of the Ārya Samāja in general, the velocity of his writing is quite remarkable.

3.2.2 Svāmī Dayānanda in Punjab

In January 1877, Svāmī Dayānanda attended the ceremony proclaiming Queen Victoria Kaiser-i-Hind in Delhi. During this event, he met various Indian social and religious leaders and received an invitation to visit Punjab. Svāmī Dayānanda arrived in Lahore in April 1877 and stayed in the region for approximately one year. The local Brahmo Samāja branch was

partly responsible for Svāmī Dayānanda's invitation to Punjab and was managing some of his expenses and organizing his meetings. However, during his initial speeches in this region, along with his strong condemnation of icon worship, child marriage, death rituals, and food taboos, Svāmī Dayānanda chose to focus on the exclusive infallibility of the *Vedas* and the transmigration of souls, which represented the two most divergent points between his and the Brahmo doctrines. Soon, instead of persuading his hosts, Svāmī Dayānanda was abandoned by the Brahmo Samāja. Nonetheless, he continued his stay in Punjab and carried on with his public speeches. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda witnessed the threat posed by missionary proselytism, which had attracted many new followers in Punjab. This intensified Svāmī Dayānanda's concern about the growth of Christianity; during this period, he also met and debated several local missionaries (see Jones 1976). In Lahore, Svāmī Dayānanda founded a branch of the Ārya Samāja that soon became the headquarters of the society. Here, on the 24th of July 1877, a committee constituted by Lala Sain Das, Lal Jivan Das, and Lala Mul Raj polished 'The Rules of the Bombay Samaj,' reformulating their creed into a constitution of 10 principles.[37] During this time, Svāmī Dayānanda sought governmental funds for his commentary on the *Vedas*. Lal Jivan Das, the secretary of the new Ārya Samāja Lahore branch, wrote a letter to Dr. G. W. Leitner, Registrar of Punjab University in Simla, to persuade him of the relevance of Svāmī Dayānanda's enterprise. Lal Jivan Das argued that distributing Svāmī Dayānanda's commentary on the *Vedas* among Indian and English people was instrumental in diffusing the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*. He contended that this was necessary for a correct interpretation of Hinduism and for uprooting superstitious beliefs, especially icon worship. To seek support for his request for government funding, Svāmī Dayānanda shared a sample of his work with R. Griffith, the Principal of Banaras Sanskrit College, C.H. Tawney, the Principal of Calcutta Presidency College, and three other Sanskrit Pandits from Lahore. Svāmī Dayānanda's commentary, however, was not well received by either the pandits or the European scholars. When the reformer learned of the negative reviews, he sent a letter of complaint in defense of his work. After the government refused to engage further with the issue, the Ārya Samāja felt that the Indian pandits had allied with the British and betrayed their fellow countrymen.

Jones (1976: 36) mentions that during confrontations and debates, Svāmī Dayānanda exhibited an aggressive and belligerent attitude, which received a positive and enthusiastic response in Punjab. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda's public speeches had such a decisive impact that many Hindus began throwing "their idols in the Ravi River or publicly smashed them in the local bazaars" (Sarda 1946: 179–180). Such events triggered the response of the local orthodox pandits, who began organizing public lectures in defense of icon worship (Graham 1943: 186). 'Orthodox forces' began to organize themselves around the figure of Shraddha Ram, who allegedly followed Svāmī Dayānanda's whereabouts, arranging public debates and lectures to contain the spread of the Ārya Samāja. These are the first significant instances of orthodox pandits attempting to create united fronts against 19th- and 20th-century religious

[37] For a throughout analysis of the 10 principles and the comparison with the Bombay chart, see Graham (1943: 187–198).

reforms. It was particularly during his stay in Punjab that Svāmī Dayānanda was recognized as a threat to Hindu orthodox traditions (see chapter 5).

3.2.3 The Theosophical Society

One of the most peculiar contacts of Svāmī Dayānanda with the 'Western' world is his alliance with the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society is an 'esoteric' religious movement founded in 1875 New York by Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), also known as Madame Blavatsky, and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907). The Society articulated disillusionment with the Christian world and voiced the desire for the spiritual knowledge of the 'East,' advocating for a reform of 'Western spirituality' based on the Indian model. In February 1878, Colonel Olcott sent a letter to Svāmī Dayānanda, praying to him for his guidance: "We come to your feet as children to a parent, and say, look at us, our teacher: tell us what we ought to do" (Sarda 1946: 525; Leopold 1970: 290). In 1878, under the suggestion of Harischandra Cintamani of the Ārya Samāja of Mumbai (but without consulting Svāmī Dayānanda first), the Council of the Theosophical Society merged with the Ārya Samāja (Leopold 1970: 290). The allegiance between the two societies was based on the understanding of common Aryan origins. Madame Blavatsky argued that the Ārya Samāja and the Theosophical Society were a united community engaged in the eradication of 'superstition' and the instauration of authentic Vedic principles. According to Leopold (1970: 291), when Olcott received a translation of the strongholds of the Ārya Samāja in August 1878, he realized that Svāmī Dayānanda's thought, previously understood solely through the words of Harischandra Cintamani, was not what he had expected. Svāmī Dayānanda's exclusive adherence to the *Vedas* and his vision of a monotheistic and 'un-mystical' God resembling the Christian one disappointed Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky (see Leopold 1970: 291). Instead, the Theosophical Society accepted the authority of the *Brahmāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, and *smṛti*, while considering the *Purāṇas* as literature for the less learned ones. Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky allowed their followers to keep their religions while claiming to perform miracles and sharing ghost stories; this was entirely unacceptable to Svāmī Dayānanda. Although the two societies continued to collaborate for some time, by November 1880, Svāmī Dayānanda had distanced himself from the Theosophical Society. Eventually, Madame Blavatsky accused Svāmī Dayānanda of having become one of those "infallible Pope[s]" he despised so much (Leopold 1970: 293).[38]

In 1880, Svāmī Dayānanda established a publishing house, the Vedic Press, and an Ārya Samāja branch in Varanasi. During this time, he faced strong opposition. Although a ban on

[38] Despite losing the alliance with the Ārya Samāja, the Theosophical Society had a significant impact on the subcontinent, especially because of its focus on education; for instance, The Central Hindu College funded in Varanasi in 1898 by the Theosophical Society eventually became the Banaras Hindu University. Additionally, the Theosophical Society also played a significant role in Indian politics. According to Bevir (2003: 112), the Theosophical Society significantly influenced Indian political development by equipping Western-educated Indians with a shared ideological framework and organizational skills that were crucial for the establishment of the Indian National Congress. Although the founders of the Society did not pursue a political agenda, the discussions they promoted—centered on India's cultural heritage and spiritual identity—were eventually adopted also by Indian nationalists, who also benefited from the networks established within the Society.

his public lectures had just been lifted, he was taken to court by Muslims due to his offensive writings against Islam (Jordens 1998: 34). In 1883, Svāmī Dayānanda published a second edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*; this, rather than the first edition, represents the *vademecum* of the Ārya Samāja. According to Jordens (1998: 53) and Graham (1943: 240), the second edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* must have been substantially different from the first, thus hinting at the fact that the 1883 edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* is the outcome of Svāmī Dayānanda's changing and evolving thought rather than a collection of timeless truths deriving from Vedic exegesis. A few months after the publication of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*'s second edition, Svāmī Dayānanda passed away at the age of 59; he was reportedly poisoned, although the identity of the perpetrators remains uncertain (Sarda 1946: 324–333).

3.2.4 Svāmī Dayānanda's Reformative Program

Upon examining Svāmī Dayānanda's scholarly body of work, I identified three key aspects that stand out in his program: (i) the modification of the Hindu textual canon, (ii) the instauration of the caste system as a merit-based structure, and (iii) the eradication of *mūrtipūjā* together with the establishment of the worship of one only formless god. Thus, Svāmī Dayānanda's program significantly aimed at reorganizing the main socio-religious structures of the subcontinent. As argued by Zavos (2001), his reformative program aimed at radically transforming the basic structures of Hinduism, which he identifies as complex nexuses of the caste system and *saṃpradāyas*. Below, I illustrate the first two points of Svāmī Dayānanda's program, while the discourse on *mūrtipūjā* is addressed throughout this dissertation, and particularly in the sub-chapter 8.2.

3.2.4.1 Modification Of The Hindu Textual Canon

Svāmī Dayānanda regarded the *Vedas* as God's revelation and the only infallible source of authority, encompassing religious, scientific, and technological knowledge:

> We believe in the Veda, that is, whatever acts of commission and omission are ordained by the Vedas. As we believe in the Veda, our religion is the Veda. This belief should be accepted by all people and particularly by the Aryas so as to have one faith among them while they live on earth (*SP*, Prasad 1908:124).

Svāmī Dayānanda posited that God directly transmitted the *Vedas* to the seers. He also contended that the *Vedas* consisted solely of their *mantra* portions, while he regarded the *Brāhmaṇas* as unreliable commentaries, providing incorrect interpretations of the *mantras*. He accepted that other texts may be authoritative, as long as they do not conflict with the four *Saṃhitās* and common sense. He thus listed the *Nirukta* and the *Nighaṇṭu* among the books to be studied; he also extensively quoted from them, suggesting that he considered them, at least partially, authoritative. He believed that the *Manusṃṛti* and Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* were also authoritative—though not infallible—textual sources, while he considered Vedic commentaries, such as that of Sāyaṇa, to be flawed. Furthermore, he advocated for the study of the six *darśanas*, with a preference for the Sāṃkhya school. Additionally, Svāmī Dayānanda despised epic and devotional literature as unreliable and merely products of a decaying society that believes in the existence of many gods. *Itihāsas* like the *Mahābhārata* and the

Rāmāyaṇa could be taken into account for historical data, but they were not reliable in religious matters. The *Purāṇa*s and the *Tantras*, central literature of the *sampradāyas*, were to be rejected entirely. Svāmī Dayānanda recognized that 'partial truths' could be found in modern Hindu texts, even in the *Purāṇa*s and the *Tantras*. However, he viewed these "truths" as mere remnants of ancient Vedic knowledge, mixed with "untruth." Consequently, he regarded these treatises as deceptive and felt they needed to be "thrown off like food mixed with poison" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 124).[39]

In my opinion Svāmī Dayānanda's position on authoritative literature—that the *Vedas* consist solely of their *mantra* portion and that other works hold authority only if they align with them and common sense—along with his dismissal of 'traditional' Vedic interpretations, created the space for a free examination of the *Vedas*, unrestricted by commentarial traditions. The Vedic *mantras*, whose language and meanings are often obscure, provided fertile ground for exegesis and the reinterpretation and legitimation of new ideas. In other words, Svāmī Dayānanda's approach unlocked the semantic possibilities of the *mantras*, allowing him to reinterpret them independently of commentarial traditions. This interpretive freedom also enabled him to dismiss, on the ground of inconsistency with his Vedic meanings, portions of texts, treatises, and entire sections of literature (such as the *Tantras* and the *Purāṇas*) that conveyed ideas contrary to his program. In this way, he could discard literature that opposed his view while simultaneously invoking Vedic authority to legitimize his positions and present them as Vedic revelation rather than his personal ideas.

3.2.4.2 The Instauration Of The Caste System As A Merit-Based Structure

Svāmī Dayānanda aimed to establish a merit-based caste system and discard the notion of a birth-based *varṇavyavasthā*. In his view, abolishing the hereditary principle of the caste system was essential to combat Indian apathy and prevent the economic and social consequences of a lazy and static society. Jaffrelot (2007: 30) argues that the establishment of the caste system as a merit-based structure was also a measure to re-evaluate the caste system, which had been criticized by Europeans. Another reason that likely led Svāmī Dayānanda to lean toward a meritocratic social structure was the threat posed by Christian missionaries who, in recent years, particularly in Punjab, had been successful in converting many Hindus. In his pamphlet *Hindus—A Dying Race* (1909), Colonel U. Mukherji of the Indian Medical Service forecasted that Indians professing 'Hinduism' were destined to disappear within 400 years (cited in Dalmia 2019: 161). Conversions were particularly common among low castes and outcastes living on the outskirts of Hindu society, as they were more vulnerable to missionary influence. The merit-based caste system had the benefit of facilitating an egalitarian society, where personal efforts were valued more than birthright. To bring back into the Hindu fold those who had been converted to Christianity (as well as to Islam), Svāmī Dayānanda designed a ritual called *śuddhi*. The *śuddhi* was modeled after an ancient brahmanical ritual (also called *śuddhi*) that recreated a person's state of purity after contact with a polluting object or an impure activity. In the initial stages, Svāmī Dayānanda's

[39] For a list of the books that Svāmī Dayānanda recognized as authoritative, partially authoritative, and spurious, see the third chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 119–125).

śuddhi was conducted with the assistance and collaboration of 'traditional' pandits who shared his concerns about the increasing number of Hindus converting to Christianity (and to Islam as well). From 1880, however, the Ārya Samāja began performing the *śuddhi* for low- and outcastes, repositioning them among the upper castes. Eventually, as the *śuddhi* became a tool for allocating large numbers of low castes within the highest *jātis*, the alliance with the 'traditional' pandits was broken. Nonetheless, only a few among the 'birth-based caste' Hindus, and not even all Ārya Samāja members, accepted the newly 'reclaimed' in their midst; the *śuddhi* did not change the social reality of the low- and outcastes (see Jones 1976: 133).

3.3 Final Remarks

In this chapter, I outline a short biography of Svāmī Dayānanda and a few significant events from his life. I examine some of these episodes (as reported in the *Autobiography*) through an allegorical lens, underscoring the efficacy of such accounts in the construction of Svāmī Dayānanda's persona. I argued that Svāmī Dayānanda's narration of the Śivarātri events aims to demonstrate that his opposition to icon worship stems from his direct rational thinking, as confirmed in the Vedas, rather than from personal experiences, and social and practical considerations (see sub-chapter 3.1.1).

Svāmī Dayānanda's stated aim was to revitalize Hindu society and create a strong, active community capable of standing up against colonial rule. He thus dedicated his life to developing a theoretical framework that could ensure this purpose and committed to implementing such a program. I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's thought is a product of the dynamics of cultural entanglements, namely, the processes and encounters that characterized his life. I theoretically divided Svāmī Dayānanda's life into two phases: a formative one, during which he was on a quest for 'truth,' culminating in his encounter with his master Vijarānanda, who placed him on the path of Vedic literature and instilled in him a total disdain for icon worship. During these years, Svāmī Dayānanda engaged with the Bengali intelligentsia in Kolkata and evolved into a reformer. In the subsequent phase, he focused on executing and promoting his agenda.

Overall, Svāmī Dayānanda's interactions with English society and academic circles appear somewhat marginal in his hagiographies and biographies. In the next chapter, I illustrate the significant connection between early Indological theories and Svāmī Dayānanda's concepts, establishing a meaningful link between the theories of European scholars and Svāmī Dayānanda's ideas.

4. Early Indology and Svāmī Dayānanda

In examining the diverse and complex body of 18th- and 19th-century Indological scholarship on the cultural and religious history of the subcontinent, I identified a series of interconnected conceptual frameworks that recur in several of these works. These are (i) the assumption of a hiatus between 'ancient' and 'modern' India, the latter being a degeneration of the former, that (ii) the *Vedas* are the testimony and 'crystallized' revelation of ancient Vedic religion that has no relation to modern Hinduism, and (iii) the understanding that *mūrtipūjā* is the superstitious practice *par excellence*, the main token of 'modern Hinduism,' resulting from a misinterpretation of the *Vedas* and the cause-effect of India's 'backwardness.'[40]

In the following subchapters, I illustrate that the points mentioned above are ultimately echoed in Svāmī Dayānanda's program for the reformation of 'modern Hinduism.' Svāmī Dayānanda presented his religious and social theories as the application of Vedic law and the rationalization of 'degenerated' contemporary practices or, at times, as the outcome of divine intuitions, or a mix of both (for instance, see sub-chapter 3.1.1). Yet, I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda's thought did not stem from Vedic exegesis but resulted from his life experiences and was triggered and invariably shaped by European scholarship (see also chapter 4 and sub-chapter 8.2). Svāmī Dayānanda's positions can therefore be better understood as the product of a conscious engagement and re-elaboration of 'Orientalist instances' rather than a case of simple borrowing. He did not passively accept European scholarships in his reformative program; his contempt for colonialism, the desire for an independent India, and his sense of superiority toward other cultures revealed his negative attitude toward the 'West' and clearly prevented him from acknowledging this connection (see *SP*, Prasad 1908: 278–289). Instead, my analysis suggests that the three Indological perspectives on the subcontinent, which I mentioned at the beginning of this page, played a crucial role in Svāmī Dayānanda's delineation of the Ārya Samāja's program. I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda internalized and critically revised these three assumptions according to two main criteria: (a) making India above the criticisms implied in such formulations, and (b) emulating the cohesiveness and constituency of European models, above all that of the British Empire. The first criterion expressed the need to distance India from accusations of being 'backward' and avoid derision. The second highlighted the necessity to partially emulate European countries in order to effectively stand up against them and respond to their exploitation. Thus, the main aspects of Svāmī Dayānanda's program I mentioned in the sub-chapter 3.2.4[41] were meant to be instrumental in creating a strong and independent India, whose constituency and practices

[40] Here, I do not mean to suggest that early Indologists held a unified, coherent perspective on the subcontinent; rather, several prominent scholars in the field acknowledged a few key concepts. In this chapter, I aim to provide an understanding of this diverse landscape. However, exploring the complexities of these studies in depth is beyond the scope of this work. I do not aim to provide a comprehensive account of the history of early Indology, as extensive studies on this subject already exist. Therefore, I highlight those themes that, in my view, resonate in various ways within Svāmī Dayānanda's thought.

[41] (i) The modification of the Hindu textual canon, (ii) the instauration of the caste system as a merit-based structure, and (iii) the eradication of *mūrtipūjā* (and its interconnected 'superstitious' practices and beliefs) together with the establishment of the worship of one only formless god.

could rise above 'Western' mockery (further in the sub-chapter 4.4, I illustrate that icon worship was a primary target of colonial criticism).

Even today, Svāmī Dayānanda's scholarship is quickly classified as the mere product of either Muslim,[42] Christian, and/or early Indology influences. According to Salmond (2006: 1–7), this is especially the case with Svāmī Dayānanda's view on icon worship, because of the tendency to perceive aniconism as a phenomenon foreign to the subcontinent and merely of 'Western' derivation.[43] In contrast, Har Bilas Sarda (an Ārya Samājī) (1933: xxxiv) and D. M. Sarma (1944: 165) argue that although Svāmī Dayānanda's program was a reaction to the colonial presence in India, it bore no relation to 'Orientalist' views, Christianity, or Islam. This is mainly discussed on the basis of Svāmī Dayānanda's ignorance of the English language and the resulting—putative—inability to access 'Western' scholarship.[44] I disagree with this view and rather agree with Lajpat Rai, suggesting that "The Arya Samaj may quite logically be pronounced an outcome of the conditions imported into India by the West" (Rai 1967: 293). This, as long as "outcome" and "reaction" are not understood as acts of passive borrowing. I argue this primarily based on the relevant similarities between Svāmī Dayānanda's and European intellectual productions. Additionally, time and space corroborate my hypothesis, as Svāmī Dayānanda lived in colonial India and was consequently exposed to European thought. Nonetheless, Jordens (1998: 39) reports that Svāmī Dayānanda's first encounter with Christianity was in 1866. In the years prior, he resided at his father's home and then wandered in search, first of a *guru* and then of "the essence of Hinduism." Jordens (1998: 71) argues that the most 'Western' influences within Svāmī Dayānanda's thought can be traced back to his meetings with the Bengali intelligentsia (1872). In his view, these are primarily reflected in (i) Svāmī Dayānanda's attention to chronology and historicity in delineating the superiority of Vedic religion, (ii) the depiction of a golden age also characterized by scientific and technological development, and (iii) the transfer of the idea of Christianity as the religion of the book handed down by God to the four *Vedas*, a corpus of total social, political, economic, and scientific revelation.

Still, even if there are no records of Svāmī Dayānanda being exposed to European thought before 1866, this absolutely cannot prove that he hasn't been. We cannot even know whether Virajānanda's influence on Svāmī Dayānanda was filtered through Indological or missionary perspectives. The fact that we have no such knowledge—that in the *Autobiography* and other sources, before 1866, there are no records of Svāmī Dayānanda coming into contact with 'Western' thought—simply does not prove that he hadn't been exposed to European scholarship in some form prior to that date. Additionally, especially in the context of the *Autobiography*, it would be rather surprising to find such a link; in fact, Svāmī Dayānanda's contempt for colonialism and European scholars would have prevented him from informing

[42] Jawaharlal Nehru stated that "the Arya Samaj was a reaction to the influence of Islam and Christianity, especially the former" (cited in Salmond 2006: 5).
[43] Salmond (2006: 3) argues: "That these Hindus [Svāmī Dayānanda and Rammohan Roy] should attack "idolatry" appears anomalous because it contravenes what could be called "Orientalist" generalizations on (or perhaps caricatures of) India and Indian religion as seen in contradistinction to "the West."
[44] In this chapter, I show that Svāmī Dayānanda's inability to speak or read English did not prevent him from getting in touch with European thought.

us of any such encounters. Thus, as I argued in the previous chapter, Svāmī Dayānanda's *Autobiography* seems more like an annotated and metaphorical hagiography rather than a reliable source of information.

Later in his life, we know that Svāmī Dayānanda had several contacts with the Indological world. According to Leopold (1970: 288), in 1875, the year of the foundation of the Ārya Samāja, Svāmī Dayānanda undertook morning walks in the company of H. H. Wilson. In 1876, he met Monier Williams and entrusted him with his pupil, Shyamji Krishnavarma, who earned a Bachelor of Arts at Oxford and later became Monier Williams's teaching assistant. Monier Williams also extended an invitation to Svāmī Dayānanda to embark on a tour of Europe, where he could have delivered public speeches. However, citing difficulties with the language, Svāmī Dayānanda opted to remain in India instead. Leopold (1970: 288) also reports that while Shyamji Krishnavarma was in Oxford, Svāmī Dayānanda asked him about Monier Williams' and Max Müller's views on the *Vedas* and the *śāstras*. Svāmī Dayānanda also knew European scholars working in India like Georg Bühler, George Thibaut, and John Wilson. His personal library contained works by Max Müller, H.H. Wilson, John Muir, Rudolf Roth, Theodor Benfey, and others that—one can presume—were read and simultaneously translated for him. In 1876, Svāmī Dayānanda made an attempt at studying English; he soon changed his mind and hired a pandit to translate for him Max Müller's English translation of the *Ṛg Veda* (Leopold 1970: 288). Around these years, from 1876 to 1877, Svāmī Dayānanda began publishing the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. Although the first edition of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* was released in 1874 (one year after he met with the Brahmo Samāja; see the previous chapter), it was only in 1883 that the second edition was released.[45] Yet, although Svāmī Dayānanda's first meetings with Indologists are recorded from 1875, this was not his first recorded contact with this world. In 1872, when he met in Kolkata with Rajnarayan Basu and viewed his *Hindudharmmer Śreṣṭhatā*, Svāmī Dayānanda certainly had access to the numerous Indological quotations contained therein, stemming from the works of H.H. Wilson, H.T. Colebrooke, William Ward, Max Müller, and others (see sub-chapter 3.1.6). In conclusion, if Svāmī Dayānanda received interesting outputs from his English colleagues—directly or indirectly—he certainly did not acknowledge them: his position remained that of an opponent to colonial power and European thought.

I now make a brief digression on European intellectual perspectives regarding the subcontinent to provide a general idea of the Indological enterprise and differentiate between two phases of European intellectual production on the subcontinent. The first phase, characterized by a certain 'Indomania,' is one during which scholars engaged with Sanskrit texts and cultural issues on the subcontinent while also displaying a fascination for it (see Trautmann 1997: 62–98). My discourse on the connections between Indological works and Svāmī Dayānanda's theories relates to the works of this first phase. In the second phase, called 'Indophobia,' there is a predominant interest in implementing English culture and transforming India into a well-oiled gear of the British Empire, alongside a complete disregard for Indian culture and religious values (see Trautmann 1997: 99–130). For the most

[45] Leopold (1970) posited that Svāmī Dayānanda's interest in the Indological world did not stem from interest in incorporating Indological theories.

part, early works on the subcontinent are interwoven with biases and assumptions of racial and cultural superiority. This is true for the works of 'Indomania' as well as 'Indophobia,' although the latter group intensified the tones. Thus, while addressing this topic, I will quote several passages from the works of these scholars to convey the impact that these must have had on European and, more importantly for this case study, Indian minds.

4.1 European Studies on the Subcontinent

The first 'Western' scholars of the subcontinent lived around the end of the Enlightenment era and throughout the Romantic period. Their intellectual baggage included the 'worship' of reason and a belief in, as well as nostalgia for, ancient splendor. This led to the Romantic topos of 'yearning for the origins,' a tendency to look to the 'East' as the cradle of human civilization. Yet, the Judeo-Christian and Protestant backgrounds of these scholars filtered their vision and understanding of the subcontinent. Further on, the Scottish Enlightenment and subsequently Darwinism introduced positivistic elements that found full expression in the work of the 'Anglicists.' The first European accounts of India, along with the earliest translations of Indian poems, such as the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, sparked an 'uncontrolled' excitement for India in the 'West,' leading to a fascination for the 'exotic' and the spread of 'Indomania.' The work of Indologists partly stemmed from this enthusiasm and fueled this interest through the production of critical editions and translations. On the other hand, it rationalized romantic expressions using an analytical and logical approach.[46]

The beginning of the discipline of Indology is commonly associated with the foundation of the Asiatic Society (originally, Asiatick Society) in 1784 Calcutta by William Jones. The Asiatic Society aimed to promote research among the Britishers living in Bengal, establishing a space for the study and translation of Sanskrit texts, as well as a platform for British scholars to develop and share their works. Warren Hastings (1732–1818), the first Governor-General of Bengal, was eager to gain a comprehensive understanding of India and consequently encouraged and supported the efforts of the first Indologists to translate the Hindu texts, particularly the Indian legal digests, as he aimed to administer the subcontinent through the application of its own legal system. At this stage, European scholars depended on Indian pandits to learn Sanskrit and translate texts into English. According to Kopf (1969: 5), these dynamics originated a "double-sided acculturation"[47] between European intellectuals and their Sanskrit teachers, particularly in Bengal. Many European scholars established stable relationships with their tutors, thus creating space for a 'cultural exchange' between Indians and Britishers. However, the power imbalance between colonialists and the colonized prevented the conditions for an encounter between equals. For instance, the Asiatic Society—devoted to the study of Hinduism and Hindu texts—did not allow membership to Indians and

[46] Nonetheless, sentimental expressions of fascination for India persisted in groups such as the Theosophical Society (1875), see sub-chapter 3.2.3.
[47] E. A. Hoebel (1958: 643) defines 'acculturation' as a "process of interaction between two societies by which the culture of the society in subordinate position is drastically modified to conform to the culture of the dominant society."

non-Europeans until 1829,[48] which means that for the first forty-five years of activity, Indian scholars—the very teachers of the first Indologists—were not given an institutional voice in this context. Additionally, it became common knowledge that Indian *brāhmaṇs* were either incapable of grasping the true meaning of their ancient texts, the *Vedas*, or they deliberately shared a distorted version of their writings to uphold their elite position over others, who remained in what was perceived as 'ignorance' steeped in 'superstitious' beliefs. Still, the fact that the first Indologists depended on pandits to learn Sanskrit implied that early Indology was primarily the prerogative of the British, whose stay in India was due to or facilitated by the East India Company. Among these, the most distinguished scholars included William Jones (1746–1794), Henry Thomas Colebrook (1765–1837), Charles Wilkins (1749–1836), Horace Hayman Wilson (1786–1860), and John Muir (1810–1882).

The pioneering Indological works resulting from the collaboration of Indian and English scholars led to the publication of translations from Sanskrit into English, as well as of Sanskrit grammars and dictionaries. William Jones translated the legal digests of Manu, *Institutes of Hindu law*, as well as the *Abhijñānaśākuntala,* and the *Gītagovinda.*[49] Charles Wilkins translated the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785) and the *Hitopadeśa* into English, and in 1808, he published a *Grammar of the Sanskrita Language*. Wilson was the first to engage in an English translation of the *Ṛg Veda*; in 1813, he translated Kalidasa's *Meghadūta*, and in 1819, he compiled his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. The works of these early Indologists ensured that Sanskrit grammars and dictionaries were accessible in Europe. The availability of Sanskrit learning resources outside India marked the beginning of a new era in Sanskrit studies, where 'Western' scholars no longer relied on the pandits' educational intervention. As a result, Indology emerged as a distinct discipline, separate from India's geographical boundaries, and European scholars, such as Rudolf Roth and Theodor Goldstücker, declared their autonomy in the study of Sanskrit. Yet, Hanneder (2015: 51) notices that Sanskrit's "street credibility," even among European Indologists, was generally achieved only after having been to India.

The study of Sanskrit, and more importantly for this case study, the study of Vedic Sanskrit, was grounded in the application of comparative philology based on William Jones' Aryan theory. The origin of this methodology is commonly attributed to Franz Bopp and his study of the conjugation system in Indo-European languages, the *Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache*[50] (1816), and his *Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrits* (1833). Trautmann (1997: 132) notes that although all European scholars contributed to the growth of this discipline, the German academy maintained a leading role in delineating the cornerstones of Indo-European comparative philology. Among this second generation of Indologists are Theodor Goldstücker (1821–1872), Rudolf Roth (1821–1895), and Max Müller (1823–1900).

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[48] One of the first Indian members of the Asiatic Society was Rabindranath Tagore.
[49] William Jones avoided the publication of a few sections of the *Gītagovinda* because of their suggestive contents.
[50] According to Schwab, this was "the first work in which William Jones's lucky intuition became a method." (Schwab 1984: 178, cited in Masuzawa 2005: 156).

These first two chapters in the history of Sanskrit studies reflect a strong interest in Hindu textual traditions and, more broadly, in ancient Indian cultures—though the scholars' perspective largely remains one of cultural superiority. However, the initial phase of 'Indomania' was succeeded by one marked by 'Indophobia,' which was characterized by the intention to replace Indian culture with English culture. Trautmann (1997: 99) theorized a planned transformation of 18th-century 'Indomania' into 19th-century 'Indophobia.' The former arose from the 'inclusive Eurocentrism' of the Enlightenment period and corresponded to the East India Company rule, while the latter stemmed from the 'exclusive Eurocentrism' of the 19th century and coincided with the official annexation of the subcontinent to the British Empire. Thus, 19th-century scholars 'suffering' from 'Indophobia,' otherwise called 'Anglicists,' disdained the entirety of Indian culture, both ancient and modern, while resenting European 'Indomania.' Trautmann (1997: 99) argues that Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism consciously "killed off" 'Indomania' and replaced it with 'Indophobia.' The most notable speakers of this trend were Charles Grant (1746–1823), James Mill (1773–1836), and Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859). As these scholars were active during the time of Svāmī Dayānanda and their works remained relevant at the time of Svāmī Karapātrī, I now provide a brief account of the most significant aspects of their scholarship for a better understanding of the context in which Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Dayānanda operated.

In his *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (2013 [1797]), Charles Grant displayed an aggressive policy of anglicization and evangelization of India, contrasting with earlier policies (in particular, that of Warren Hastings), which maintained a certain consideration for the Indian laws, customs, and traditions (Trautmann 1997: 101). Trautmann underlines that Grant's relevance in the colonial policy of Imperial India was "immense," as his views remained prominent in British rule until Independence (Trautmann 1997: 101; Embree 1962: 157). Grant, who belonged to the school of the Scottish Enlightenment and was heavily influenced by the thought of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832, the founder of Utilitarianism), wanted English culture, religion, art, philosophy, and language to be taught to the Indians, and to replace Indian cultures with the English one. In contrast to earlier Indologists, Grant argued that there was nothing worth saving in the Indian civilization and that the replacement of Indian culture with European culture was the most convenient choice for the British Empire:

> It has suited the views of some philosophers to represent that people as amiable and respectable; and a few late travellers have chosen rather to place some softer traits of their characters in an engaging light, than to give a just delineation of the whole. The generality, however, of those who have written concerning Hindostan, appear to have concurred in affirming what foreign residents there have as generally thought, nay, what the natives themselves freely acknowledge of each other, that they are a people exceedingly depraved. […] they exhibit human nature in a very degraded humiliating state, and are at once, objects of disesteem and commiseration (Grant 2013 [1797]: 43).
>
> The true cure of darkness, is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The

> communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied, it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us (Grant 2013 [1797]: 148).

The *History of British India* (1820 [1817]) by James Mill (1773–1836) gained significance in India and Europe and was adopted as the primary history textbook for the servants of the East India Company. In his work, Mill assigned no value to modern or ancient India and gave little consideration to the efforts of the first Indologists, who, often driven by—in his view, inappropriate—curiosity regarding ancient India, collected information and facts on the subjugated people, 'without connecting the dots.' In contrast, he portrayed himself as a European philosopher capable of drawing an organic perspective on India's history and evolutionary journey. It is worth noting that James Mill not only never traveled to India but also never learned any South Asian language. Yet, he wrote:

> As soon as every thing of importance is expressed in writing, a man who is duly qualified may obtain more knowledge of India in one year in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of the longest life, by the use of his eyes and ears in India (Mill 1820 [1817]: xxii).

In his work, Mill remained silent about the Indo-Aryan theory while planning "to ascertain the true state of the Hindus in the scale of civilization" according to utilitarian principles (Trautmann 1997: 121). The scholar concluded that India required the implementation of a civilizing project aimed at freeing it from 'immorality' and 'superstition' and leading it toward the 'right' evolutionary path. This task was assumed by the British Empire—a very appealing justification for colonial domination.[51]

Following the works of Grant and Mill, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) planned to establish policies for the education and modernization of India. Macaulay intended to create an elite group of Indians educated in English schools, sharing English tastes, opinions, and morals, and willing to shape the minds of their fellow citizens to introduce India's population into the 'modern world.' Macaulay's "theory of education was based on the "filtration" of ideas and patterns of life from the apex of the educational pyramid [the Indians educated in the English schools] to its very base and from there spreading ever laterally into the population at large" (Heimsath 1975: 366).[52] Thus, the thoughts and programs of the Anglicists not only provided a theoretical justification for colonial power but also revealed pretenses of cultural superiority, much deeper than those of the Indologists, and a willingness to flatten the subcontinent's diversity and transform India into a mere province of the British Empire.

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[51] Although I mentioned that the Anglicists had a certain contempt for the work of the Indologists, I didn't mention that the Indologists also despised the Anglicist attitudes. For instance, referring to Mill's evaluation of the subcontinent and its civilization, Wilson said, "its tendency is evil" (see Trautmann 1997: 118).

[52] Macaulay's plan remained a primary source of concern for Svāmī Karapātrī, who thus established several traditional Hindu schools (*gurukulas*) based on the *guruśiṣyaparamparā* model. Similarly, Svāmī Dayānanda also opted for an Indian schooling system.

In the following subchapters, I elaborate on the similarities between European scholarship and the thought of Svāmī Dayānanda, thereby suggesting an important connection between the two.

4.2 Vedic Religion vs. Modern Hinduism

I already mentioned that several 18th- and 19th-century European scholars share with Svāmī Dayānanda the assumption of a hiatus between 'Vedic' and 'modern Hinduism.'[53] Thus, the first Indologists directed their attention to the Indian past while they overlooked its contemporary culture. The first modern European contacts with the subcontinent generated confidence that 'Hinduism' concealed a 'natural light' attributable to its putative shared origin with Christianity (Halbfass 1990: 48). Since the 16th century when the first Portuguese landed on the shores of the subcontinent, there was the common hope to find in the religion of the Hindus subjugated by Mughal power traces of an ancient form of Christianity (Lach 1965: 401).[54] Exponents of the Enlightenment and Romanticism periods revealed a tendency to perceive Asia as harboring a pristine form of religion. For instance, in 1760, Voltaire (1694–1778) concluded that the ancient religion of the Hindus was the oldest and purest form of all religions.[55] August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845), Professor of Indology at Bonn University, believed that the cradle of humanity was located in India, although he later reallocated it to Mesopotamia.

The tendency to discern similar features between ancient India and Europe emerged prominently when William Jones (1746–1794) discovered the similarities among Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, and Latin, and postulated the Indo-Aryan language theory:[56]

> The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to

[53] Although this was the leading scholarly theory, there were also other perspectives. For instance, Karl Friedrich Geldner (1852–1929) and Richard Pischel (1849–1908) argued against the idea of a pristine Indian religion. According to their analysis, Vedic people had all the 'weaknesses' and 'vices' of later Hindus (Hanneder 2015: 56). Although this position shows that there were differences and controversies among Indologists, the thought of Geldner and Pischel comes too late to have interested Svāmī Dayānanda.

[54] This idea might come from the notion that Saint Thomas reached India in the 1st century CE to spread the gospel; there are Christian communities in Kerala tracing their origin to the evangelical activity of Saint Thomas.

[55] Voltaire's knowledge of India was mainly based on a French translation of the *Ezourvedam*, allegedly a lost *Veda*, that was in truth a forgery composed by Jesuit missionaries to help them in the spreading of the gospel (see also p. 67).

[56] Claiming a common origin with ancient India not only implied recognizing a certain degree of sophistication in an otherwise non-European people, but also empowered colonial authorities to 're-educate' Indians in the 'Aryan way of life' and to portray British and European cultures as models to emulate.

> have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists (Jones 2013 [1786]: 34).

William Jones focused on outlining a world history centered on the shared origins of the Indo-Aryan people, supported by Hindu and Biblical myths. For instance, he acknowledged the myth of the Tower of Babel as proof of an ancient kinship between Europe and India. He thus identified the Indo-Aryans with the Biblical people, who lived in harmony, shared the same monotheistic belief—essentially Christianity—and communicated in the same language prior to their scattering.[57] Jones also traced a version of the story of Biblical Noah in the *Bhagavāta Purāṇa*, thus not only assuming a shared world history but also confirming the authority of the Bible, which is more recent than the *Vedas*. For Jones, the ancient Hindu civilization was the long-lost brother of Europe and was therefore worthy of high esteem. In his view, even Pythagoras and Plato derived much of their philosophy[58] from Indian 'wisdom,' especially from Ādvaita Vedānta (Kopf 1969: 38). Jones even came to write that the Hindu concept of transmigration was more 'logical' than the Christian doctrine of "punishment and pain" (Mukherjee 1964: 44–45). Similarly, Max Müller wrote:

> One thing is certain: there is nothing more ancient and primitive, not only in India but in the whole Aryan world, than the hymns of the Rig-Veda. So far as we are Aryans in language that is in thought, so far the Rig-Veda is our own most ancient book (Müller 1879: 147).

However, these examples should not lead one to believe that these scholars considered ancient Hindu civilization superior to European culture. The scholarly interest in ancient India was largely focused on uncovering the early evolutionary stages of European culture. Consequently, Vedic society was viewed as a rural and primitive stage in the development of 'Western' civilization. For Jones, the most outstanding achievement of humankind was the British constitution (Mukherjee 1964: 46), and

> […] though we cannot agree […] that "the *Asiaticks* are born to be slaves," yet the *Athenian* poet seems perfectly in the right when he represents Europe as a *sovereign Princess* and *Asia* as *her Handmaid* […] and, although we must be conscious of our superior advancement in all kinds of useful knowledge, yet we ought not therefore to contemn the people of *Asia* […] reason and taste are the grand prerogatives of European minds (Jones (2013 [1785]: 12–13).

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[57] Svāmī Dayānanda referred to the myth of the Tower of Babel, without acknowledging Jones' theory, and simply arguing that this episode proved that the "God of the Christians" confounded the language of people out of jealousy, pairing such an act with that of a devil, rather than of God (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 459).

[58] Jones even compared ancient Greece with ancient Hindu civilization: "To what shall I compare my literary pursuits in India? Suppose Greek literature to be known in modern Greece only and there be still worshippers of Jupiter and Apollo; suppose Greece to have been conquered successively by Goths, Huns, Vanduls, Tartars and lastly by the English; then suppose a court of judicature to be established by the British Parliament in Athens and an inquisitive Englishman to be one of the judges; suppose him to learn Greek there which none of the countrymen knew and to read Homer, Pindar, Plato which no other European had ever heard of. Such am I in this country; substituting Sanscrit for Greek and the Brahmins for the priests of Jupiter and Valimin, Vyasa and Calidasa or Homer, Plato and Pindar" (Letter to George John 23.08.1787, cited in Mukherjee 1964: 42–43).

All in all, Jones's relatively positive interest in India, like that of many of his colleagues, such as Rudolf Roth, Max Müller, and H.T. Colebrooke, was exquisitely directed toward the ancient Hindu civilizations, viz. Vedic India. Instead, he regarded contemporary India as a degraded version of its former cultural heritage. In his view, the Indo-Aryan flocks scattering from the Tower of Babel and migrating to the subcontinent soon lost their connection to their origins; they lost the ability to understand their scriptures, the *Vedas*, which held the essence of a primordial monotheism, and consequently fell into superstitious beliefs and false doctrines.

> […] how degenerate and abased so ever the Hindus may now appear, that in some early age they were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government; wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge (Jones 1788: 421, cited in Kopf 1969: 39).

H.T. Colebrooke, who served as Professor of Sanskrit at the College in Fort William, Calcutta, from 1800, argued that ancient Hindu civilization was distinctly different from modern India. He was also of the opinion that the origin of human history was to be located in Asia (Colebrooke 1837: 1–2) and that the Vedic society was once florid and built on egalitarian values; men were strong and indulged in beef eating and did not engage in superstitious practices.[59] On the contrary, modern India was the emblem of decadence, and 'modern Hinduism' was a corrupted form of the ancient beliefs testified in the *Vedas*.

Scholars such as Theodor Goldstücker, Rudolf Roth, and Louis Jacolliot agreed that the cause of the hiatus between ancient and modern India was to be located in the 'dishonest' conduct of the *brāhmaṇs*. According to this perspective, the *brāhmaṇs* retained their exclusive right to the *Vedas*, thereby exerting their influence over laypeople to uphold their privileged status. The *brāhmaṇs* were thus accused of concealing the true Vedic meanings and promoting the production of post-Vedic literature that fostered superstitious beliefs, particularly the practice of icon worship, which was viewed as a cause and effect of the 'degeneration' of contemporary India. In this regard, Louis Jacolliot wrote:

> The mass of Hindoos of the present day have but a feeble impression of their ancient worship, and the Brahmins, after having despotically perverted the loftiest and purest principles. Have in their turn sunk into the moral degradation which they fostered for the maintenance of their own authority. When invasions had ruined their political power, they took refuge in their temples, multiplied feasts and ceremonies, and emulated each other in pomp and splendor to preserve their religious prestige (Jacolliot 1870–1887: 272).

According to Theodor Goldstücker (1821–1872), the decline of the Vedic religion resembled that of Christianity in Europe. The Roman Catholic Church had deviated from the teachings of the Bible until Martin Luther (1483–1546) and the Protestant Reformation rescued the Bible from the 'cloak' of the Catholic priesthood. This 'liberation' was achieved through the

[59] According to Kopf (1969: 41), Colebrooke's portrayal of ancient India (Aryan culture) was quite romanticized. Kopf thus lists Colebrooke among the first exponents of Neo-Hinduism, arguing that his scholarship can be seen as the first proper formulation of a golden age of the so-called Indian Renaissance.

printing of the holy texts and their circulation among the people, thus inaugurating an era of free examination of the 'holy word.' Similarly, Goldstücker claimed that over the centuries, the *brāhmaṇs* had monopolized the *Vedas* and established their hegemony through conveniently biased exegeses. In Goldstücker's view, it was necessary to challenge the brāhmaṇs' authority and make the *Vedas* accessible to the public to uncover their 'original' meanings and free people from blind compliance and superstition. In his *Inspired Writings of Hinduism*, Goldstücker wrote:

> When, by priestcraft and ignorance, a nation has lost itself so far as to look upon writings like these [Purāṇas…][60] as divinely inspired, there is but one conclusion to be drawn: it has arrived at the turning point, and we anxiously pause to see which way it will direct its steps. […] All barriers to religious imposition having broken down since the modern Puranas were received by the masses as the source of their faith, sects have sprung up which not merely endanger religion, but society itself; tenets have been propounded, which are an insult to the human mind; practices have been introduced, which must fill every true Hindu with confusion and shame […] But what we do hold is, that all the activity of that learned portion will not avert the danger which threatens the future destiny of Hinduism, unless it boldly grapples with the very root of the disease. The causes of the gradual degeneracy of Hinduism, are, indeed, not different from those to which other religions are subject, when allowed to grow in the dark. In Europe, religious depravity received its check when the art of printing allowed the light of publicity to enter into the book whence her nations derive their faith; and no other means will check it in India than the admission of the masses to that original book which is always on their lips, but which now is the monopoly of that infinitesimal fraction of the Brahminical caste able to understand its sense; and admission, also, to that other and important literature which has at all periods of Hinduism striven to prove to the people that their real faith is neither founded on the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, nor on the Puranas, but on the Rigveda hymns (Goldstücker 1952 [1864]: 108–109).

The evaluation of ancient and modern India conducted by early Indologists and Svāmī Dayānanda seems to bear several resemblances. Certainly, Svāmī Dayānanda's portrayal of the Indian past was more flattering than that constructed by European scholars. Although early Indologists viewed ancient India as the cradle of human civilization, they also believed, as I mentioned earlier, that the Vedic civilization marked the start of an evolutionary journey leading to modern Europe. In contrast, Svāmī Dayānanda depicted Vedic India as the most powerful and advanced culture in history, at the peak of every conceivable evolutionary scale.

Svāmī Dayānanda shared the view of a hiatus between ancient and modern India and the understanding that the latter was a degenerated version of the former. Yet, his characterization of ancient India evidently took on different nuances than the Indological

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[60] The contempt for modern India went along with the contempt for post-Vedic literature. The *Purāṇas* were a primary target for European scholars as they fostered devotion to many gods and depicted apparent sexual licentiousness among them. Svāmī Dayānanda shared this position (see subchapter 4.3).

ones. Svāmī Dayānanda identified the region named 'Tribisthapa,' which corresponds to modern Tibet, as the cradle of Vedic civilization, and posited that from here the Aryans descended into the subcontinent. In Svāmī Dayānanda's view, until about 5000 years ago, there was no religion on earth other than the Vedic religion, and the Aryans were the lords of the entire world. Eventually, from here, all sciences, arts, and customs spread across the globe (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 290–293).[61]

Svāmī Dayānanda described the Vedic age as a Golden Era. He posited that, during this phase, the Hindus lived according to the 'original' precepts of the *Vedas*, which enabled them to achieve high standards. The *Vedas* were not just repositories of the 'true' monotheist religion but also a crystallized revelation containing the entirety of possible human knowledge. They were also books of science and technology, and the key to development. In the *Vedas*, Svāmī Dayānanda discovered the telegraph, automatic fans, fast cars, and planes:[62]

> You should make the telegraphy apparatus of a pure white metal which is a good conductor of electricity possessing the qualities of fire and it should be charged with electricity. It should possess the qualities of the *Ashvins*. It has many excellent properties and most of the learned put it to their use. In military operations of the State it is a source of strength which is most difficult to overcome. It should be employed most frequently in all things. It possesses this property that when it is struck it transmits the current and brings success in all great and good undertakings. It is most helpful in defeating the opposing forces of the enemy and in securing victory to home forces. It helps forward the operations of human armies. Like the sun it brings to light events happenings at great distances. Becoming well versed in the use of the *Ashvins*, the terrestrial substances and electricity, always make use of the the telegraphy apparatus (*ṚV* 1.119.10, *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 201).[63]
>
> […] there lived some very clever mechanicians who […] had constructed a machine resembling a horse in shape that could traverse 27½ kosas or about 55 miles an hour on land as well as in air. Another mechanician had invented a fan that gave plenty of air and worked automatically (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 312).
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> Cars should be constructed for traversing distances upon land, water and in the upper region. May our ships be as good as those of the wise who live by making sea voyages. May we employ water and fire in our cars as the wise do in theirs. All men should

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[61] Svāmī Dayānanda noted that even Jacolliot and Darashikoh agreed with him on the greatness of ancient India. In the 1908 translation of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda wrongly refers to Goldstücker as the author of *Bible in India* (1870–1887). I assume this to be a mistake of the translator, as in other editions of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* Jacolliot is rightly indicated as the author of the work.

[62] In these regards, see Mishra (2021).

[63] *ṚV* 1.119.10: *yuvam pedave puruvāram aśvinā spṛdhāṃ śvetaṃ tarutāraṃ duvasyathaḥ| śaryair abhidyum pṛtanāsu duṣṭaraṃ carkṛtyam indram iva carṣaṇīsahaṃ*|| "A horse did ye provide for Pedu, excellent, white, O ye Aṣvins, conqueror of combatants, Invincible in war by arrows, seeking heaven worthy of fame, like Indra, vanquisher of men" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1920: 163).

> endeavour to construct such cars for crossing and recrossing the oceans, etc." (*ṚV 1.46.7*, *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 199).[64]
>
> O men! When the swift moving horse, i.e., fires are lighted, under vessels containing water, with fuel, wood, etc., and are able to move the machinery then they make the cars made of earthly substances leap up into the bright firmament, i.e., carry them up (when they get up full steam and move rapidly they produce happiness just as the land irrigated by water produces various objects for the enjoyment of men (*ṚV* 2.3.23.1, *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 18, 199–200).[65]

The dissonances between Vedic and modern India validated Svāmī Dayānanda's interventionist approach. Svāmī Dayānanda aimed to retrieve the 'original' precepts of the *Vedas* and propagate them in India to restore the Vedic 'way of living,' which implied setting aside 'superstitious' practices such as icon worship. He then identified the Mahābhārata 'world war' as the starting point of India's decline:

> When very learned men, kings, emperors, sages and philosophers were killed on the battle field of Kuruksetra, or otherwise died during the Great War, knowledge declined and decayed in Aryavarta and with it disappeared the religion of the Veda (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 294).

Thus, according to Svāmī Dayānanda's analysis, after the Mahābhārata war, the *brāhmaṇs* grew ignorant, ceased learning the *Vedas* with their meanings, and studied only what was necessary to maintain their power over the rest of society. They began living in luxury, provided with every good by their uneducated disciples who, ignorant of Sanskrit, could not read the wonders of their past in the *Vedas* and become aware of their priests' corruption. Thus, the *brāhmaṇs*, whom Svāmī Dayānanda refers to as "popes" with explicit reference to the discourses of Protestantism,[66] consciously concealed Vedic religion and facilitated the spread of superstitious practices, thereby safeguarding their role in society. Svāmī Dayānanda proposed that Indian redemption could be achieved by abandoning the practices of 'modern Hinduism,' promoting the 'original' interpretations of the *Vedas*, dismantling Brahmanical systems, and reviving the traditional 'Vedic way of life.'

It may seem like a stretch to assert that Svāmī Dayānanda's depiction of a Vedic Golden Era, in contrast to a debased modern India, was influenced by European scholarship. Indeed, the Hindu theory of cyclic time (*yugas*) suggests a downward succession of eras, from the golden age to the iron age, which is the present Kali Age. The *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* portrays the Kali Age as a period characterized by the dominance of *śūdras* and *mlecchas*

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[64] *ṚV 1.46.7*: *ā no nāvā matīnāṃ yātam pārāya gantave yuñjāthām aśvinā ratham||* "Come in the ship of these our hymns to bear you to the hither shore: O Aṣvins, harness ye the car" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1920: 63).
[65] *ṚV 1.164.47*: *kṛṣṇam niyānaṃ harayaḥ suparṇāḥ apo vasānā divam ut patanti| ta āvavṛtran sadanād ṛtasyād id ghṛtena pṛthivī vy udyate||* "Dark the descent: the birds are golden-coloured; up to the heaven they fly robed in the waters. Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their fatness" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1920: 227).
[66] Similarly, in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda wrote: "[…] the nominal Brahmins act just like the popes of Rome" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 295).

(foreigners), diminished life expectancy, and increased occurrences of disease, famine, and floods. It also emphasizes the relaxation of sexual taboos and the acceptance of inter-caste marriages, leading to violations of traditional conduct rules (see Kane 1993 Vol. 3: 892–895). These are all 'signs' that Svāmī Dayānanda observed in contemporary India. Why, then, attempt to trace a link between European intellectuals and Svāmī Dayānanda on this matter? There is an essential ontological difference between Svāmī Dayānanda's characterization of cyclical time and the traditional *yuga* theory. The advancement—and consequently degeneration—of the *yugas* is traditionally seen as an inexorable process independent of human agency.[67] In contrast, Svāmī Dayānanda attributed the responsibility for a dark age solely to humanity (see Jordens 1998: 71). Therefore, he believed that the succession of *yugas* is not an inevitable process separate from human actions, but rather a direct result of those actions. This means that the Golden Age could be brought back through human effort; Svāmī Dayānanda referred to this project as the "future regeneration of Aryavarta," or the "recapturing of the conditions of that ancient time" (Jordens 1998: 71). In particular, the assumption that the degeneration of Vedic religion was a result of a historical event (the Mahābhārata war) and the subsequent loss of the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas* ultimately suggested that people had the agency to restore the Vedic Golden Age (with the help of Svāmī Dayānanda).

In sum, although Svāmī Dayānanda likely borrowed elements from Hindu textual traditions in his depiction of a Golden Vedic Era and a Kali Age, his characterization of Vedic and modern Hinduism seems closer to European scholarship than to 'traditional' *yuga* theories. In fact, like H. H. Wilson, H. T. Colebrooke, Theodor Goldstücker, Max Müller, Rudolf Roth, and Louis Jacolliot, Svāmī Dayānanda displayed an interventionist character; he sought to retrieve the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, expose the *brāhmaṇs* as frauds, steer the population away from 'superstition,' and guide them toward progress. This process involved rejecting icon worship and embracing a single, monotheistic God. In my opinion, early Indologists and Svāmī Dayānanda generally shared an interventionist character and goals. However, it is important to note that Svāmī Dayānanda aimed to return to an ancient era of splendor instead of pursuing a social evolutionary path influenced by Europe and Christianity.

4.3 Vedic Exegesis

As I just mentioned, for several European scholars and Svāmī Dayānanda, the degraded condition of modern India was to be blamed on the *brāhmaṇs* monopolizing access to the *Vedas*, the written testimony of ancient Aryan civilization. As a result, the *Vedas* became a central focus of research for Indologists and Svāmī Dayānanda as they explored the origins of the Indo-Aryan people. Additionally, Jones' postulation of the Indo-Aryan theory sparked interest among European scholars in Vedic studies and fostered a sense of ancestral rights, as

[67] In this regard, Jordens (1998: 70) observes that the *Mahābhārata* admits the possibility of the instauration of a Golden Era independently of the cycle's progress. A ruling king observing *dharma* could theoretically bring about a non-cyclical Golden Era; however, this seems to be an exception to the rule.

well as a potential moral obligation, to explore their origins in the *Vedas*. Rudolf Roth believed that the *Ṛg Veda* depicted a society with values more similar to those of Europe than to modern India, and that in the *Vedas*, there were traces of "high spiritual endowments that belong of right to the Indo-European family of nations, which have paced it foremost in the world's history" (Roth 1853: 347, cited in Tull 1991: 39–40). According to Whitney,

> The civil constitution, the religious rites, the mythologic fancies, the manners and customs, which they depict, have a peculiarly original and primitive aspect, seeming to exhibit a far nearer likeness to what once belonged to the whole Indo-European family than is anywhere else to be attained. The Vedas appear rather like an Indo-European than an Indian record; they are the property rather of the whole family than of a single branch (Whitney 2013 [1867]: 227).

Thus, based on a certain ancestral right and intellectual compatibility, European scholars believed they were more qualified than modern Indians to understand the meanings of the *Vedas*. European scholars generally considered that their intellectual capabilities were substantially more refined than those of modern Indians, whom they viewed as living in a 'numb' society. In this regard, Tull notices that the first Indologists trusted that "their vision was not, like that of the Hindus, obfuscated by the myths, rites, and mumbo-jumbo of an all-powerful priestly caste, but was focused through their "scientific" understanding of the Vedic language itself" (Tull 1991: 40). Consequently, the role of European scholars went beyond mere intellectual curiosity and involved an interventionist approach, as they aimed to share their findings with modern Hindus to make them give up their 'modern' practices and beliefs. Colebrooke argued that European researchers were to study the subcontinent's history in order to chart a course for Hindus to regain their former prosperity. Similarly, Theodor Goldstücker felt the moral imperative of 'liberating' the Hindus from their oblivion. The German Indologist argued not only for a *Klärung*, or clarification of the Hindu texts, but also for an *Aufklärung*, or enlightenment—an elucidation of the *Vedas* for the Hindus (Goldstücker 1952 [1864]). The term *Aufklärung* carries a specific connotation of intellectual awakening initiated by a superior towards a subordinate—someone who enlightens others from a position of authority.[68] Goldstücker writes:

> If those intelligent Hindus of whom we are speaking have the will and the energy to throw open that book, and the literature connected with it, to the people at large, without caring for the trammels imposed on caste by the politicians of late ages, we have no misgivings as to the new vitality which they will impart to its decaying life (Goldstücker 1952 [1864]: 109).

In tune with the idea of a hiatus between ancient and modern India and the depreciation of the latter, European scholars evaluated commentarial Vedic textual traditions and later compositions like the *Purāṇas* and the *Itihāsas*—texts testifying to the existence of many gods—as the intellectual production of a spoiled society unable to mirror Vedic principles.

[68] The use of this term also likely derives from Kant's essay titled "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (1784). In this work, Kant proposes that people should muster the courage to utilize their own reasoning and free themselves from imposed authorities.

According to several European scholars, Hindu traditional commentaries frequently displayed irrational interpretations of the *Vedas*. For instance, concerning the *Brāhmaṇas,* Max Müller wrote:

> These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots, and the raving of madmen (Müller 1860: 389).

Wilson, who valued Vedic commentarial traditions more than his other colleagues,[69] argued that Europeans had a more rational approach to the Vedic exegesis. Indological studies, through the application of comparative linguistics in Vedic exegesis, challenged the status of revelation of the *Vedas*, their non-human origin (*apauruṣeya*), and the traditional interpretations contained in the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Nirukta*, and the commentaries of Sāyaṇa, Uvaṭa, and Mahīdhara. European scholars shared the understanding that the meanings of the *Vedas*, as intended by their compilers, were substantially different from the meanings handed down by traditional commentary traditions.[70]

Max Müller posited the existence of 'original' and 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas*. He described the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas* as the "simple truth" of the *ṛṣis* embedded in the hymns, namely, the meanings of the *Vedas* as intended by their compilers. In contrast, he defined the 'traditional' meanings as those handed down by textual traditions. Although Max Müller believed that these two types of meanings may sometimes coincide (especially in correspondence of simple and linear Vedic passages), the 'traditional' meanings generally represented the "gradual corruption of simple truth into hierarchical dogmatism and philosophical hallucination."[71]

> […] in the Veda, as in other works, handed down to us from a very remote antiquity, the sharp edges of primitive thought, the delicate features of a young language, the fresh hue of unconscious poetry, have been washed away by the successive waves of what we call *tradition*, whether we look upon it as a principle of growth or decay. To restore the primitive outlines of the Vaidik period of thought will be a work of great difficulty (Müller 1856 [1849]: vii-viii).

Max Müller argued that Sāyaṇa had been heavily misled by earlier commentarial traditions, particularly the *Nirukta* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. Accordingly, although Sāyaṇa was an undisputed authority for the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas*, the interpretation of the

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[69] Otto Böhtlingk (1815–1904) and Rudolph Roth (1821–1895), the compilers of the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (1855–75), acknowledged the scholarship of Wilson as a pillar of early Indology, but at the same time criticized his appreciation of Sāyaṇa.

[70] Yet, not every Indologist shared the same opinion. In his *Indien für die Inder*, Hanneder (2015) shows that European scholars disagreed in many ways on how to approach the Vedic texts; one major discussion revolved around the appreciation or depreciation of Sāyaṇa's work.

[71] In contrast, in his article *A Theory of Philological Practice in Early Modern India*, Pollock (2024) argues that a text has no singular and unique truth. He thus defines the meaning of a text as threefold: "a work's meaning for its original audience; its meaning for the many subsequent generations of its traditional readers; its meaning for us today. These meanings, I have long argued, are all are equally true, however irreconcilable with each other they may be, since meaning will always be meaning for different readers and cannot be reduced to any one of them. We must strive, difficult though it will be, to hold these three truths in balance, for it is only in their combination that" (Pollock 2024: 113–114).

'original' meanings was the prerogative of European scholars who, by applying philological analysis, cleansed the *Vedas* of later 'polluting' and 'traditional' interpretations. According to this view, the period when the *Nirukta* and other auxiliary literature were composed was already marked by 'rampant polytheism' and 'fictional etymology.' Thus, the 'errors' of the commentators were passed down through the textual traditions and eventually replaced the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*. Accordingly, Max Müller postulated the existence of an 'original' and therefore 'unique' and 'crystallized' meaning of the Hindu revelation, as opposed to the 'traditional' ones.[72]

> As the authors of the Bráhmaṇas were blinded by theology, the authors of the still later Niruktas, were deceived by etymological fictions, and both conspired to mislead by their authority later and more sensible commentators, such as Sáyaṇa. Where Sâyana has no authority to mislead him, his commentary is at all events rational; but still his scholastic notions would never allow him to accept the free interpretation which a comparative study of these venerable documents forces upon the unprejudiced scholar. We must therefore discover ourselves the real vestiges of these ancient poets; and if we follow them cautiously, we shall find that with some effort we are still able to walk in their footsteps (Müller 1856 [1849]: viii-ix).

Rudolf Roth noted that Sāyaṇa lacked "freedom of judgment and a greater breadth of view and of historical intuitions" (see Miur 1866: 308). For Roth, Indian commentators could not be held as a guideline (*Richtschnur*) for a correct translation of the *Vedas* but only as one among other tools (*Hilfsmittel*) (Hanneder 2015: 53). Roth and Böhtlingk presented themselves as pioneers of Vedic exegesis by producing a Vedic index listing all occurrences of a certain number of words in the *Vedas*. They claimed that their work represented a valuable approach to Vedic exegesis, as it could establish the 'original' meanings of several Vedic words. In his *Aus Indien und Iran* (1899 [1886]), Oldenberg (1854–1920) praised German scholars for their ability to create '*Wissenschaft*,' the only subject capable of forming a science of interpretation based on objective philology. In Oldenberg's opinion, German scholars had the best chances of retrieving the message of the *Vedas* because of their scholarly ability and consanguinity with the Aryan people, one that was perceived to be tighter than that of other Europeans (on the implications of this concept, see Grünendahl 2012). In contrast, he believed that modern Indians lacked the capacity to produce '*Wissenschaft*' and were therefore vulnerable to subjective and erroneous interpretations of the *Vedas*.

John Miur accused Sāyaṇa of inconsistency and unreliability, as he interpreted the same words found at different places in the *Vedas* with different meanings (Tull 1991: 38).[73]

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[72] Max Müller thus closed the 'space' of Vedic language, ultimately committing—in Ganguly's words—an act of "epistemic violence." In this regard, Ganguly (2018: 61) recounts an instance that illustrates how Max Müller sought to fixate a specific meaning on a Vedic term.

[73] From Muir's philological perspective, this meant that the commentators had interpreted rather than reported the Vedic meanings. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī argues that the meanings of the Vedic *mantras* are not based on the words composing them, but rather on their application sanctioned in the auxiliary texts. The *mantras* thus have multiple meanings, some of which cannot be grasped by a simple analysis of the text. In other words, for Svāmī Karapātrī, the correspondence of one word to one meaning is absurd in the Vedic context (see subchapter 10.1).

Similarly, later on, E. B. Cowell (1826–1902), the first professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University, claimed that Sāyaṇa's commentary was a danger to the development of Indological scholarship. He praised, by contrast, the work of the first Indologists, particularly the German ones, whom he regarded as pioneers in the codification of ancient Indian texts (Tull 1991: 38). On a similar note, Theodor Benfey (1809–1881) referred to Sāyaṇa as "schwachsinnigen Guru von Çṛingêri," the imbecile guru of Shringeri (Benfey 1877: 98).

Hanneder (2015: 60) notes that the quest for the 'original' meanings was pushed to its limits when the uncompromising application of etymology resulted in extremely literal translations, creating a *Verfremdungseffekt*.[74] In his view, the mere understanding of grammatical forms leading to vague concepts and general analogies could not deliver the meaning of a poem, which was rather the expression of culture and a world of ideas (Hanneder 2015: 55).[75] Horace Wilson maintained a certain regard for Indian commentarial tradition and the work of Sāyaṇa whom he said was "the safest guide through the intricacies and obscurities of the text" (Wilson 1854: xviii). In his view, Sāyaṇa was the best authority on the *Ṛg Veda*; however, as already mentioned, he observed that Europeans had a more rational approach to Vedic exegesis. Wilson spoke rather outside the chorus when he observed that the credibility of the philological analysis presupposed that manuscripts and various editions of Sanskrit texts were marked by accuracy and consistency. He argued that such precision was highly improbable, not only because there was no substantial proof that the compilers of the *Vedas* adhered to principles of consistency, but also because the presence of different compilers undermined the possibility of uniformity in the Vedic texts. This implied that the same words at different points in the texts did not necessarily have the same meaning (Tull 1991: 37). Similarly, Pischel and Geldner were skeptical about the possibility of explaining the *Vedas* based solely on philological analysis. They held that the *Vedas* were the product of the Indian mind and, therefore, not radically different from that of more recent Indian literature (Hanneder 2015). In their view, Hindu commentaries were likely to have explained the Vedic meanings better than Roth or Grassmann (the author of the *Wörterbuch zum Rig Veda*, see also footnote n. 75).

In his redaction of the critical edition of the *Ṛg Veda*, Max Müller included the commentary of Sāyaṇa.[76] In the *Preface* to the third volume of the first edition of the *Ṛg Veda*, Müller argued

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[74] "Es ist ein Wahn, zu glauben, daß durch das blosse Verständnis der grammatischen Form, durch die vagen Begriffe, welche die etymologische Zergliederung ergiebt, und durch die allgemeinen Analogieschlüsse der Sinn einer Dichtung aufgehellt wird, die der Ausdruck eines ganz eigenartigen Volksgeistes, einer völlig abgeschlossenen Cultur und Ideenwelt, vielfach fremder Sitten und Gebräuche ist" (Hanneder 2015: 60).

[75] Additionally, Hanneder reports that Geldner and Pischel lamented that, in the redaction of his Vedic dictionary, Grassmann followed principles of linguistics instead of philology. Geldner and Pischel posited that philology was the study of culture with the help of linguistic evidence, not the study of language alone. In their view, the "confusion" between linguistics and philology (as a science that did not base itself on linguistics only) had been "fatal" for the *Ṛg Veda*. The linguists—Hanneder explains—have completely detached the *Ṛg Veda* from the context of Indian literature and separated it from Indian antiquity. The grammatical and etymological dimensions of the Vedas became the primary focus of textual analysis, despite their occasional inability to yield results (Hanneder 2015: 55).

[76] Max Müller embarked on the enterprise of creating a critical edition of the *Ṛg Veda* comprehensive of Sāyaṇa's commentary under the patronage of the East India Company which kept him busy between 1849–1875. According to Tull (1991: 37), Müller's decision to include Sāyaṇa's commentary in his work was likely motivated

that the commentary of Sāyaṇa was necessary for a proper understanding of the *Vedas*. According to him, this had become the leading position among his colleagues after several academic controversies.[77] Following the line of thought of Adolphe Regnier (1855), Max Müller suggested that the right way to go about with the commentary of Sāyaṇa was to accept the commentator's reading as long as grammar and logic evidence could support it and to openly indicate when and why this was not the case and then give the preferable and 'correct' reading.

It thus appears that at this stage, European scholars engaged with the question of the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*. This Indological quest challenged the authority of century-old commentarial Hindu traditions that had 'always' accompanied the *Saṃhitās*. The interventionist nature of early Indology implied that the results of Vedic research needed to be communicated to Hindus, according to Goldstüker's principle of *Aufklärung*. It was then expected that once Hindus became aware of the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, they would realize the gap with the 'traditional' meanings and acknowledge that their trust in the *brāhmaṇs* had been misplaced. The next expected step was for India to follow the European lead and eventually embrace Christianity.

Thus, together with European scholars, Svāmī Dayānanda shared the postulation that the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* were substantially different from the 'original' ones. He also discarded most commentarial Hindu traditions and based his Vedic exegesis on a 'rational' and, in Svāmī Dayānanda's case, proto-philological analysis of the texts. At times, Svāmī Dayānanda appeared to emulate European philological analysis, albeit lacking the rigor of the discipline.[78] Theoretically, rational thinking played an important role for Svāmī Dayānanda, who posited that this was one of the criteria through which literature could be asserted as authoritative (see also subchapter 3.1.3). This ultimately meant that 'reason' was a criterion for establishing religious authority and, therefore, a tool for interpreting it. It followed that any text that seemed to lack basic elements of rationality and consistency could be amended. Likewise, early Indologists questioned the value of traditional literature and Vedic commentaries, asserting that these provided interpretations contrary to common sense. The understanding of a hiatus between ancient and modern India implied that post-Vedic literature was detached from the Vedic world and thus likely unconnected and unable to relate to it. Svāmī Dayānanda shared with Indologists like Goldstücker an interventionist approach, as he presented himself as a *deus ex machina* able to retrieve the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, as he believed that disclosing the 'true purport' of the *Vedas* was the only way to India's rectification. In his introduction to the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda

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by his desire to please Wilson, who had acted as a tutor to him since his arrival in the United Kingdom and had helped him secure funding for his research. According to Tull's analysis, Müller's choice did not stem from a sincere reverence for the Indian commentator but rather from the desire to please Wilson, who held Sāyaṇa's commentary in esteem and was in a position to recommend him as his successor for the Boden Professorship at Oxford. Ultimately, the professorship went to Monnier Williams.

[77] On that, Tull (1991: 38) claims that Max Müller must have pretended to be "deaf" to the ongoing Sāyaṇa controversy, when he depicted a united scholarly perspective and recognition—although with reserve—of the value of Sāyaṇa's commentary.

[78] For instance, see Svāmī Dayānanda's explanation of *ṚV1.119.10*, p. 57).

claimed to explain the Vedic *mantras* according to the ancient method of interpretation of the Aryan sages and seers; he then concluded:

> May, this attempt of mine, to destroy the blemished of modern commentaries and glosses which cast a slur upon and grossly misinterpret the Vedas and to bring to light their ancient and correct interpretation, be successful through the help of God (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 12–13).

I believe that Svāmī Dayānanda's focus on the *Vedas* could be influenced by European scholarship. The academic stance on Vedic commentarial traditions has somewhat undermined traditional scholarly work, thereby creating an opportunity for creating new interpretations. Given that the Vedic *mantras* are sometimes extremely cryptic and, therefore, outside the context of commentarial traditions, exceptionally malleable material, Svāmī Dayānanda may have considered the *Saṃhitās* fertile ground for free interpretation, a place where he could superimpose his program for authority purposes. Additionally, the *Vedas* represented the possibility of delineating a religion of the book, namely, one that could unite the Hindus under one creed and flag. Thus, Svāmī Dayānanda's effort to invalidate the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* may be viewed as an attempt to create space for his 'new' Vedic exegesis. Furthermore, many post-Vedic textual traditions emerged from different *saṃpradāyas* and 'sects,' thereby fostering social fragmentation and hindering national cohesiveness.

Until now, I have highlighted the similarities between European scholars and Svāmī Dayānanda; however, I must also point out that there were significant differences. As previously indicated, Svāmī Dayānanda sought to reinstate his version of a Vedic religion, which aimed to recover the social framework of the most progressive, evolved, and powerful nation ever known, Vedic India. He rebuked the idea that the *Vedas* were the composition of a pastoral people and instead argued that they were the testimony of the most progressive society. Additionally, Svāmī Dayānanda posited that the *Vedas* had no human author (*apauruṣeya*), were not located in time, and were revealed by God. In this regard, Svāmī Dayānanda wrote:

> […] It is evident that the opinion of European Prof. Max Müller, Wilson &c., that the Vedas are of human and not divine origin […] is rooted in error (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 11).

Thus, despite the similarities in thought, Svāmī Dayānanda did not praise the Indological Vedic research; instead, he mocked the European scholars. In the eleventh chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda ridiculed Max Müller and German Indology. He argued against the chatter that Sanskrit had spread in Germany and that "nobody in the whole wide world knows as much Sanskrit as Prof. Max Müller" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 293). It is not clear whether Svāmī Dayānanda was here exaggerating the rumors—though this seems likely; nevertheless, he asserted that Max Müller's command of Sanskrit was considerably limited. Furthermore, he argued that Max Müller could conduct his academic work on the *Ṛg Veda* only because he relied on the Vedic translations made by earlier Indian scholars (no additional details are provided). All in all, Svāmī Dayānanda invalidated Max Müller's scholarship

because he translated the word *bradhnm*[79] in *ṚV 1.6.1* as "horse." Svāmī Dayānanda argues that even Sāyaṇa[80] managed to give a better translation of the term when he referred to it as "sun," while the correct meaning is "Great." For Svāmī Dayānanda, proper knowledge of Sanskrit could be found only in India, or—as he called it—in the Āryāvarta:

> […] for, there is a proverb in Sanscrit that a castor-oil plant or a bush is considered to be a great tree in the country where there is no shrub to be seen.[81] Accordingly Sanscrit being not much found among the Europeans, the little knowledge of Sanscrit of the Germans and Prof. Max Müller is made a mountain of a whole-hill in Europe (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 293).

In conclusion, opening the gates to Vedic exegesis can be seen as an evolution towards the democratization and greater inclusivity of religion. Yet, as the authority and significance of the *Vedas* remained unchanged among the masses, the freedom of interpretation initiated by philology, combined with the pervasiveness of Vedic language—especially when taken outside the rigor of the subject—created opportunities for interpretations that exploited the authority of Vedic words for ulterior motives, above all, the nationalist one.[82] Indeed, Svāmī Dayānanda, whom I contend sought to emulate a creative form of philology, has come to be recognized as one of the forerunners of Hindu nationalism. This freedom in Vedic exegesis and the consequent superimposition of new meanings on the Vedic *mantras* is a primary target for Svāmī Karapātrī, which I address in chapters 6, 9, and 10.

4.4 Icon Worship

Among European scholars, a consistent element in the enunciation of discontinuity between Vedic and modern India was the moral condemnation of 'modern Hinduism' and its most distinctive practice, *mūrtipūja*, or icon worship. For the most part, it was argued that this practice was foreign to Vedic India and condemned as a token of polytheism and modern Hinduism. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter (see p. 51), the first European explorers aimed to trace elements of ancient Christianity within Hinduism, namely, traces of a 'true' monotheist creed. Even before the postulation of a common ancestry with India, European

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[79] *ṚV 1.6.1*: *yuñjanti braghnam aruṣaṃ carantaṃ pari tasthuṣaḥ| rocante rocanā divi||* "They who stand round him as he moves harness the bright, the ruddy Steed: The lights are shining in the sky" (*ṚV,* Griffith 1920: 7). See also *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 165–167.

[80] For Svāmī Dayānanda, saying that even Sāyaṇa is better than Max Müller in interpreting the *Vedas* constitutes a great offense against the German scholar; this reveals how little consideration Svāmī Dayānanda had for his Indian predecessor.

[81] The proverb in Sanskrit is: *nirastapādape deśa eraṇḍo 'pi drumāyate.*

[82] Similarly, Dodson (2007: 57) reports the perspective of an Ārya Samājī scholar, Guru Datta Vidyārthī, who had been a professor of science at the Government College in Lahore since the 1880s. In his article, "The Terminology of the Vedas and European Scholars" (1893), Vidyārthī endorsed departing from customary and traditionally accepted meanings of the Vedic *mantras*. Instead, he advocated revisiting the etymological method of the *Nirukta* (and other related texts), thereby unlocking the semantic possibilities presented by the very structure of Sanskrit itself. In doing so, he opened new avenues for rewriting the meaning of the *Vedas* through translation (Dodson 2007: 57).

intellectuals and missionaries searched for a pristine form of Christianity within ancient Hinduism.

John Holwell (1771: 4–6) argued that at the basis of each religion, there are "primitive truths" resulting from God's impression on humankind. He further noted that only ancient Hinduism contained the full articulation of these "primitive truths," which, however, had been partially forgotten due to the spread of superstitious practices, particularly *mūrtipūjā*. The Evangelical missionary Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg claimed that behind the portrayal of a multitude of gods, Hinduism concealed an ancient belief in a monotheistic god (that he found in the Hindu texts referred to as *parāparavastu*). He concluded that contemporary Hindus had lost contact with this reality and needed to be brought back to a monotheistic creed:

> Inspite of the knowledge that there is only one single divine being, these heathens have nevertheless allowed themselves to be seduced by the devil and their ancient poets into believing in a multitude of gods, whereby they have strayed so far away from the signs of the one God that they do not know how to find their way back (Caland 1926: 43, cited in Halbfass 1988: 48).

Accordingly, when people lost the ability to comprehend the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, they lost contact with the Vedic "primitive truths" and became lost in polytheistic practices, particularly *mūrtipūjā*. Part of the early Indological—in this case, also missionary—mission was to retrieve testimony of that ancient Vedic world and primeval form of religion, something like a 'proto-Christianity,' to free Hindus from icon worship. For instance, in the 18th century, a so-called *Ezourvedam*, allegedly a lost Veda that was actually a Jesuit work, came to light (see Rocher 1984). Reportedly, Jesuit missionaries created such a '*Veda*' containing concepts similar to Christianity, which they could use to demonstrate the existence of ancient ties with Hinduism and win over converts. The *Ezourvedam* was structured as a dialogue between a certain 'Choumantou' (likely Sumantu) and 'Byach' (a name reminiscent of Vyāsa). Choumantou was a sage professing monotheism, adept in philosophy and opposing icon worship, while Byach, the ignorant one, echoed the name of Vyāsa, the author of the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, texts seen as promoting icon worship and therefore considered immoral.

In his *Christian Researches in Asia* (1813), Claudius Buchanan (1766–1815), an evangelical chaplain in the British Army and vice-provost of Fort William College, expressed his disgust for Indian superstitious practices, particularly icon worship. Here, he gave a horrid account of the Jagannath Ratha Yatra of Puri (in his book referred to as '*Juggernaut*'), depicting the event as an obscene and bloody tradition. In the text, Buchanan compared 'harmonious' areas of India where the contacts with "Englishmen" had 'purged' the plague of 'idolatry' to the more remote areas of the subcontinent, where *mūrtipūjā* had kept the population at an 'animal stage.' In Buchanan's words, the city of Puri was a "Valley of Hinnom" and Lord Jagannath "the Molloch of the present age" (1813:19).

Colebrooke (1837: 1–2) argued that modern Hinduism was a corrupted form of the ancient beliefs testified in the *Vedas*, as it presented elements of 'decay' such as icon worship, the caste system, and the habit of *sati*. He argued that the religion of the Aryans depicted in the

Vedas did not endorse any of these practices, particularly icon worship, but instead revealed a belief in a monotheistic God. According to Goldstücker (1879: 49), "idolatry and gross practices" were the outcome of "a misconception of the sacred texts" and the "interested motives of a degenerated class of priests." According to Horace Wilson, icon worship was not contemplated in the Vedas" (Wilson 1862: 54), and the personifications of "creation, preservation, and regeneration, Brahma, Vishnu, and Śiva" were not "objects of special adoration" (Wilson 1862: 53). According to Wilson, even in the later Hindu texts, icon worship was defended on the sole ground that "the vulgar cannot raise their conceptions to abstract deity, and require some perceptible object to which their senses may be addressed" (Wilson 1862: 54). Wilson also argued that many Hindus spent long time in these "unprofitable" practices and perceived them as "grievous burdens" (Wilson 1862: 58). Max Müller held that "the religion of the Vedas knew no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods" (see Banerjea 1956: 42–43).

It follows that, among many European scholars, icon worship was considered a superstitious practice, both a cause and symptom of Indian 'decay.' Ganguly (2018) argues that *mūrtipūjā* scandalized Christian morality, especially the 19th-century 'refined' Victorian minds, for the apparent depiction of 'sexual licentiousness' deriving from the physicality of the gods represented in the icons. Hindu mythological narrations, such as the *Purāṇas*, particularly the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and the *Gītagovinda*, led Europeans to regard modern Hindus as subordinated to their bodily desires. In contrast, according to Max Weber (1978: 610), the Second Commandment prohibiting the consecration of icons likely directed Europe and Christianity towards the development of intellectual and rational cognition. In this view, eradicating icon worship meant disenchanting society and consequently relegating God to a purely transcendent sphere, thus creating a rational society capable of progress in economics, science, and all areas of human knowledge (see Salmond 2006: 130).

Additionally, icon worship was regarded not only as mere devotion to icons but as part of a complex system of rules, dos and don'ts that delineated Hinduism as an 'orthopraxy,' namely, a comprehensive set of practices extending over every realm of human life. In Europe, religion has primarily been regarded as a matter of inward experience only in the last three centuries. Negotiations between the domains of reason and faith had already interested the Enlightenment period. Yet, the rise of natural and social sciences incited the contemporary understanding of 'religion,' leading to the primacy of reason and science over the different spheres of human life.[83] It follows that it was only around the second half of the 18th century

[83] Aside from the negotiation of realms of knowledge, the Materialism school argued that the only means to knowledge was science and that religion needed to be relegated to a phenomenon of the past. Bergunder (2016: 86–93) reports some of the fundamental steps of the *Materialismus-streit*, or 'debate on materialism' emerging in 1854, when the physiologist Rudolf Wagner (1805–1864) spoke about Christianity as the spiritual foundation of science at the 31st Convention of the Society of German Scientist and Doctors in Göttingen. In the discourse, the zoologist Carl Vogt (1817–1895) was heavily criticized for his theses illustrated in *Physiologische Briefe* (Physiological Letters) where he expressed his profound commitment to materialistic principles. Vogt reacted to Wagner's critique and in 1856 published his *Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft* (Blind Faith and Science) and continued to spread his ideas in his extensive public speaking activity. In 1859, when Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, the theory of evolution transformed materialism into a comprehensive theory of the

that religion started to be perceived as a primarily 'inward phenomenon,' until in the second half of the 19th century the contemporary understanding of inward religion was achieved (Bergunder 2016: 96). Similarly, Kant's postulation of *noumenon* and *phenomenon* led the so-called 'neo-Kantians' (among which Max Müller) to maintain the relevance of materialism in the natural field and posit the spiritual realm as the dominion of religion. According to the historian Thomas Nipperdey (1988: 129), the majority of scholars came to accept the view of Neo-Kantianism, establishing the field of science as separated from that of religion. These discourses led to a global recalibration of Christianity that, in the wake of technological development, retreated from all-encompassing explanations of the world and repositioned itself as an "inward religion" (Bergunder 2016: 93). In Masuzawa's words (2005: 19), during the 19th century, religion became "circumscribed in such a way that it was finally discernible as a distinct, and limited, phenomenon." The recalibrated role of religion in society was seen not just as a process of transformation but instead as a process of evolution. Krämer (2019: 374) notices that the 19th-century Protestant conception of religion allowed a progressive rise of global capitalism and created the space for economic growth.[84] Masuzawa (2005) recognizes that Europe was triggered by the role of religion in its development and the potential integration of rationalism and modernity with Christianity. However, he contends that the relativization and abstraction of religion, or rather the compartmentalization of society and the subsequent relegation of religion to the spiritual domain, along with the rise of the social sciences in Western societies, were perceived—albeit without consensus—as a symptom of 'modernity.' Richard King suggests (2010: 98) that the European modern distinction between the realms of religion and science came to be perceived as the archetype or the *conditio sine qua non* for the creation of a 'modern' country (as in an institution competitive in economics, politics, and military power).

Thus, the idea that Europe had reached a certain maturity, as religion withdrew from specific fields of human knowledge now governed by science, contrasted with the notion that India's systems of knowledge were entirely influenced by 'religion.' According to this perspective, the fact that Hindu textual traditions regulated every aspect of human life placed India on a low scale of social evolution. Similarly, the religious practices of a society were viewed as

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natural evolution of all living beings. David Friedrich Strauß (1808–1874) in his *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (The Old and the New Faith, 1872), outlined a moral Humanist doctrine arising from Christianity and embodying the modern scientific perception of the world as a continuous sequence of cause and effect that allowed no room for God's intervention. By the end of 1888, this work counted 14 editions and several translations. The Darwinian zoologist and professor at the University of Jena Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) claimed that nature—and not the supernatural—is the only source of knowledge. His work *Die Welträthsel* (The Riddles of the World, 1903 [1899]) had 300.000 reprints and was translated into 24 languages 15 years after its publication. Other examples of the discourse on the predominance of scientific knowledge over religion and the intent of replacing Christianity with science are further displayed in British Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1835) and John Tyndall (1820–1893), "the hammer of theology" (Bergunder 2016: 92). The debate 'religion' vs 'science' was further testified in its depth by John William Draper's *A History of the Conflict between Science and Religion* (1877 [1875]), and Andrew Dickson White's *A History of the Warfare of Science With Theology in Christendom* (1896). The limits of materialism were discussed by Albert Lange (1828–1875), Emil Du Bois-Reymond (1818–1896) and Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894) (see Bergunder 2016).

[84] In subchapter 8.2, I show how Svāmī Dayānanda believed that 'superstitious practices' in India posed a significant obstacle to the country's development and subsequently created a social reform program aimed at defying these practices in the name of social development.

indicative of its level of sophistication. Max Müller theorized that religions are on an evolutionary path toward a rarefaction of their worship's objects. Thus, in the fourth of his Hibbert Lectures, "The Worship of Tangible, Semi-Tangible, and Intangible Objects" (Müller 1879), he attempted to delineate an evolutionary path of the "religious idea" and its refinement through three progressive stages identified with their respective objects of worship. These are, first, the (i) "tangible objects," the earliest and most primitive objects of religious worship that could be touched all around, like stones, bones, shells, flowers, berries, branches of wood, and so on.[85] Then the (ii) "semi-tangible objects," that humans can only partially perceive, like trees, mountains, rivers, the seas, and the earth, and the (iii) "intangible objects" like the sky, the moon, the sun, thunder, wind, and rain, quasi 'deities,' as embodiments of natural phenomena. According to Max Müller, the *Vedas* were a testimony of the worship of semi-tangible and intangible objects only and testified to humankind's evolutionary journey from primitive forms of worship to the abstraction of the idea of God. Thus, the *Vedas* represented a stage in the development of the human faculty of abstraction and the spiritual journey toward God, represented by a progressive rarefaction of their objects of worship. Max Müller spoke of "a real transition from the visible to the invisible," "steps by which our ancestors proceeded from the world of senses to the world beyond the grasp of senses." According to the Indologist, the *Upaniṣads*[86] represented the culmination point of Indian spiritual and cognitive evolution, with their representation of *ātman*, or the Supreme Self (Müller 1879: 214).[87] Thus, for Max Müller, the *Vedas* did not depict a polytheistic creed but testified to the evolution of religion and the intermediate stages that brought man closer to God (see Müller 1879: 376). Müller further argued that artifacts such as daggers and vessels, which are sometimes praised and eulogized in the *Vedas*, reflect stylistic patterns also found in the works of Wordsworth and Tennyson; therefore, they do not indicate the worship of objects (Müller 1879: 198–199).[88] In his view, icon worship was instead a modern development—or rather a retrogression—that had no ties to the *Vedas*.

> Fetish comes in later times, where we expect it: in the earliest documents of religious thought in India there is no trace of it, nay, we may go even further and say, there is no room for it, as little as there is room for lias before or within the granite (Müller 1879: 359).

In sum, Max Müller theorized an evolutionary path of religion, suggesting a progressive abstraction of the object of devotion: the more ephemeral the object of worship, the more

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[85] This stage corresponds to 'fetishism.' Max Müller (1879: 168) seems to dislike this appellation and argues that even the primitive populations indulging in fetish worship manifest their devotion to objects as they represent something that goes beyond sensuous perception.

[86] Still, about the *Upaniṣads*, he says: "guesses at truth, frequently contradicting each other, yet all tending in one direction" (Müller 1879: 319).

[87] Max Müller (1879: 364) compares the 'maturity' of Hindu texts to human life stages. According to his metaphor, the *Vedas* correspond to childhood, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the sacrificial and moral regulations represent "the busy manhood," and the *Upaniṣads* to "the old age of the Vedic religion."

[88] In contrast, in the debate between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs, the Vedic instances in which non-conscious objects are the focus of veneration are used by the Sanātanī to demonstrate that even in the *Vedas*, there are examples of *mūrtipūjā* (see chapter 9, and especially subchapter 9.6).

evolved the religion, and the more evolved the religion, the more evolved the society.[89] This line of thought revealed that the Hindus had moved from worshipping semi-tangible and intangible objects to the worship of tangible objects. It followed that the diffused practice of *mūrtipūjā* was not merely a cause-and-effect of India's backwardness, but also a testimony that India had 'walked back' on the evolutionary path. From the European perspective, this was further confirmed by the fact that Hindu practices (*mūrtipūjā*, astrology, purity rules, the caste system, etc.) were not relegated to the spiritual sphere only but governed several realms of human life. With this, there was also the notion that worshipping non-conscious objects impeded the growth of Hindus' intellectual abilities and compromised their morals.

Similarly, in the eyes of Svāmī Dayānanda, *mūrtipūjā* was also the outcome of the misunderstanding of the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, as well as the *brāhmaṇs*' "wicked" interests (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 323). In his view, too, icon worship hindered the intellectual development of Hindus, compromised their morals, and confined them in a cage of superstition that governed every aspect of their lives (see subchapter 8.2). *Mūrtipūjā* was the cause of India's degraded condition, and its eradication was a necessary condition for India's redemption. I already mentioned that in his *Autobiography*, Svāmī Dayānanda related that the starting point of his aversion for *mūrtis* was an intuition he had as a kid during the night of Śivarātri. I already referred to the relative importance of this event and argued that this can be treated as a hagiographical sketch only (see sub-chapter 3.1.1). Instead, in my opinion, Svāmī Dayānanda's rejection of icon worship is a direct reaction to European scholarship following the two main criteria I already referred to in this chapter (p. 44). Consequently, I argue that Svāmī Dayānanda appears to respond to the general European evaluation of icon worship by (i) positioning India above criticism, asserting that there are no traces of icon worship or devotion to non-conscious beings in the *Vedas*. Additionally, (ii) he emulates the British religious model, structuring a Vedic religion that is substantially monotheistic. I return to this point in subchapter 8.2, where I delineate Svāmī Dayānanda's theological positions. I now briefly anticipate my conclusions, suggesting that Svāmī Dayānanda, who reportedly based his positions on the *Vedas*, instead imposed his views on *mūrtipūjā* onto them—views that, I argue, were mediated by European influence.

Before concluding, I must add that Salmond (2006) complained about a certain ease in identifying Svāmī Dayānanda's positions on icon worship as a mere result of borrowings. Salmond thus explored alternative sources for Svāmī Dayānanda's aniconism (Salmond 2006: 6–7), also considering the possibility of "independent invention" (Salmond 2006: 10). He thus considered that, at times, similar ideas might arise independently in different places without one deriving from the other. Specifically, this would mean that Svāmī Dayānanda arrived at his positions on *mūrtipūjā* independently. Although Salmond agrees that Svāmī Dayānanda's program is triggered by exposure to "Muslim, Protestant and European rationalist models," he posits that his thought stems from Indian sources and precedents (Salmond 2006: 138). The scholar offers a series of examples of 'original' Indian aniconism, independent from

[89] Before Max Müller, in his *The Positive Philosophy* (1896 [1840–1842]), Auguste Comte referred to three stages of the evolution of society: the theological stage, the metaphysical stage, and the positive stage. The theological stage is further divided into three stages: fetishism, polytheism, and monotheism.

Muslim and Christian influences, like the early aniconic Buddhist phase and the Sthānakavāsa and Terāpantha Jaina sects.[90] He mentions the Liṅgāyats (12th century) and the Sant lineages, like that of Kabir[91] and Guru Nanak, and Sikhism, also rejecting icon worship (see Salmond 2006: 31–39).[92] Yet, I disagree with Salmond's position that Svāmī Dayānanda's program might have originated from Indian sources like those of the Buddhists and the Sant lineages. I argue this because, unlike the listed examples of indigenous aniconism, which seem to be of the nature of a spiritual and philosophical quest, Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to *mūrtipūjā* appears to respond to social and political needs instead (see subchapter 8.2). Thus, in my opinion, Svāmī Dayānanda's stance against icon worship is not only triggered but also significantly influenced by European preconceptions of icon worship. I further build on this point in the sub-chapter 8.2.

I will now explore the reaction of the Hindu 'orthodox,' or Sanātanīs, to Svāmī Dayānanda's program and locate Svāmī Karapātrī as a representative of this tendency.

[90] Aniconic Jainism likely arose from the notion that icon worship was not a significant theme in Jaina sects and that constructing temple buildings involved the killing of many living beings during the digging process (Salmon 2006: 34).
[91] It is but an image of stone/ which they worship as 'Creator'!/ Those who put their trust in it were downed in a black torrent/ Kabir, they built a cell made of paper/ with gates made out of ink/ In the ground, they've sown stones/ and the Pandits loot them all (Vaudeville 1993: 205, cited in Salmond 2006: 38).
[92] Due to space and time constraints, I am unable to further explore this area of study. However, Salmond has presented in his book a brief analysis of the aniconism of these sects (see Salmond 2006: 31–39).

5. Sanātana Dharma: Movements and Conception

In the initial section of this chapter, I begin by exploring how orthodox groups, identifying as Sanātana Dharma, responded to the spread of Svāmī Dayānanda's ideas. In other words, I examine the 19th and 20th century formation of Sanātana Dharma *sabhās*, *saṅghas*, *samājas*, and *maṇḍalas*, which aimed to define Sanātana Dharma, or Hindu orthodoxy, in contrast to Ārya Samāja.[93] I show that some of these circles, such as the Sanātana Dharmarākṣiṇī Sabhā (founded in 1877) and the Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala (founded in 1887), attempted to become umbrella organizations seeking to defend both religious and social Hindu establishments while presenting themselves as proponents of pan-Hindu orthodoxy against Ārya Samāja's postulations.

The polarity between Sanātanīs and Samājīs was reflected in the activities of these circles, public debates, and a long list of publications (see chapter 7).[94] Similarly, Svāmī Karapātrī's interest in Svāmī Dayānanda's thought positions his activity within the stream of Sanātana Dharma movements opposing the Ārya Samāja. I also contend that the Dharma Saṅgha, an organization founded by Svāmī Karapātrī in 1940 (see chapter 6, p. 95), can be listed alongside other Sanātana Dharma circles established to preserve Sanātana Dharma. However, I must note that the term Sanātana Dharma and the Sanātanī appellation are extremely wide-reaching terms. For instance, as I reported in chapter 2 (p. 22), the report of the 1891 census in Punjab revealed that many people registered themselves as Sanātanīs, in the sense of 'the ones belonging to the old school,' and employed the term as a quasi-antonym to the Ārya Samājī. Based on current sources, other than observing that the use of the name 'Sanātanī' appears as a collective reaction against the Ārya Samāja, we cannot define or trace the exact origins of this trend. A large and diverse group of people embraces this designation. This suggests that the term carries a broad significance and that it is perhaps impossible to say who the Sanātanīs are, other than by considering everyone who identifies as such. Therefore, in the second part of this chapter, as I analyze Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma, I take a step toward understanding this complex phenomenon. However, my findings cannot fully encompass the diversity inherent in the various people and groups identifying as Sanātanī.

In the next subchapters, I analyze the term Sanātana Dharma, which, along with 'Hindu Dharma' and 'Vaidik Dharma,' is Svāmī Karapātrī's preferred designation for referring to his religious tradition. I first consider the scholarly literature and then explore what Sanātana

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[93] As I already noted in footnote n. 7, Zavos (2001: 111) argued that the Hindu world lacks a united center of orthodoxy. Instead, in India, there are local institutions based on a nexus of caste and *saṃpradayas*, forming several regional "frameworks of orthodoxy." I must add that the four *maṭhas* of the Śaṅkaracāryas serve as macroregional centers of orthodoxy, which allegedly supervise each quarter of the subcontinent.

[94] On one hand, the differences within and between Sanātana Dharma movements, or more accurately, among the people identifying as Sanātana Dharmīs, seem temporarily overshadowed by the effort to combat the spread of the Ārya Samāja, which is perceived as a common enemy of orthodoxy. On the other hand, there are also disagreements and contrasting factions among Ārya Samājī scholars (see Jones 1976: 154–185). Therefore, while the polarization between Sanātana Dharma movements and Ārya Samāja remains a historical fact, I also want to emphasize that there is no homogeneity within either faction.

Dharma means for Svāmī Karapātrī. To do that, I integrate material from two scholars close to Svāmī Karapātrī: the 68th Śaṅkarācārya of Kanchipuram Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī (1894–1994), and the late Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotirmath and Dwarka Pīṭham Svāmī Svarūpanānda Sarasvatī (1924–2022).[95] I thus propose three complementary ways to understand Sanātana Dharma: (i) through family resemblances, (ii) in opposition to the other *dharmas*, and (iii) with a focus on the 'constancy' of tradition.

5.1 Sanātana Dharma Movements in 19th- and 20th-century India

Long before the formation of Sanātana Dharma groups, there existed in India circles of learned *brāhmaṇs* deliberating on matters related to *dharma*; these were called *pariṣads* (lit., assembly). According to Kane, these circles primarily focused on resolving issues of ritual and social practice and did not engage with doctrinal matters (Kane 1997 Vol. 2,2: 967). The encounter with the colonial world and the spread of reform programs, particularly that of the Ārya Samāja, which challenged traditional institutions and practices, prompted the learned *brāhmaṇs* to reflect on the effects of Svāmī Dayānanda's (and other reformers') doctrines on their notion of orthodoxy. According to Jones (1976: 108), the rise of Sanātana Dharma circles is triggered by the spread of the Ārya Samāja:

> The Aryas [...] had achieved an increasingly separate identity from the orthodox and traditional world around them. Their defense of this new lifestyle and aggressive condemnation of the old created an institutionalized opposition (Jones 1976: 108).

Similarly, Lekhram (1972: 672, cited in Jordens 1998: 31) reports that some of the Ārya Samāja's tenets instilled doubts among Hindus about their practices and beliefs. This elicited a response from orthodox *brāhmaṇs* who acknowledged the urgent need to confront Svāmī Dayānanda's positions. Thus, while *pariṣads* maintained their role in deliberating about ritual and social duty, Sanātana Dharma *sabhās*, *saṅghas*, *samājas*, and *maṇḍalas* served as organizational bodies representing orthodoxy, defending doctrines and authority, thereby constructing Sanātana Dharma's identity boundaries. These circles thus acted as 'outer shells,' defining and defending Sanātana Dharma against the Ārya Samāja and other reform movements. This opposition manifested in the formation of organized groups, the organization of public debates and lectures, and the publication of books and journals. According to Farquhar (1998: 316), the various Sanātana Dharma organizations were not necessarily connected or in communication with each other. Nevertheless, they appeared to share the goal of creating extensive organizational networks of orthodoxy; in Zavos' words, "a binding together of the social structure that sought to protect existing divisions and present them as elements of an 'organic' unity" (Zavos 2001: 121).

[95] As I already discussed in the Introduction (1.1), Svāmī Svarūpānanda was intimate friend and *gurubhāī* of Svāmī Karapātrī.

While for the most part, Sanātana Dharma circles aimed to preserve social and religious establishments, this act of preservation implied a certain range of changes. For instance, discussions held within Sanātana Dharma assemblies aimed to define a Sanātana Dharma identity by reasserting those aspects of Hindu religious traditions that the Ārya Samāja had endangered. The main points of disagreement between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs concerned the scope of the Hindu canon, the caste system, and 'superstitious practices,' especially *mūrtipūjā* (see subchapter 3.2.4). Thus, the necessity of reaffirming these points rendered them emblematic of orthodoxy itself: the effort to make these universal symbols of Sanātana Dharma conflicted with the peculiarities and local manifestations inherent to these practices. In other words, this created the challenge of unifying and essentializing a diverse plurality of practices, customs, and beliefs to define Hindu religious and social traditions. Thus, practices, customs, and beliefs—often unique expressions of local traditions—now needed to be represented as a unified whole to counteract the Ārya Samāja and other groups advocating structural changes in the subcontinent.

Zavos (2001: 112–113) notes that Sanātana Dharma groups themselves displayed traces of colonial influences in their methods of self-representation. They organized themselves into associations, borrowing British democratic organizational models to create societies headed by presidents and composed of treasurers, registered members, committees, and so forth. However, the changes necessitated by the need for self-representation primarily remained on the surface and did not involve doctrinal discourses (see Zavos 2001:110). I now give a few examples of Sanātana Dharma formulations and their interaction with the Ārya Samāja in order to show the discourses at play between the two factions. I briefly mention the 1869 *śāstrārtha* in Varanasi, then focus on the 1881 Calcutta Pandit Council, the 1889 and 1900 Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala sessions, and the 1923 Hindu Mahāsabhā meeting. From these examples, it becomes clear that the Hindu canon, the caste system, and the practice of icon worship remained primary topics of contention between the two factions. I then briefly position Svāmī Karapātrī and his Dharma Saṅgha as continuators of the efforts of the Sanātana Dharma circles.

During the 1869 *śāstrārtha* in Varanasi, the divisions between Ārya Samājīs[96] and Sanātana Dharmīs not only manifested in the debate but also in the cheering that accompanied it (see subchapter 3.1.5).[97] A few years later, Svāmī Dayānanda's arrival in Lahore in 1877 sparked a reaction among local orthodox scholars who established a Sanātana Dharmarākṣiṇī Sabhā (1877) to limit the reformers' growing influence (Jordens 1978: 166). On a larger scale, on January 22, 1881, the Calcutta Pandit Council was held to address with authority some of the doubts that had recently emerged among Hindus due to Svāmī Dayānanda's doctrines (Jordens 1998: 31–35). The meeting saw the participation of about 300 pandits and 200 other prominent figures addressing four main questions forming the basis of the Ārya Samāja's

[96] Technically, the Ārya Samāja was founded six years later in 1875. Yet, with this term, I refer here to Svāmī Dayānanda and his supporters, who eventually became known as Ārya Samājīs.
[97] According to Jones, the Calcutta Dharma Sabhā in 1831 was commonly cited as the first orthodox institution of the colonial era. This assembly counted the portion of the Calcutta intelligentsia who had petitioned Parliament early in 1830 opposing Bentinck's *sati* decree (see Jones 1989: 32).

thought (Lekhram 1972, cited in Jordens 1998: 31): (i) Are the *Brāhmaṇas* as authoritative as the *Saṃhitās*? And, are post-Vedic literature and *Sṃṛti* in general as valid as the *Manusṃṛti*? (ii) Are *mūrtipūjā*, *śrāddha* rituals, and pilgrimages sanctioned in the *śāstras*? (iii) In the *Ṛg Veda*, does the word *agni* mean 'fire' or 'Īśvara'? (iv) And is the *yajña* to be performed to purify the environment or to secure salvation? The pandits' deliberations primarily aimed to demonstrate that Svāmī Dayānanda's innovations were not grounded in authority and resulted from his rejection of post-Vedic literature and his inability to understand the *Vedas*. Thus,

i. The *Brāhmaṇas* were confirmed as an integral part of the *Vedas* and as authoritative as the *mantra* portions of the *Vedas*.
ii. It was confirmed that *mūrtipūjā*, *śraddha* rituals, and pilgrimages were sanctioned in the *śāstras* (on the ground that authority is granted to *Sṃṛti* and post-Vedic literature).
iii. It was established that, in the *Ṛg Veda*, *agni* means fire, and that
iv. The *yajñas* are not performed to purify the air but to secure salvation.

According to Jordens (1998: 32, 35), with these resolutions, the Council wanted to expose and brand Svāmī Dayānanda as 'unorthodox.'

In 1887, Paṇḍit Dina Dayala Śarmā founded the Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala, which quickly became a prominent organization for the defense of orthodoxy. Pandit Śarmā fought against the Ārya Samāja's stance on *mūrtipūjā*, instructing "the people to retain their idols and live in orthodox fashion" (Farquhar 1998: 316). The Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala served as a central umbrella organization for the network of Sanātana Dharma Sabhās, largely active in Punjab and the Northwestern Provinces (Zavos 2001: 115). By 1902, the Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala proclaimed itself as the representative of all orthodox Hindus throughout India (Zavos 2001: 116). A report from 1889 by the Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala outlines the primary aims of the organization: (i) educating members of the first three *varṇas* in Vedic religious texts, (ii) spreading Sanskrit knowledge among all Hindus, (iii) making authoritative books accessible through their translations into vernacular languages, and (iv) safeguarding the caste system (Jones 1998: 237). During a 1900 session of the Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala in Delhi, the primary topics of discussion included (i) *mūrtipūjā*, (ii) the use of Devanāgarī, (iii) obedience to pandits and *brāhmaṇs*, (iv) widow marriage,[98] and (v) the establishment of a Sanskrit College where education is grounded in the *śāstras* (Zavos 2001: 116).

The Hindu Mahasabhā (founded in 1915) primarily focused on the articulation and organization of a Hindu identity. In this regard, Zavos (2001: 118) cites an editorial from *The Leader* discussing the upcoming Hindu Mahasabhā meeting in Varanasi in 1923. The main focus of the conference was the collaboration between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs

[98] While Svāmī Dayānanda was a fervent supporter of widow marriage, the orthodox pandits were generally against it.

regarding *śuddhi*.[99] The following article clearly shows that the key goal of the Sanātana Dharmīs was to establish a cohesive institutional body.

> Nothing is left for the Hindus but to organise themselves. […] They must as a community inspire respect before they can have unity on reasonable and equal terms with the Muslims. Their first duty, in their own interest, in the interest of the country, and also in that of Hindu-Muslim unity, is that they should organise, organise, organise (*Leader* 2/4/23, cited in Zavos 2001: 118).

In the context of this meeting, the Ārya Samājī scholar Śraddhānanda (1856–1926) proposed reforms to the caste system. While his request to readmit the Malkana Rajputs (see Zavos 2001: 118–119) into the folds of Sanātana Dharma was accepted, his other two propositions were deferred for the deliberation of a circle of learned *brāhmaṇs*: Śraddhānanda sought to grant the outcastes access to wells and schools as a first step toward assimilating them into the caste system through the *śuddhi* ritual. He also wanted the converts who underwent *śuddhi* to be acknowledged by the Hindu community. A group of seventy-five pandits met in January 1924 to deliberate on these matters. A month later, the Mahāsabhā accepted the conclusions of the pandits: while access to wells, temples, and schools was generally granted to the outcastes, it was also firmly stated that this was no step toward their acceptance within the *varṇavyāvasthā*, as it was "against scripture and the tradition to give the untouchables *yajyopavit* [i.e investiture with sacred thread], to teach the Vedas and to interdine with them" (*Leader* 8/2/24, cited in Zavos 2001: 119). Similarly, non-Hindus, particularly Christians and Muslims, who wished to 'convert back' to Hinduism were welcomed within Sanātana Dharma, provided they were not to be included in the caste system.

Eventually, under the umbrella of the Mahāsabhā, the understanding of Sanātana Dharma as 'orthodoxy' representing the majority of Hindus was "superseded by a more potent symbol of organized Hinduism: the Hindu nation" (Zavos 2001: 119). In the early 1920s, the idea of a broad-based, unified Hindu nation began to emerge as a distinct political ideology, with Savarkar's *Hindutva* (1923) serving as its most relevant theorization (Zavos 2001: 120). Thus, Hindu nationalism embraced many of the symbols of Sanātana Dharma, aligning with causes such as cow protection and the promotion of both Hindi and Sanskrit. However, it remained devoid of any doctrinal core beyond its deification of the nation (Zavos 2001: 120). According to Zavos (2001: 120), in the twenties, "Although *sanātana dharma* was recognized as a signifier of orthodoxy within Hindu nationalism, it was no longer significant in a political context, in the context of representation, as pan-Hindu organizations, addressing putative pan-Hindu constituencies, were consolidated in the realm of nationalist ideology". In other words, the necessity for Sanātana Dharma groups to oppose the spread of Ārya Samāja and

[99] The *śuddhi* is a ritual through which the Ārya Samāja wanted to first reclaim converts among the Hindus and then insert outcastes within the four *varṇas*. This collaboration arose from concerns about the increasing number of Hindu conversions to Christianity and Islam, which created a shared interest between Ārya Samājī and Sanātana Dharmī in reclaiming the converted. As long as the *śuddhi* was utilized for reconverting Muslims and Christians, there was a common base for collaboration. However, when *śuddhi* began to serve as a means of reallocating outcastes within the four *varṇas*, the collaboration between Samājīs and Sanātanīs ended abruptly (see Jones 1976: 129–135).

other reforms was overshadowed by the need for a singular Hindu identity that encompassed the entire Hindu community for political representation. The stated aim of the Sanātana Dharma groups—preserving religious and social traditions against non-orthodox others—thus transformed into the perceived necessity to put together everything seemingly Hindu to construct a national identity. As Zavos observed (2001: 120), the term Sanātana Dharma, representing the religion of Hindus, remained a fundamental aspect in the construction of the idea of a Hindu nation. However, rather than being viewed as an 'object' to preserve, Sanātana Dharma became a tool for legitimation and representation. Furthermore, Svāmī Dayānanda and the Ārya Samāja ultimately became closely associated with nationalist movements, and Svāmī Dayānanda is often regarded as one of the founders of Hindu nationalism. Svāmī Karapātrī can be positioned at this ideological juncture as a representative of Sanātana Dharma, aiming to reverse the transformation of a Sanātana Dharma identity into that of a Hindu nation. Thus, Svāmī Karapātrī not only opposed the Ārya Samāja and their positions on the *śāstras*, the caste system, and *mūrtipūjā*, but he also opted not to prioritize the nation-building project over the preservation of orthodoxy or to overstep grounded differences for the pursuit of a Hindu national identity.[100]

5.2 Sanātana Dharma

As I discussed, Sanātana Dharma is a term used by people, scholars, groups of scholars, and wide organizations who identify with Hindu orthodoxy. However, understanding Sanātana Dharma as 'religion' is problematic as it carries the risk of falling into Christian conceptual patterns and preconceptions, which could impose misleading notions on a multifaceted and challenging reality (see chapter 2, p. 18). One significant challenge in discussing Sanātana Dharma is the vast diversity of religious traditions to which the term applies. India has a vast body of Sanskrit literature focusing on the debates and theories regarding the differences among *saṃpradāyas* and *darśanas,* but there is very little on Sanātana Dharma, or Hindu religious traditions, as a community.[101] According to Halbfass (1990: 172–196), prior to colonial times, Hindu scholars showed little interest in the religious practices and ideas of foreign peoples and engaged instead in vigorous internal debates. To explore traces of pan-Hindu identity formulations prior to colonial rule (see contra-constructionist theories in subchapter 2.2), it is thus essential to examine why Hindu scholars seldom addressed commonalities among Hindu traditions before colonial times. According to Gianni Pellegrini,[102] the reason for these internal debates likely stems from the fact that, in the Hindu context, philosophical and religious discussions are rooted in textual sources. Thus, the authoritative texts serve as the ultimate test of a theory's validity. In other words,

[100] Ultimately, for Svāmī Karapātrī, maintaining orthodoxy is the essential condition for establishing a successful state in India. More about this aspect and Svāmī Karapātrī's involvement in politics can be found in subchapter 6.2.
[101] In chapter 2 (p. 20), I provided a few examples of efforts to define a Hindu identity, as those of Mādhavācarya and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.
[102] Gianni Pellegrini made this suggestion during a private meeting on the occasion of the ECSAS Conference (European Conference for South Asian Studies) on 27.07.2023 in Turin, Italy.

disagreements between *saṃpradāyas* and *darśanas* typically arise from a conflict over a particular issue (*vastu*). There is an enunciation (*uddeśya*), a definition (*lakṣaṇa*), and a thorough examination (*parīkṣā*) of the problem or contrasting positions. The examination (*parīkṣā*) must be based on the *śāstras*; if it is not, analyses of enunciations are without solid foundation (*apadārtha*). Since other religions have different textual traditions, meaningful religious and philosophical dialogues with non-Hindus cannot lead to the discovery of 'truth.' Accordingly, until at least the 19th century, there is a rich body of literature attesting to debates within and across *saṃpradāyas* and *darśanas*, highlighting the differences and disagreements among various schools, but very limited literature discussing the idea of a shared Sanātana Dharma or Hindu identity. Fuchs and Dalmia (2019: xxiii) note that the focus on conflicts between *saṃpradāyas* before the 19th century shifted during colonial times to discussion about a Hindu identity in contrast to 'others.' As a result, the distinctions among Hindu traditions were downplayed, and efforts were made to unite even profoundly different realities.

'Sanātana Dharma' is a widely debated term that has been explored through both historical and philosophical contexts. Together with 'Hindu Dharma' and 'Vaidik Dharma,' this is Svāmī Karapātrī's favorite term for self-identification (and not only in opposition to Ārya Samāja). According to Kane (1977 Vol. 5,2: 1629), the earliest known testimonies of the word 'Sanātana Dharma' are found in the Khānpur plates of Mādhavavarman dated around the 6th century BCE[1] and in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, 2.33.37–38,[1] where the term seems to be used in the sense of "ancient practice no longer prevalent […] and in the sense of 'duty recognized a long ago'." Kane emphasizes the notion of antiquity inherent to the term 'Sanātana Dharma.' Klostermaier (1989: 31; 530) translates it as "eternal religion" or "eternal law," Halbfass (1990: 344) as "unshakable, venerable order," and Lipner (1994: 221) as "ancient and continue guideline" (cited in Zavos 2001: 109). However, this term is consistently applied to denote orthodox Hinduism only in modern India. Lutgendorf asserts that in the 19th century, the term Sanātana Dharma acquired the connotation of a "self-conscious affirmation of religious conservatism in a perceived pluralistic society" (Lutgendorf 1994: 363). He also asserts that defining the contours of Sanātana Dharma is quite challenging, suggesting that the most effective approach is to employ apophatic terminology: "one who was *not* an Arya or Brahmo Samajist, not a Christian or Westernizer and who did not advocate widow remarriage, the initiation of untouchables, or the abandonment of image worship. A designation of orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy, the term could encompass pan-Indian rites such as *pūjā*, *ārtī*, and pilgrimage as well as purely localized caste and kinship customs" (Lutgendorf 1994: 363). Makarand Paranjape (2013: 244) speaks of a "Sanatani narrative" and attempts to define it: "First, it has no point of origin and no closure. Secondly, it is pluralistic, without being relativistic; that is, it accepts the unity of truth, but allows for a diversity of expressions and descriptions. Thirdly, it has no one central text, prophet, founder, or church. It is always a field of difference and debate, though not necessarily of conflict or opposition. Fourthly, its central tendency is to sacralize the world and all the objects contained in it. […] The Sanatani is not anthropocentric, logocentric, or even theocentric, but radically *self*centric, where the self is ultimately nonseparated, radically relational, and co-extensive with the cosmos." Zavos argues that, in 19th- and 20th-century India, Sanātana Dharma was "institutionalized as the

emblem of a religious organization with specific aims; it is used to denote a particular form (with the implication of being the *truest* form) of Hinduism; and it is used to represent a particular group of people, a 'very large body of Hindus' (with the implication of being the *largest* body of Hindus)" (Zavos 2001: 111).

These efforts to define Sanātana Dharma underscore the difficulty of expressing it in binary terms. This is mainly due to the fact that restricting a definition to a diversity and plurality of realities constitutes a considerable conceptual stretch. However, regardless of the terminology in use,[103] Madhāvacārya and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī can be cited as examples pre-colonial attempts to define a Hindu community. In the *Prasthānabheda*, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī hierarchically classified existing philosophies and schools, systematizing them within a framework of *āstika* philosophies in contrast to the *nāstika* schools (see p. 20). Following this nomenclature, in his *Nāstika-āstikavāda* (Karapātrī n.a.), Svāmī Karapātrī utilized the terms *āstika* and *nāstika* to respectively distinguish 'orthodox' from 'unorthodox' schools, or "those who adhere to the *Vedas*" from "those who do not" (see Pellegrini 2009: 65). In addition to this and a statement that the caste system and the *śāstras* are the pillars of Sanātana Dharma, I struggled to find a clear definition of this term by Svāmī Karapātrī. For this reason, to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, I included original material from Svāmī Karapātrī's circles (see subchapter 1.1). Specifically, I analyze an article by the 68th Śaṅkarācārya of Kanchipuram, Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī, titled "Hamāre Dharm Ke Sāmāny Siddhānt," wherein the scholar reflects on what the different religious traditions in India have in common. Next, I report passages of an interview from Facebook with the former Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotirmath and Dwarka Svāmī Svarūpanānda Sarasvatī on the meaning and understanding of Sanātana Dharma. While looking at this material, I follow three main lines of thought to move closer to Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma: (i) family resemblances of Sanātana Dharma, (ii) Sanātana Dharma in opposition to the other *dharmas*, and (iii) the 'constancy of tradition.'[104]

5.2.1 Family Resemblances of Sanātana Dharma

Ferro-Luzzi argues that concepts should not be definable only through "common attributes" and "clearcut boundaries" but also through "family resemblances" or "overlapping similarities." She posits that composite realities like Hinduism should be described as "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (Wittgenstein 1976: 66, cited in Ferro-Luzzi 1989: 187). Ferro-Luzzi thus highlights the concepts of *saṃsāra*, *mokṣa,*

[103] Madhāvacārya and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī do not use the term Sanātana Dharma.

[104] In the following pages, I explore Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma from three different, yet interconnected, angles, without the pretense of reaching a definitive definition. Jason Pollock's article on the three meanings of a text (Pollock 2014, 2024, see also footnote n. 71) led me to conclude that empirical realities, like texts, can have multiple interpretations and definitions, none of which alone fully captures the essence of the thing being defined. Furthermore, the situation becomes significantly more complex when one considers that we are dealing with a theoretical concept that attempts to articulate an 'essence' of empirical plurality. I acknowledge that there are no perfect overarching definitions for Hindu religious manifestations, but I hope the following three sections can be viewed as partial and imperfect endeavors to define a plurality that inevitably evades closed definitions. This 'difficulty' of definition is not merely a peculiarity of Hinduism but applies to most overarching concepts.

and purity and pollution as intersecting traits among Hindu traditions (Ferro-Luzzi 1989: 190–191). Similarly, Geoffrey Oddie (2010: 42–43, see also p. 21) identified the following three main "overlapping similarities" within Hindu traditions: (i) the caste system and the concerns of purity and impurity, (ii) the custom of pilgrimages, and (iii) the importance attributed to the *brāhmaṇs*.

Likewise, Svāmī Karapātrī stated that the caste system and faith in the *śāstras* are the pillars of Sanātana Dharma. In other words, they represent the 'overlapping similarities' of Sanātana Dharma, as he regards them as foundational components and, therefore, common ground of his religious tradition:

> The caste system (*varṇavyavasthā*) based on the *Vedas* and other *śāstras* is our great fort, on which basis India is defending itself" (Karapātrī 2013 [1970]: 154–155).

Similarly, in "Hamāre Dharm Ke Sāmāny Siddhānt,"[105] Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī[106] identified the reverence for *brāhmaṇs* and cows as the common denominator of Hindu traditions. In his article, Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī explored the idea of how (Hindu) religious traditions, despite having different doctrines (*siddhānta*), can be recognized as part of the same *dharma*. Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī observed that in India, there are several *dharmas* without a common doctrine. For instance, the doctrines of Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas differ from each other. Accordingly, Hindu scholars and textual traditions primarily emphasize their disagreements and leave the question of a shared doctrine unresolved. Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī thus argued that "Hindu Dharma can be called 'one *dharma*' only if there is a common doctrine (*siddhānta*) underlying it." After mentioning that this dilemma has occupied his mind many times, Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī concluded that the well-being of cows and *brāhmaṇs* recurs repeatedly in Hindu doctrines and can, therefore, be identified as the common ground of Sanātana Dharma. This is further supported by the fact that *brāhmaṇs* and cows are necessary for the performance of Vedic rituals, which supposedly serve as the foundation and essential tool for the preservation of the world. Below, I present Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī's argument, specifically four examples from Hindu textual traditions where *brāhmaṇs* and cows are given special importance, along with his conclusions:

i. A *śloka,* commonly known as *maṇgalācaraṇa* or *svastivācyamantra*, used in the Yoga traditions and, according to Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī, recited at the beginning and

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[105] The article I have does not include page numbers. Therefore, I am reporting my translations without page references.

[106] "Hamāre Dharm ke Sāmāny Siddhānt" by the Śaṅkarācarya of Kanchipuram, Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī was published in the 9th issue of the first year of *Sanmārga*, on *aṣāḍh śukl* 15 *vi saṃ.* 1997, the 19th July 1940. The magazine *Sanmārga* was founded in 1940 by Svāmī Karapātrī as the official monthly journal of the Dharma Saṅgha—a cultural association founded by Svāmī Karapātrī for the preservation of *dharma*—which aimed to present a 'traditional' perspective on modern India. The magazine's primary purpose was to promote Svāmī Karapātrī's viewpoints and those of the Dharma Saṅgha, a circle of people Svāmī Karapātrī created to preserve and spread Sanātana Dharma. I analyze this article in this context because, although it was not written by Svāmī Karapātrī himself, it appeared on the front page of his magazine and is therefore likely to contain ideas akin to his.

end of *Rāmāyaṇa* readings: "May people be happy. May the king rule the earth with justice. That cows and *brāhmaṇs* may always be happy. That all the words may be happy."[107]

ii. A verse by "Jñānasambandhamūrti Svāmījī," likely Sambandar, a Tamil Śaiva poet from the 7th century: "That *brāhmaṇs*, gods, and cows may all live happily. May there be good rain. May the king rule according to the law. May all the evils go away. That all the worlds may be filled with the words "*hara hara Mahādeva!*" May nobody on earth be sad."[108]

iii. A verse from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.19.65): "I bow to the deity of the pious, patron of the cattle and of brahmins, benefactor of the world. To Kṛṣṇa and to Govinda, I bow and bow again" (McComas 2021: 136).[109]

iv. The *Gītā dhyānam*: "All the Upaniṣads are cows, Krṣṇa is the one who milks them, Arjuna is the calf, the devotees are those who enjoy the great nectar that is the Gītā."[110]

Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī observed that, in these instances, *brāhmaṇs* and cows are mentioned separately as a distinct category, set apart from humans and other living beings. As I anticipated, in his view, *brāhmaṇs* and cows receive a special mention because they are essential for performing the Vedic ritual (*yajña*). In fact, *brāhmaṇs* recite the *mantras* for the oblations, while cows provide clarified butter (*ghī*) and other necessary elements without which the ritual cannot occur. Additionally, in this perspective, the *yajña* has the primary function of sustaining the world: "Engineers divert rainwater and make it flow into a river, but they cannot make it rain. If we want rainwater, we must send something to the *devaloka*. This is stated in the Gītā:"

> In the beginning, Brahma, together with the human beings, created the *yajña*. Then, looking at them, He said: with the performance of this *yajña*, may you people reach prosperity. This *yajña* will fulfill all your wishes. Satisfy the gods with this *yajña*.

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[107] *svasti prajābhyaḥ paripālayantāṃ| nyāyyena mārgeṇa mahīṃ mahīśāḥ|| gobrāhmaṇebhyo śubham astu nityaṃ| lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu||.*

[108] This verse is at the center of a story reported by Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī in "Hamāre Dharm ke Sāmāny Siddhānt:" Sambandar came into conflict with the local monks who had converted the king of Madurai to Buddhism. When the king fell gravely ill, his family, hoping to bring him back to Śaivism, summoned Sambandar to heal him. When Sambandar arrived, a heated dispute broke out between him and the monks. Sambandar challenged the monks, saying, "Use the power of your *mantras* to heal the right side of the king's body, while I will heal the left side. If you fail, you lose, and if I fail, I lose." Next, Sambandar recited ten verses and applied ashes to the king's left side. Instantly, the disease vanished from that side. The Buddhist monks, despite their efforts, couldn't alleviate the disease on the right side. Then they said, "You take care of the right side, and we will handle the left side." Sambandar agreed and applied a little of the ashes to cure the disease on the right side. Immediately, the disease from the right side shifted to the left. Moved by the king's suffering, Sambandar took pity and completely cured him of his illness. He then challenged the monks to a test of truth. He said, "Write your *siddhānta* on a palm leaf, and I will do the same. Let us cast the leaves into the nearby river. The leaf that floats against the current will reveal the true faith." The monks agreed. Both leaves were thrown into the river, but only Sambandar's palm leaf defied the current and floated upstream. Despite this, the monks refused to admit defeat. Sambandar proposed another test: "Let us write our *siddhāntas* again on palm leaves and cast them into a fire. The leaf that burns will be the one with the false belief." They agreed once more. When the leaves were thrown into the flames, the monks' palm leaf burned entirely, while Sambandar's leaf remained intact and unscathed. On Sambandar's leaf was written a powerful verse affirming the truth of his faith. This is the verse quoted here by Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī.

[109] *namo brahmaṇyadevāya gobrāhmaṇahitāya ca| jagaddhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ||.*

[110] *sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ| pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīr bhoktā dugdhaṃ gītāmṛtaṃ mahat||.*

> Those gods may bestow prosperity on people through rain and so on. In this manner, you people may obtain prosperity with the help of each other.[111]

Following this argumentation, even though Sanātana Dharma has intermediate divisions and differences because of different doctrines (*siddhāntas*), there is one common doctrine among them: the well-being of *brāhmaṇs* and cows, which are necessary for the preservation of the world and the prosperity of every living being. Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī thus identifies care for *brāhmaṇs* and cows as the "overlapping similarities" and "family resemblances" of Sanātana Dharma. Additionally, the fact that he mentions the verses (ii) and (iii), which are respectively attributed to the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions, reveals his intention to highlight common ground even between Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas, historically known as antagonistic *saṃpradāyas*.

In conclusion, Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the caste system and faith in the *śāstras* as the pillars of Sanātana Dharma. Additionally, following the thoughts of his associate Svāmī Candraśekharendra, he likely considered the well-being of *brāhmaṇs* and cows, due to their vital role in the *yajña*, as the common ground of Hindu religious traditions.[112]

5.2.2 Sanātana dharma in opposition to other dharmas

As I mentioned, Lutgendorf suggests that the most effective way to define the adherents of Sanātana Dharma is through apophatic terms: those who are neither Ārya nor Brahmo Samājīs, nor Christians, nor supporters of widow marriage, who reject the initiation of untouchables, or who are in favor of the abolition of icon worship (Lutgendorf 1994: 363, see p. 77). In a video published on his official Facebook Page on 04.01.2021,[113] Svāmī Svarūpānanda spoke about Sanātana Dharma and stated that, in comparison to other religions, this is the only *dharma* without a historical founder and the only creed that has been passed down since forever. He regards Sanātana Dharma as the sole eternal *dharma* and examines the credibility of Christian doctrines in comparison to his own religious tradition, referencing the occurrence of Hindu conversions to Christianity. The underlying notion is also that Sanātana Dharma is the best among religious traditions:

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[111] This is my English translation from Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī's Hindi paraphrasis of *BhG. 3.10–11*: *sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā puro'vāca prajāpatiḥ| anena prasaviṣyadhvaṃ eṣa vo'stv iṣṭakāmadhuk|| devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ| parasparaṃ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha||* "Prajāpati of old said, emanating creatures together with sacrifice: "By this shall you procreate; let this [sacrifice] be this wishfulfilling cow [of your] desires." With this may you sustain the deities so that the deities may sustain you. Sustaining one another, you shall obtain the supreme good (*shreya*)" (*BhG 3.10–11*, Feuerstein 2011: 120–123).

[112] Svāmī Karapātrī regards the caste system as a perpetual and immutable structure. In contrast, several scholars problematize the notion of *varṇavyavasthā* as an immutable structure. For instance, Benke (2010) challenges the notion of castes as "eternal essence," arguing instead that these are adaptable constructs influenced by material and political factors. My discourse on the caste system and the relevance of *brāhmaṇs* as 'family resemblances' of Sanātana Dharma does not enter into the details of this scholarly critique but simply explores Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of Sanātana Dharma's 'family resemblances.'

[113] https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3834233873265302, retrieved on 4.01.2021. Jagadguru Shankaracharya Darshan – Badari, Dwaraka, Facebook Page.

Worldwide, various *dharmas* and *saṃpradāyas* believe in an afterlife (*paraloka*) and in God (*īśvara*). The differences among these belief systems create friction, which troubles society. Just as rickshaw and taxi drivers gather in front of railway stations, competing for customers and urging them to enter their cars, people from different *saṃpradāyas* are driven to emphasize their opponents' faults (*anyāya*). However, a question arises: if God created the world (*saṃsāra*), wouldn't it be natural that after creating human beings, He provided them with the teachings of *dharma* for their prosperity in both this world and the next? But which *dharma* is that? The *dharma* that was given by God (*īśvara*) before any other can be called Īśvarī Dharma. We believe that our Sanātana Dharma was not established by any individual; it is handed down through *paraṃparā*. Here, we believe in the *avatāras* of God. We do believe in God, but we do not see Him as the originator of Sanātana Dharma. The *Bhagavadgītā* says: you [*bhagvan*] are undecaying (*avyaya*), you are the protector of Sanātana Dharma. That means that our *dharma* is without beginning (*anādi*).[114]

Regarding the other *saṃpradāyas*, although these are not included in the definition of the word *dharma*,[115] they identify themselves as *dharma*, despite having a date to their beginning. These *saṃpradāyas* emerged at a certain time, and those who founded them are regarded as their leaders (*netā*). For example, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was not a Christian. Muhammad had a father who was not a Muslim. In contrast, you will not find a Sanātana Dharmī whose father was not also a Sanātana Dharmī. There is no designated starting point for Sanātana Dharma, nor does it have a creator. This is why it is considered *sanātana*: '*sanā*,' meaning 'at all times,' and '*tana*,' meaning 'existing.' Sanātana Dharma is the path of eternal elevation towards the unsurpassed good. This defines Sanātana Dharma. Not recognizing the greatness (*garimā*) of Sanātana Dharma, some people are drawn (*pralobhan*) to other religions and wish to convert to them. However, they struggle to do so based on reasoning (*tarka*). For example, the Bible states that Jesus Christ was sentenced to death and resurrected on the third day after his death. In contrast, the Quran claims that Jesus Christ did not rise from the sarcophagus because he was not the one who was condemned. The Quran mentions that when Jesus was condemned, he entered deep meditation and had someone else take his form.[116] It was this person who was condemned and killed, and not Jesus, who instead escaped in the process. Hence, people believed that Jesus was

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[114] Here, Svāmī Svarūpānanda refers to *BhG 11.18* (Feuerstein uses the expression "eternal law" instead of Sanātana Dharma): *tvam akṣaraṃ paramaṃ veditavyaṃ tvam asya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānaṃ| tvam avyayaḥ śāśvatadharmagoptā sanātanas tvaṃ puruṣo mate me||* "You ought to be known as the supreme Imperishable. You are the supreme receptacle of all this. You are the Immutable, the Guardian of the eternal law. You are the everlasting Spirit. [This] is my conviction" (*BhG*, Feuerstein 2011: 224–225).

[115] Here, Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī is probably referring to the aforementioned verse from the *Bhagavadgītā* (11.18), wherein Sanātana Dharma is defined as the *dharma* without beginning.

[116] *Quran 4.157*: "And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger - they slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain" (Yusuf Ali, corpus.quran.com, retrieved on 3.12.2024).

> resurrected on the third day. That of the Bible is a lie. Therefore, what is proven with a lie cannot be permanent (*sthāī*).[117]

Svāmī Svarūpānanda provides a reflection on Sanātana Dharma in contrast to other religions. He notably expresses concerns about the conversion of Hindus to Christianity and to illustrate the religious pressure surrounding conversions in India, he employs a metaphor of rickshaw drivers competing for customers outside an Indian station. Against this background, Svāmī Svarūpānanda makes two primary considerations: (i) first, he presents Sanātana Dharma as the best religion because it has no beginning, as it lacks a historical founder, unlike all other religions. In addition to the idea that Sanātana Dharma represents a direct revelation, Svāmī Svarūpānanda's words, particularly in light of the yuga theory—which posits a gradual decline in global and human conditions—suggest that later religions are inherently less perfect than Sanātana Dharma.

Secondly, (ii) Svāmī Svarūpānanda emphasizes that other religions, like Christianity, are not more logical than Sanātana Dharma. This consideration might arise from the fact that missionaries often sought to prove the illogicity of Hindu religious traditions. In contrast, Svāmī Svarūpānanda seems to imply that the notion that Christianity may be more consistent and rational than Sanātana Dharma is somewhat tenuous, particularly when considering that the founder of Christianity, Jesus, is believed to have died and resurrected after three days.

In the following subchapter, I explore in detail the idea of the constancy of tradition inherent to Sanātana Dharma.

5.2.3 Analysis of the constancy of Sanātana Dharma

For Svāmī Svarūpānanda, the perpetuity of Sanātana Dharma is grounded on the constancy of the *paramparā*, the transmission of knowledge, or the reiteration of Vedic truths from master to disciple:

> The meaning of the word *sanātana* is *sanā*, i.e., *sadākāla* 'at all times' existing. It is called *sanātana* that which is running from ever and will last forever. Sanātana Dharma is the path of the eternal rising to the unsurpassed good. This is the definition

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[117] The discourse goes on: The British who invaded India were Christians. Since they failed to convert the *brāhmaṇs* and other members of the four *varṇas*, they turned to the *ādivāsīs* and people of the lower *jātis* who, influenced by British educational, medical, and operational efficiency, converted to Christianity. However, this was insufficient for the Christians, who also sought to convert the *brāhmaṇs* and other higher *varṇas*. They attempted to do this by appealing to them economically and coercing them to change their *dharma*. The Indian government pays little attention to their actions; people remain vigilant toward Muslims [but not Christians]. For example, many people lack medical knowledge. A woman facing issues during pregnancy and experiencing pain in her abdomen is told that wearing a cross around her neck will help her recover. Once she gives birth and the pain subsides, they claim that everything has been resolved because of the cross. Furthermore, in their efforts to convert as many people as possible to Christianity, they invite young women and offer them clothes and jewelry, provided they marry a Christian. […] About *dharma* and faith (*āsthā*), first and foremost, the true nature (*vāstavik svarūp*) of *dharma* must be made known. If a *dharma* does not satisfy the believer's needs, then an alternative *dharma* may be introduced to them. However, things are handled differently. The greatness (*garimā*) of *dharma* is not made known; on the contrary, what is noble about it is labeled as false. This constitutes a conspiracy against Sanātana Dharma that must be addressed.

> of Sanātana Dharma, the Supreme Self expressed through the eternal scriptures for the sake of the eternal individual souls. [Sanātana Dharma] is beginningless, the meaning of *sanā* is 'from ever existing.'[118]

It follows that for Svāmī Svarūpānanda, the main token of Sanātana Dharma is the continuity of tradition. Similarly, Svāmī Karapātrī used the terms *ādhunika* (lit., modern) and *idānīntana* (lit., 'modern') to pejoratively denote the 'moderns' and their doctrines in comparison with the 'everlasting *dharma*.'[119] In accordance with Svāmī Svarūpānanda's words, Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the perpetuity of Sanātana Dharma as based on the transmission of tradition according to *paramparā*, namely the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student:

> In truth, the Vedic people refer to the *Vedas* as having no human origin because they stem from an unbroken chain of *sampradāya-paramparā* and have no author that can be remembered (Karapātrī 1943: 160).[120]

This "unbroken chain" is thus represented by both the oral and written transmission of authoritative texts (*śāstras*) from *guru* to disciple. These are the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Itihāsas*, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Purāṇas*, *Rāmacaritamānasa*, and so on. Svāmī Karapātrī referred to texts such as the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Rāmcaritamānasa* as embodying the essence of the *Vedas* in a form accessible even to non-twice-born and women (Karapātrī 1979 [2008]: 1639–1640). In his view, both Vedic and post-Vedic literature formed the sacred corpus of the Hindu canon, with post-Vedic literature being a natural progression from the *Vedas*.[121] This does not imply that Svāmī Karapātrī viewed Hindu textual traditions as mere products of encounters and social interactions throughout Indian history and geography. Instead, he likely regarded Sanātana Dharma as an 'indigenous' product, in which Vedic truths were reinterpreted in various forms across different eras and regions. From this perspective, constancy of tradition means ongoing tradition, that is not crystallized in the past, but is continually evolving while theoretically remaining 'true' to itself. Therefore, although Svāmī Karapātrī viewed the authority of the śāstras as absolute and 'essentialized,' he also regarded the religious traditions that stem from them as reflecting the sensibilities of their respective times and contexts. In other words, the authors of the *śāstras* communicate in the language of their eras and contexts, thereby conveying the 'fundamental truths' of Sanātana Dharma

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[118] The same definition is found in the video uploaded on Facebook to which I refer in subchapter 5.2.2. This is however the outcome of an interview I conducted in Bhopal on the 4th of January 2020.

[119] Similarly, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī refers to Svāmī Dayānanda as 'modern.' The same terminology with the same implication can be found in the *Vedāntacandrikā* (1817), a treatise in Bengali written by Mṛtuṃjaya Vidyālaṃkāra, Head Pandit of the Fort William College in Kolkata. This text was composed to oppose Rammohan Roy and his reformist positions against the religious establishment. Here, the modern or innovator (*ādhunika* or *idānīntana*) is presented in opposition to the *śiṣṭa*, the person who is "educated in the tradition and committed to it. Instead the innovator or "founder of new doctrines" (*nūtanasampradāyakārī*) propagates his own delusions (*svakapolakalpita*) and aims at the fulfillment of his own goals (*svaprayojanasiddhi*)" (Halbfass 1990: 210–211).

[120] *sacmuc vaidik log sampradāy-paramparā na ṭūtne aur asmaryymāṇkartṛk hone si hī vedon ko apauruṣey batlāte hain|.*

[121] On the contrary, Dayānanda Sarasvatī saw a breach between a Vedic golden age and 'decadent' modern India. For him, there is no continuity between the *Vedas* and later textual traditions (see subchapters 4.2 and 4.3).

in a manner that is understandable and accessible to their audiences. Despite this, for Svāmī Karapātrī, the foundational texts of Sanātana Dharma remained the *Vedas*. As a result, the fact that Svāmī Dayānanda theoretically grounded his thought in the *Vedas* created common ground between the two scholars, enabling Svāmī Karapātrī to engage in a śāstric debate with the Ārya Samāja's founder.

5.3 Final Remarks

In this chapter, I addressed the first Sanātana Dharma responses to the spread of the Ārya Samāja. I argued that, despite notable differences, Sanātana Dharma groups sought to organize themselves to establish a unified identity against the Ārya Samāja 'other,' and that, a few decades later, Svāmī Karapātrī perpetuated this tendency. I then discussed Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of the Sanātana Dharma community, focusing on his perception of unity within the vast plurality of Hindu religious traditions. I borrowed Ferro-Luzzi's concept of "family resemblances" and concentrated on Svāmī Karapātrī's writings along with the testimonies of Svāmī Candraśekharendra and Svāmī Svarūpanānda. While aware that no clear-cut definitions could be found, I concluded that for Svāmī Karapātrī, the caste system and faith in the *śāstras* are the pillars of Sanātana Dharma. I also inferred that the importance attributed to *brāhmaṇs* and cows represents Sanātana Dharma's "family resemblances," and that its main peculiarity is the constancy of tradition, which contrasts with other creeds that have historical founders instead.

While the preservation and faith in *śāstras* are of primary importance in Svāmī Karapātrī's program, I could not find instances where he provided a list of titles he recognized as authoritative texts.[122] One reason for this might be that I wasn't able to locate it; there are, for instance, several writings of Svāmī Karapātrī that are either 'lost' or, at least, not accessible to me (see Pellegrini 2009: 29–30), and therefore this might be addressed in a text that I could not access. Another reason could be that, according to the concept of continuous revelation, Svāmī Karapātrī migh have regarded a closed list of titles as meaningless, since *śāstras* are continually produced by those who have the proper education and qualifications to engage with them. This would further locate Svāmī Karapātrī as a continuator of 'indigenous' textual traditions as opposed to a constructor of Sanātana Dharma religion. However, on one side, Svāmī Karapātrī spoke for the 'orthodox' Hindu community, continuing the works of Madhāvācarya and Madhusūdhana Sarasvatī, while, on the other, he embodied 20th-century tendencies to present a Hindu unity in the context of the formation of the new independent state.

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[122] Yet, here and there in his writings, Svāmī Karapātrī mentioned a few relevant texts. For instance, in his "Prācīn Vedabhāṣy aur Ādhunik Anusandhān," while analyzing the proper curriculum studiorum of a person investigating the meanings of the *Vedas*, he highlights the importance of the *Kalpasūtra*, the *Mahābhāṣya*, the *Nirukta*, the *Paddhatis*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstra*, the *Nibandha*, Ādi Śaṅkarācarya's writings, the Mīmāṃsā works of Śabara, Kumārila, Maṇḍana, and others. Indeed, the list of authoritative texts provided by Svāmī Karapātrī is shaped by the context in which he is writing. If he were to discuss relevant *śāstras* in a *bhakti* context, he would probably present a different selection of titles.

Therefore, in these respects, borrowing from Zavos's vocabulary (see p. 16), Svāmī Karapātrī aimed to 'horizontally' restructure Hindu religious traditions, meaning that he sought to present them as a unified whole. He thus emphasized certain aspects and practices that were primarily endangered by the English or the English-educated establishment, reformers, Svāmī Dayānanda, and so forth. The aspects he prioritized included the caste system, the *śāstras*, cow protection, and icon worship. According to Zavos's analysis of Sanātana Dharma circles, Svāmī Karapātrī adopted British representational modes, including associations, magazines, and so on. However, unlike Svāmī Dayānanda, he did not seem to borrow religious structures from Christianity. Consequently, rather than reforming the foundations of Hindu orthodoxy, he attempted to present Hindu plurality as belonging to the same thread that is Sanātana Dharma. Unlike Svāmī Dayānanda, who created a new religion (see subchapters 3.2.4 and 8.2), Svāmī Karapātrī aimed to protect the existing traditions by presenting them as a unified entity. In fact, although he upheld debate traditions emphasizing the inherent differences among various *saṃpradāyas*, he still regarded these as part of the same tradition. For example, in debate, he consistently defended Advaita Vedānta doctrines against Dvaita philosophers; nevertheless, he recognized Dvaita philosophers as part of Sanātana Dharma. In this context, a testimony from Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī further clarifies Svāmī Karapātrī's desire to uphold Hindu diversity while presenting it as one:

> Svāmījī used to say that the ultimate objective of the non-duality principle of Śaṅkarācarya, the *prayabhijñā* (the spontaneous self-recognition of the Absolute) of Śiva worshippers, the supremely ardent devotion of Viṣṇu worshippers, the *bindu* ('drop') of *yogins* and the *kulakuhariṇī* of Śakti worshippers are all to make one come face to face with the Overlord of the infinite universe. Therefore, instead of being opponents of each other, all these approaches are complementary, like brothers born from the same Vedic mother. This all-embracing attitude was seen not only in his ideas but also in his outward appearance. He appeared to be a *śākta* while worshipping Rājarājeśvarī, Parāmbā, Lalitā and *śrīyantra* with a necklace of rock crystals in his hand; while performing *rudrābhiṣeka* (anointing of Śiva) he appeared to be a *śaiva*, with a *śriṅgin* (cow horn-shaped vessel for offering water to the *śivaliṅga*) in his hands, a *rudrākṣa* rosary around his neck and the three marks of Śiva on his forehead; while singing the *puruṣasūkta* hymn, doing his daily *pūjā* (worship) of the *śāligrāma* (Viṣṇu as an an-iconic symbol) with an offering of *tulasī*, waring the *vaiṣṇava* mark, he had the mien of the best of *vaiṣṇavas* (Gabin 2009: 16).

In conclusion, both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī claimed that their thought was based on the authoritative texts. Although they had differing opinions on the extent of the Hindu textual corpus, both scholars' approaches were marked by 'essentialism,' as they asserted that their religious and social visions were derived from the *śāstras*, and therefore pure and fundamentally true. Nonetheless, Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's 'essentialisms' had different nuances. On the one hand, Svāmī Dayānanda postulated a Vedic religion, or Ārya Dharma, as the primordial and perfect religion founded on the principles of the *Vedas*. For the founder of the Ārya Samāja, the *Vedas* represented the universal revelation encompassing the entirety of human knowledge, including past, present, and future religious, philosophical, technological, and scientific wisdom. Thus, according to Svāmī Dayānanda,

the full range of human possibilities was contemplated in the four *Saṃhitās*. In other words, Svāmī Dayānanda's Ārya Dharma was a closed system grounded in an ancient and crystallized revelation. Thus, although Svāmī Dayānanda claimed to present the original Vedic religion, he instead borrowed elements from the colonial world, thereby creating a 'new hybrid identity' (Michaels 2019: 4). Conversely, Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the *Vedas* as the foundation of Hindu traditions. He considered later śāstric traditions as natural evolutions and, more importantly, adaptations of the *śruti* to the times and conditions of humanity. Differences and contradictions in the authoritative texts hypothetically appealed to the context—especially time and space—in which they were produced and their recipients. Thus, although the *śāstras* allegedly contained the seminal concepts of the *Vedas*, this being the *conditio sine qua non* for their authoritativeness, they were also adapted to (and for) the changing times.[123] This implies that while Svāmī Dayānanda focused on the past to create a future, Svāmī Karapātrī concentrated on the preservation of the transmission of Sanātana Dharma. Thus, for Svāmī Karapātrī, when Svāmī Dayānanda challenged traditional Vedic exegesis, he endangered the transmission of this Vedic truth, its practices (like *mūrtipūjā*), and, therefore, Sanātana Dharma itself. Before entering the core of this discussion in the next chapter, I introduce the persona of Svāmī Karapātrī.

[123] Kane (1977 Vol. 5,2: 1629–1630) cites a passage from the *Śantiparvan* (*Mbh 11.78.32*) attesting that there are legitimate changes in *dharma* across time and space: *bhavaty adharmo hi dharmādharmāvubhāv api| kāraṇād deśakālasya deśakālaḥ sa tadṛśaḥ||* "According to place and time, *dharma* becomes *adharma*, and *adharma* becomes *dharma*: such is the power of place and time."

6. Svāmī Karapātrī

As previously mentioned, my research centers on Svāmī Karapātrī's reaction to Svāmī Dayānanda's critique of icon worship. However, in this chapter, I wish to emphasize that while Svāmī Karapātrī engaged deeply with Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of the *Vedas*, this was just one facet of his scholarly work. Svāmī Karapātrī was a versatile scholar, connoisseur of the *śāstras*, and both a Vedāntin and a *bhakta*. He worked for the revitalization of the Vedic sacrifices (*yajñas*), established Vedic schools, entered into politics, was a *freedom fighter*, founded various associations and two magazines, and engaged in the analysis of European philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Marx. All in all, Svāmī Karapātrī authored more than forty books dealing with religious and socio-political issues.[124]

In the following pages, I first engage with scholarly works that focus on or discuss the activities of Svāmī Karapātrī. Next, I examine Svāmī Karapātrī's life through biographies and hagiographies, drawing comparisons with Svāmī Dayānand's life. I concentrate on Svāmī Karapātrī's activities and ultimately conclude that his main objective was to preserve Sanātana Dharma and, therefore, defend the caste system, the faith in the *śāstras*, and the well-being of cows (see subchapter 5.2).

My primary biographical sources are *Note Biografiche su Svāmi Karapātrī* by Monia Marchetto[125] and the *Introduction* to *The Linga and the Great Goddess* edited by Jean Louis Gabin.[126] I base my study on these works, along with other hagiographical accounts such as *Pujya Svāmī Śrī Karapātrī jī Mahārāj kī Saṃkṣipt Jīvanī* by Svāmī Sadānanda Sarasvatī, known as Vedānti Svāmī, and the *Karapātra Jīvanajāhnavī* compiled by Kṛṣṇa Prasād Śarmā in the *Abhinav Śaṅkar: Svāmī Karapātrī jī Mahārāj*. Additionally, I used Gianni Pellegrini's *Śrīkarapātragranthāḥ* (Pellegrini 2009: 29–111), an annotated list of Svāmī Karapātrī's works, which also includes a compilation of scholars and related publications that mention and examine the monk's works (up until 2009).

Svāmī Karapātrī (1907–1982) was an Indian monk and scholar who played a significant role in the religious, social, and political landscape of 20th-century India. He had a traditional upbringing and was a knowledgeable Sanskrit scholar. He organized and participated in traditional debates and wrote extensively on religious, political, and social issues. Svāmī

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[124] Tripathi (1978: 127–128) notes that during the time of Svāmī Karapātrī, the number of *saṃnyāsīs* writing books was quite limited. Most of these works were philosophical and religious texts that were edited and published by the disciples of the *saṃnyāsīs*, and they were sold at a reasonable price within reach of the masses. Among this small group of *saṃnyāsīs*, he also mentions Svāmī Karapātrī.

[125] Marchetto mainly draws from the *Abhinava Śaṅkara – Svāmī Karapātrī jī Mahārāj* and the *Jīvana Paricaya* by Vedānti Svāmī. She gathers further information from the *Kāśīkhaṇḍokta Pañcakrośātmaka Jyotirliṅga Kāśīmāhātmya* by Kedārnātha Vyāsa published in Varanasi in 1987; the *Karapātrī Caritra* located in the chapters 16–29 from the *Śrīguruvaṃśa Purāṇa* by Śivabodhāśrama Daṇḍisvāmī published in 1999; from Tripathi's *Sadhus of India* published for the first time in 1978, and the *Kāśī kī Pāṇḍitya Paraṃparā* by Upādhyāya Baladeva. She furthers relies on two unpublished dissertations, *Swami Karpatriji, Il tradizionalismo del Vedanta nella cultura e nella società dell'India moderna* by Franco Fioccardi (1991), and *Il Tripurā Rahasya nell'ottica dottrinale e ideologica di Svāmī Karpātrī* by Claudia Ramasso (1996).

[126] Gabin draws from Tripathi's *Sadhus of India*, the *Karapātra Jīvanajāhnavī* located in *Abhinava Śaṅkara – Svāmī Karapātrī jī Mahārāj* (1988), and fieldwork material.

Karapātrī's unwavering focus was on preserving and adhering to the *śāstra*s,[127] while those who disregarded and disrespected them were his primary targets of criticism. In 2020, during the celebrations for the anniversary of Svāmī Karapātrī's *jayantī* (anniversary of birth celebrations) in Jhoteshwar, Svāmī Svarūpānanda, remembered his late friend in a discourse, claiming that his purpose in life was that of putting to rest that "*panthoṃ kī khicḍī*," or 'rabble'[128] of new sects and religions that had 'messily' appeared in 19th and 20th century India, and preserve Sanātana Dharma.

Gianni Pellegrini notices that the numerous near-hagiographic stories about Svāmī Karapātrī and his extensive literary output contrasted with the complete indifference shown toward him by both Indian and Western scholars (Pellegrini 2009: 12). Thus, while Svāmī Dayānanda is well known both in and outside India, and there is a substantial body of scholarly work regarding his figure and the Ārya Samāja, Svāmī Karapātrī's name is recalled by comparatively fewer people. Even in academia, Svāmī Karapātrī has received much less attention. Although some of the schools and associations he founded are still active in India (mainly in the northern regions of the subcontinent and in Varanasi), the extent of his activities remained within Indian borders. In comparison, the Ārya Samāja continues to have numerous branches in India and globally, particularly in areas with a large Indian diaspora. Thus, from a quantitative standpoint, Svāmī Karapātrī's influence was notably less significant than that of Svāmī Dayānanda. Yet, Svāmī Karapātrī's thought remains relevant as he addressed a crucial issue that affected nearly everyone of his era: balancing the demands of a new modern state and economic growth (*vikās*) with the principles of Sanātana Dharma. Throughout his work, Svāmī Karapātrī encouraged Hindus to adhere to *dharma* in modern society. He believed that while dharmic conduct could coexist and eventually facilitate economic development, it was crucial for modernity to submit to *dharma* rather than the reverse. In other words, while compromises on modernity could be made in the name of *dharma*, no compromise with *dharma* could be made in the name of modernity. Such an unpopular position explains why Svāmī Karapātrī's influence remained limited to a smaller audience:[129] he is remembered as '*kaṭṭar*,' a staunch monk who was unwilling to compromise on *dharma*.[130]

Monia Marchetto presents Svāmī Karapātrī as an exponent of Advaita Vedānta, who was also a distinguished *bhakta* and *yogī*. While he was acclaimed as a *jñānaniṣṭha* (lit., fixed in knowledge), he was esteemed as *karmaniṣṭha* (lit., dedicated to action) and was given the title of *dharmasaṃrāṭa* (lit., the emperor of *dharma*) by the *saṃnyāsī* community of Varanasi because of his relentless activities in the "defense of *dharma*" (Marchetto 2009: 22–23). Gianni Pellegrini refers to Svāmī Karapātrī as an "eclectic ascetic," "a rigid and inflexible interpreter

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[127] In chapter 5 , I argued that by using the term *śāstras*, Svāmī Karapātrī referred to the Hindu textual corpus from the *Vedas* to the present. There, I addressed the question of what he means by that term.
[128] *Khicḍī* is an Indian dish made mainly from rice and lentils, often including various vegetables mixed vegetables. This is a fridge raid meal, where everything is cooked in a single pot, resulting in a hodgepodge stew. In this context, this hodgepodge stew is compared to a rabble of "new sects."
[129] In contrast, I argued that Svāmī Dayānanda established a religious and social framework aimed at building a cohesive, strong, and modern nation to combat colonial exploitation.
[130] This is common knowledge I learned during my fieldwork (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction).

and representative of the Śaṅkarian tradition, as well as adapter and uplifter of various aspects of the Hindu culture" (Pellegrini 2009: 11). In his *Sadhus of India*, Tripathi (1978: 64) identifies Svāmī Karapātrī as the leader of the *daṇḍī saṃnyāsī* community of the time.[131] Clemetin-Ojha (2000) refers to Svāmī Karapātrī as the "champion des brahmanes smārta." She further claims that the scholars of the city of Varanasi have increased authority because of the "central role" their city holds in the "Brahmanical universe." In her work, Clemetin-Ojha (2000: 334) speaks of "two antinomian conceptions of authority" among the *smārta*s of North India. One represented by centralized bodies directed by the *jagadgurus* (or Śaṅkarācāryas), and the other spread among the assemblies of *brāhmaṇs* (the *pariṣads*, see also p. 72). She further adds that because of the prominence of Varanasi in matters of *dharma*, the *pariṣads* in Varanasi are more influential than all the others. In this regard, Clementine-Ojha gives the testimony of Baṭukaprasāda Śarmā Śastrī, secretary of the *Śrī Kāśī Vidvat Pariṣād* in Varanasi. He says that he acknowledges only the authority of the *śāstras*, not even that of the *jagadguru*s or *īśvara*, and adds that the Śaṅkarācāryas even consult them (the *Śrī Kāśī Vidvat Pariṣād*) on several dharmic matters. In my opinion, this doesn't actually demonstrate "two antinomian conceptions of authority" but rather illustrates a dynamic interplay of authoritative roles. Svāmī Karapātrī, in fact, dispels this supposed "antinomy" because, while being a sort of *primus inter pares* among the *brāhmaṇs* of Varanasi, he maintained a strong relationship with the seats of the Śaṅkarācāryas. Svāmī Karapātrī was in fact a *daṇḍadhārī* monk of the Sarasvatī family, belonging to the Daśanāmī Saṃpradāya.[132] His guru was Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, who became Śaṅkarācārya of the Jyotirmaṭha in 1941.[133] After him, Svāmī Kṛṣṇabodhāśrama, who closely collaborated with Svāmī Karapātrī throughout his life, became Śaṅkarācārya of the Jyotirmaṭha in 1953. Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī, who was

[131] Although Tripathi's *Sadhus of India* was published for the first time in 1978, this book was actually based on the research he carried out for his Ph.D. thesis *The Religious Mendicants of Uttar Pradesh* which he completed already in 1967. His work focuses on the *sadhus* of Uttar Pradesh, with Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Naimisharanya, Ayodhya, Prayag, Chitrakoot, Mathura, Vrindavan, Haridwar and Rishikesh as the main pilgrimage cities at the center of his fieldwork.

[132] The Daśanāmī Saṃpradāya is a very prominent sect in India, usually identified as an orthodox Śaiva and established by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya formulated ten categories of renunciants: (1) Giri (hill), (2) Puri (city), (3) Bhāratī (goddess of learning), (4) Vana (wood), (5) Parvata (mountain), (6) Āraṇya (forest), (7) Sagara (ocean), (8) Tīrtha (pilgrimage), (9) Āśrama (hermitage), and (10) Sarasvatī (goddess of knowledge). It is believed that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya also established four monasteries (*maṭha*) at the four cardinal points of the subcontinent, each with its respective quarter of influence, with the aim of creating an organized structure for the preservation of *dharma* (see Mishra K.N. and P.N. Mishra 2016: xxi). This is perhaps the most successful form of institution representing a Hindu orthodoxy to a large scale in India. The renouncers of the Daśanāmī order are divided into *daṇḍadhārī*s (staff holders) and *paraṃhamsa*s (without the staff); the *daṇḍadhārī*s being considered more prominent than the *paraṃhamsa*s. Only *brāhmaṇs* can become *saṃnyāsī* of the Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī family, and they only are eligible to hold the staff. *Kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* might be initiated in the other categories of renunciants. In addition to this, the *saṃnyāsin*s are then named after their spiritual level: (1) *kuṭichaka* is the *saṃnyāsin* living in a hut, on the alms he collects from others, spending time in contemplation and worship; (2) *bahūdaka* is the *saṃnyāsin* who cannot accept alms in cash, the (3) *haṃsa*s are well-versed in Vedānta and are on the path to attain enlightenment, while the (4) *paramahaṃsa*s are the ascetics at the highest level of spiritual evolution (see also Clark 2006).

[133] Marchetto (2009: 22) reports that in 1941, Svāmī Karapātri recommended his guru Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvati to the other three Śaṅkarācāryas and the representatives of the *Śrī Kāśī Vidvat Pariṣād* as a suitable candidate to seat on the Jyotiṣpiṭha that had been vacant since 1776.

gurubhāī of Svāmī Karapātrī, became Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotirmath[134] and Dwarka Pīṭha, respectively in 1973 and 1982. Svāmī Karapātrī nominated Nirañjandeva Tīrtha as Śaṅkarācārya of Puri, and after him, Svāmī Niścalānanda Sarasvatī, a former disciple of Svāmī Karapātrī, ascended to the throne of Puri. Additionally, Svāmī Karapātrī sought to revitalize the Sumerupīṭha of Varanasi.

6.1 Svāmī Karapātrī: between biography and hagiography

Similar to the life story of Svāmī Dayānanda, the biographies of Svāmī Karapātrī also intertwine with hagiographical accounts. While Svāmī Dayānanda is portrayed by his followers as a brilliant, rational, and driven individual with extraordinary mental abilities and perhaps some divine attributes, Svāmī Karapātrī is at times depicted as an *avatāra* who descended in India to protect Sanātana Dharma.

Abhinav Śaṅkar, lit., 'modern Śaṅkara,' serves as the title of an extensive commemorative volume celebrating the life of Svāmī Karapātrī. This suggests that Svāmī Karapātrī was viewed by his followers as a modern Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and, by extension, as an *avatāra* of Śiva. In discussing the title of *Abhinav Śaṅkar*, Pellegrini (2009: 12) draws a parallel between the historical contexts of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's and Svāmī Karapātrī's 'descents' to earth. The birth, or descent, of the Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (the founder of Svāmī Karapātrī's monastic order) is often described by his followers as a necessary event prompted by the spread of Buddhist and Jain doctrines, which threatened the caste system and the belief in the *Vedas*. The main motive for the descent of the *avatāras* in India is often attributed to the need to protect *dharma* from external threats. Similarly, Lorenzen observes that, theoretically, a "god or supernatural person manifests himself on earth in periods when heresy and evil are triumphing and true religion and morality need to be rescued from the depths to which they have fallen" (Lorenzen 1976: 95).[135] This point is further proven in Mādhava's *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*,[136] where the birth of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is described as the descent of Śiva to earth.[137] According to this narrative, when in heaven the gods lamented that Viṣṇu had incarnated in Buddha to mislead men, "corrupt (orthodox) doctrine, despise *brahman* and

[134] This seat was subject of legal action between Vasudeva and Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī. In 2017, however, the Supreme Court ruled against Vasudeva's eligibility for the seat of Śaṅkarācārya because he did not comply with the prerequisites for this office (he had been married, among other reasons). In December 2017, at Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī was anointed to the seat of Śaṅkarācārya in the presence of delegations from the other two Śaṅkarācāryas of Puri and Shringeri. In 2022, following the passing of Svāmī Svarūpānanda, his disciples Svāmī Sadānanda and Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda succeded as the Śaṅkarācāryas of Dwarka and Jyotirmath, respectively.

[135] On this, see *BhG 4.7–8*: *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata| abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṃ srjāmy ahaṃ|| paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām| dharmasaṃsthāpanārthāya saṃbhavāmi yuge yuge||* " For whenever there is a diminuition of the law, O descendent-of-Bharata, and an upswing of lawlessness, then I create Myself [in manifest form]. For the protection of good [people], for the destruction of wrongdoers, for the sake of establishing the law, I come-into-being from age to age (*BhG*, Feuerstein 2011: 136–137).

[136] Lorenzen (1976: 90) argues that this is the most relevant among the hagiographies of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

[137] Although Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is commonly depicted as an *avatāra* of Śiva, studies like that of Clark (2006) claim that his hagiographies should rather be included in the series of Vaiṣṇava hagiographies (Clark 2006: 148).

reject the customs of class and stage of life (*varṇāśrama-dharma*)," Śiva descended on earth to "establish the path of *śruti*" (Lorenzen 1976: 92–93) and protect Sanātana Dharma. This mythological sketch reinforces the idea that the Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was born at a time of need to preserve *dharma* and destroy *adharma*. From the Sanātani perspective, just like during the time of the Buddha, Sanātana Dharma in modern India was once again in a precarious situation. Consequently, Svāmī Karapātrī was also regarded by his followers as an *avatāra* born to uphold *dharma* and eradicate *adharma*. In Lutgendorf's words, Svāmī Karapātrī came to be perceived as "the visible manifestation of Shiva" (Lutgendorf 1994: 384). At his arrival, the crowds of Varanasi would honor him, shouting their welcome with "*hara hara mahādeva*!" (Lutgendorf 1994: 384). In short, many viewed Svāmī Karapātrī as a modern version of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and, like Ādi Śaṅkarācārya before him, an *avatāra* of Śiva.[138]

Svāmī Vedāntī's hagiography provides a detailed narrative of Svāmī Karapātrī's path to monastic life. As discussed in subchapter 3.1.2, Svāmī Karapātrī's process of renunciation contrasts sharply with that of Svāmī Dayānanda. While Svāmī Dayānanda left home without his father's approval, thus breaking away from his family tradition, Svāmī Karapātrī departed from home only after his father's consent. Additionally, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's hagiographies significantly influenced Svāmī Vedāntī's narrative: this is evident when Svāmī Karapātrī compares his mother to Aryamba, the mother of Śaṅkara (see next page). Conversely, Lorenzen (1976: 96) notes that a recurring theme in the hagiography of the Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, as in many Śaiva hagiographies, is the conflict between the duties of a householder and those of a renouncer. As a son, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya had particular responsibilities towards his family and ancestors, including performing rituals and ensuring the continuation of the family line (*gṛhastāśrama dharma*). However, he also had the right and duty to commit to renunciation and the path of salvation (*saṃnyāsa dharma*). According to Lorenzen (1976: 96), the Śaivas link Vaiṣṇavism with the active life of the householder and Śaivism with renunciation. Svāmī Vedāntī's hagiography also emphasizes the conflict between the *dharma* of the *gṛhastha* and that of the *saṃnyāsī*, particularly when discussing a young Harinārāyaṇa (Svāmī Karapātrī's birth name), who constantly tried to escape his home. Only after facing repeated reprimands from his father did Svāmī Karapātrī agree to postpone his *saṃnyāsa* until he could provide his father with an heir. Although Svāmī Karapātrī's renunciation is a historical reality, the surrounding tensions and rationale seem to frame his life story within the context of the Śaivas hagiographies. However, in this instance, the conflict between the *dharma* of the *gṛhastha* and that of the *saṃnyāsī* appears to reach a practical solution: it is only after fathering a child that Svāmī Karapātrī embraced renunciation. This could be interpreted as an effort to reconcile what Lorenzen describes as the Vaiṣṇava *dharma* of the *gṛhastha* with the Śaiva *dharma* of the *saṃnyāsī*.[139] In this way, Svāmī Karapātrī's hagiography 'does not choose' between Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas but rather embraces both, reinforcing Svāmī Karapātrī's desire to present Sanātana Dharma as a unity within plurality. In the following

[138] Lorenzen (1976: 95) observes that "by medieval times almost every famous sage or saint was regarded as the full or partial incarnation of one god or the other."
[139] However, one should note that although Svāmī Karapātrī's promise to his father was that of fathering a child so that the lineage was assured, Svāmī Karapātrī fathered a baby girl which in terms of Vedic *dharma* and family succession has no bearing.

lines, I present a narration of Svāmī Karapātrī's renunciation as described in Svāmī Vedāntī's hagiography:

> In the district of Pratāpgaḍh, there is a small village called Bhaṭnī. A family of Sarayapārīṇa *brāhmaṇs*, that of Pandit Rāmanidhi Ojhā, lived there. […] Pandit Rāmanidhi Ojhā had three sons, the youngest of whom was Haranārāyaṇa, born on the day of *śrāvaṇa-śukla dvitīyā* in *vikraṃ* 1964, which was a Sunday in the year 1907 of the Christian calendar.
>
> Since he was about 9 years old, Haranārāyaṇa would often run away from home. His father and older brother would search for him, and when they found him, they would bring him back and scold him. However, this had little effect on the boy. How many times did he run away from home only to be brought back? Day by day, the ephemeral nature of the world deepened its hold on the boy's heart […]
>
> The father believed that if Haranārāyaṇa got married, he would immerse himself in life of a *gṛhastha* and finally stop fleeing from home. Accordingly, he arranged the marriage. […] The wedding took place, but no passion ignited in the boy's detached heart. His detachment from the world remained unchanged. One day, when he had the chance, Haranārāyaṇa grabbed the door handle and attempted to escape, but his father caught him once again. Haranārāyaṇa declared, "No, father! I will not come back home. I want to leave; let me go." But his father insisted, "For the protection of our lineage, I want a son from you, Haranārāyaṇa! Once you fulfill that wish, I will let you go where you want." The son acquiesced to his father's wish.
>
> Now Haranārāyaṇa was living the life of a *gṛhastha*, confined like a prisoner within the walls of that house, waiting for the day when his father's wish would be fulfilled. His daily practices remained unchanged: he continued to perform *pūjā*, chant *bhajans*, and read the true treatises.
>
> Haranārāyaṇa was 17 years old when Bhagavatī was born in his house as a baby girl; his father's wish was finally fulfilled. Haranārāyaṇa then thought, "What is my duty in this house now?" He resolved to leave while his father stood before him. Haranārāyaṇa addressed him, "Father, you cannot break your promise now: this house suffocates me, it will consume me! Free me from this house prison." Behind his father stood his mother, and the little baby girl laid in his wife's lap. His father remained silent, but his mother stood in front of him. "Do not be an obstacle to my spiritual path, mother!" Haranārāyaṇa declared. "Save your tears and let me go."
>
> "But how can I live without you, Haranārāyaṇa?" his mother asked, tears streaming down her face. "Just like the mother of Śaṅkara, so is my mother!" declared Haranārāyaṇa. He went further, and his wife stood up, holding their baby girl in her arms. She said, "You're leaving, my lord? Where does that leave me?" Haranārāyaṇa replied, "At the feet of my parents; they are also your mother and father, so please take care of them."

> The entire family cried when the boy left home. He never returned to his home. […] He forgot the love for his parents, abandoned his attraction to his wife, broke like a straw the enchantment for his little sweet baby girl, and went away… (Vedāntī Svāmī 1988: 1–4).

After leaving his home, Svāmī Karapātrī traveled to Prayag Raj, where he met his *guru*, Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, the future Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotiṣapīṭha, who initiated him into *brahmācarya* and named him Haricaitanya. Following the guidance of Svāmī Brahmānanda, Svāmī Karapātrī then enrolled in the Sāṅgveda, a prestigious institution for Vedic studies in Narvar, under the direction of the *naiṣṭhika brahmacārī* Jīvandatta Maharāja. Here, he studied Sanskrit grammar, Vedānta, and other *darśana*s under the supervision of Svāmī Viśveśvarāśrama, in conformity to the *guruśiṣyaparaṃparā* model. Svāmī Karapātrī's hagiographies (Vedānti Svāmī, Śarmā 1988; see also Marchetto 2009, Gabin 2009) describe him as an extraordinary student who mastered grammar in just 11 months and the *darśanas* in 13 months; overall, he completed an education that typically requires 12 years in only two years (Gabin 2009: 27). Svāmī Karapātrī's remarkable ability and speed in learning the *śāstras* align with the impressive learning skills attributed to other claimed *avatāras*. However, the *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* reveals that the Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was somewhat more prodigious than Svāmī Karapātrī, as by the age of 5, he had already mastered the *Vedas*, *Vedaṅgas*, logical philosophy (*ānvīkṣīkī*), Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Mīmāṃsā, and intuitively understood Vedānta (Lorenzen 1967: 97).

After completing his studies, Svāmī Karapātrī went to Uttarakhand, where he lived as an ascetic for three years in the snowy wilds of the Himalayan foothills. This is when he began to be called Karapātrī, meaning the one who uses his hands (*kara*) as a bowl (*pātra*)–as he collected alms directly in his closed hands, in the gesture of a bowl, and ate from them. After three years of religious austerities (*tapas*), it is said that Svāmī Karapātrī attained liberation (*mokṣa*) and the state of *paramahaṃsa*.[140] In 1931, returning from his ascesis, he went back to Narvar, where his companions acknowledged that he had achieved the highest degree of spiritual evolution. He then moved to Varanasi, where Svāmī Brahmānanda initiated him into the *daṇḍa saṃnyāsa* and gave him the name of Svāmī Hariharānanda Sarasvatī; yet, the 24-year-old newly ordained monk became mainly known by the name of Svāmī Karapātrī.

The life accounts of Svāmī Karapātrī as a *saṃnyāsī* focus on his activities in defense of *dharma*. Like the Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Svāmī Karapātrī too is portrayed as tirelessly travelling throughout the subcontinent—often on foot—to disseminate his ideas, engaging and organizing numerous debates with many opponents, discussing several religious and social topics. Hagiographies and biographies record his first public religious debate (*śāstrārtha*) during the 1932 Kumbha Mela in Haridwar: a young Svāmī Karapātrī discussed with Pandit

[140] Śarmā explains the meaning of *paramahaṃsa*, lit, the supreme swan: as the swan is able to separate milk from the water when they are mixed together, in the same way, the one who can discriminate (*viveka*) between *ātma* and *anātma*, the seer (*dṛk*) and what is seen (*dṛśya*), and *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, is called *haṃsa*, or swan. According to Advaita Vedānta, there is no reality (*sattā*) in what is seen (*dṛsya*). In this manner, in the individual who perceives the entirety of what is seen (*sampūrṇa dṛśya*) as false (*bādha*), only the pure consciousness (*śuddha cetana*) remains. This person is called *paramahaṃsa* (Śarmā 1988: unnumbered page between 75–76).

Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946) for over two days on the issue whether the *praṇava auṃ* should be given as a *mantra* to non-twice-born or not, and won the debate (Vedānti 1988: 6, Marchetto 2009: 26).[141] Next, Vedāntī Svāmī recollects Svāmī Karapātrī's debates with Svāmī Rāmadeva regarding the question of whether *saṃnyāsīs* may or may not have material goods and with Svāmī Vidyāmānya Tīrtha of the *Madhvasaṃpradāya* on Vedānta (Vedānti 1988: 12–14, Marchetto 2009: 26). Marchetto notes that Svāmī Karapātrī earned a reputation as an outstanding debater (*śāstrārthī*) capable of leading dialectical discussions on various subjects (Marchetto 2009: 26, see also chapter 7 on the relevance of debate for Svāmī Karapātrī and the Sanātanīs).

In 1940, Svāmī Karapātrī established the Dharma Saṅgha, a Sanātana Dharma circle with the aim of revitalizing India's dharmic society, namely a society founded on the principles of *dharma* as articulated in the *śāstras*. To expand his association, Svāmī Karapātrī undertook journeys (*dharmayātrās*) throughout the subcontinent. According to Marchetto (2009: 23), another motivation for establishing the Dharma Saṅgha was the disruptive actions carried out in Varanasi by supporters of the Ārya Samāja, who displayed their hostility as the Sanātanīs gathered for public meetings. Marchetto (2009: 23) notes that during this period, Svāmī Karapātrī coined a famous motto that continues to be recited in many parts of India before rituals, meetings, and assemblies:

> May *dharma* be victorious, may *adharma* be destroyed, may there be goodwill in the living beings, may the world prosper, Śiva is everywhere![142]

Soon, the verses "hail to the cow mother!" and "stop cow slaughter!"[143] were added to the motto, which then accompanied Svāmī Karapātrī's actions against cow slaughter (see subchapter 6.3.2). Svāmī Karapātrī also founded two magazines: the monthly *Sanmārga* (the Right Path) and the weekly *Siddhānta* (The Doctrine).[144] These magazines became crucial tools for disseminating the message of the Dharma Saṅgha and are recognized by Gianni Pellegrini (2009: 31) as the voice of Svāmī Karapātrī. *Sanmārga* was established as the official magazine of the Dharma Saṅgha, reporting on the organization's activities, including assemblies, debates, Vedic rituals, and the establishment of new branches throughout the subcontinent. The magazine's numbering indicates that its inaugural issue was published in October/November 1939. However, Gianni Pellegrini (2009: 31) discovered copies of *Sanmārga* from 1935 and 1937. How is this possible? Could these have been individual pamphlets distributed to convey a message, and later, after receiving a positive response, a decision was made to create a formal magazine? We do not know. Gianni Pellegrini indicates

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[141] Svāmī Karapātrī's position was that according to the *śāstra*s, only twice-born have the eligibility (*adhikāra*) to the syllable '*auṃ*.'

[142] *dharm kī jay ho/ adharm kā nāś ho/ praṇyoṃ meṃ sadbhāvanā ho/ viśv kā kalyāṇ ho/ har har mahādev!*". According to Lutgendorf (1994: 390), here *dharma* means "Sanatani religion and social hierarchy," and *adharma*, "any effort to promote social change."

[143] *Gomātā kī jay ho/ gohatyā band ho!*

[144] The following insights on *Sanmārga* and *Siddhānta* are based on the issues of the magazines published between 1940 and 1946, which are preserved at the Giorgio Cini Library. While the library has nearly the complete collection of *Sanmārga* and *Siddhānta* issues up to 1946, only a few scattered issues exist after this date.

that *Sanmārga* was still being published as recently as 2009, under the editorship of Vīrabhadra Miśra, the head of the Saṅkaṭa Mocana temple in Varanasi, albeit in a different format. *Siddhānta*, on the other hand, is a weekly newspaper founded in 1940, which, according to Gianni Pellegrini (2009: 31), should have been published at least until 1975.[145]

As I just mentioned, the magazines *Siddhānta* and *Sanmarga* primarily reflected the thoughts of Svāmī Karapātrī. However, he was not the only writer for these magazines; many other authors contributed to the journals, including prominent figures such as Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī (see in the previous chapter, 5.2.1), Svāmī Kṛṣṇabodhāśrama, and Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī—three significant Śaṅkarācārya authorities in India at that time. Each issue typically featured one or more editorials alongside various articles from occasional contributors. Overall, these magazines explore three main themes: (i) *dharma*, (ii) doctrine and religious-philosophical speculations, and (iii) worldview.

i. *Dharma*: Both magazines consistently focused on highlighting the significance of *dharma* from both individual and political perspectives. They explored how individuals can embody *dharma* in their daily lives and proposed a vision for an independent India that incorporated the 'needs' of Sanātana Dharma into its governance. Key issues discussed included maintaining the caste system, upholding traditional educational models (*guruśiṣyaparaṃparā*), reverence for the *śāstras*, conserving Vedic traditions, prohibiting cow slaughter, and concerns about the spread of the English educational model across the subcontinent.
ii. Doctrine and religious-philosophical speculations: numerous articles explored doctrinal and religious-philosophical topics, particularly emphasizing Ādvaita Vedānta, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, and devotional literature associated with Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Devī, and Śiva.
iii. Worldview: foreign lifestyles and viewpoints, especially those from Europe and the United States, were discussed. Additionally, various articles explored academic 'Orientalist' works and analyzed books written in Europe and the United States.

Another significant endeavor of Svāmī Karapātrī, which is also directly connected to this case study, was the revitalization of Vedic sacrifices. As I discuss in subchapter 8.2, Svāmī Dayānanda argued that the true purpose of the Vedic *yajña* was not the offerings to the gods but the purification of the air. Consequently, likely in an effort to challenge this perspective and, more importantly, to revive a practice that was gradually diminishing, Svāmī Karapātrī placed significant emphasis on promoting the performance of *yajñas* in their 'traditional' role of offering to the gods. As noted by Vedāntī Svāmī (1988: 14–15), Svāmī Karapātrī initiated the revival of Vedic *yajñas* during the 1942 Kumbh Melā at Prayag Raj. This restoration effort became a primary focus for Svāmī Karapātrī and the Dharma Saṅgha. In the same year, upon returning from the Kumbh Melā, Svāmī Karapātrī conducted a *śatmukh koṭi homa*, offering oblations on a hundred fire altars in Delhi. According to Vedāntī Svāmī (1988: 16), the sacrifice was so magnificent that it appeared as if it had been carried out during the reign of King

[145] Starting in 1955, the twelfth year of publication, *Siddhānta* transitioned to a fortnightly schedule (it was weekly until 1946, and at least from 1955 onwards, it became fortnightly, though possibly earlier).

Vikramāditya.[146] In the month of Māgha (January/February) in 1943, a large *yajña* took place in Indraprastha (Delhi). People came from near and far to witness the *yajña*, and a bridge was constructed using military boats. Later, a Dharma Saṅgha Mahāvidyālaya was established on the same site. In early 1944, a major *śatmukh koṭi homa* occurred in the Unnao district of Kanpur. That same year, a *yajña* was organized in Varanasi, during which 11 *atirudra yajñas*, one *mahārudra yajña*, and 108 *śrimadbhāgavāta saptāha yajñas* were conducted. The four Śaṅkarācāryas were also present, and a crowd filled the entire area from Nagwa to the banks of the Ganges (Vedāntī Svāmī 1988: 16–18). *Sanmārga* and *Siddhānta* report a rapid expansion and intensification of *yajña* performances in North India during this period. Alongside the ritual performances, Svāmī Karapātrī continued the tradition of the *Sarvaveda Śākhā Sammelans*, a conference series where *Vedas*-related matters were discussed. These events, held regularly, brought together representatives from various Vedic schools and doctrines across the country, and occasionally, even Ārya Samāja scholars participated in the debates (Marchetto 2009: 27). Before Svāmī Karapātrī, Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī and Lalaprasad Miśra used to organize the same conferences and invite the Ārya Samājī to debate (see p. 107).

In 1978, Svāmī Karapātrī was awarded an honorary degree of *vācaspati* by the Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya in Varanasi. The following year, he founded the Veda Śāstrānusandhāna Kendra, an institute dedicated to Vedic research in Kedarghat, Varanasi. In the same year, the Mahārāja of Varanasi publicly presented the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (Gabin 2009: 38). Svāmī Karapātrī spent his final years in Varanasi and passed away on February 7, 1982, at the age of 75.

6.2 Svāmī Karapātrī: Dharma, Dharma, Dharma

As mentioned, Svāmī Karapātrī identified the caste system and the *śāstras* as the pillars of Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2 and Karapātrī 2013 [1970]: 154–155), with *brāhmaṇs* and cows representing the "family resemblances" of Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2.1). It follows that, while aiming to preserve Sanātana Dharma, Svāmī Karapātrī focused on defending these aspects of Hindu religious traditions. Consequently, beyond his scholarship on Advaita Vedānta and *bhakti* traditions, Svāmī Karapātrī directed his efforts toward the protection of the caste system, the *śāstras,* and cows.

According to Svāmī Karapātrī, in the past, the caste system and faith in the *śāstras* enabled the Sanātanīs not only to resist the spread of Buddhism but also to drive it to the extent that Buddhists were forced to leave India to propagate their teachings. In contrast, the Jains, who initially opposed the caste system, were eventually absorbed by it (Karapātrī 2013 [1970]: 155). According to Svāmī Karapātrī, although India experienced numerous invaders throughout history, such as Alexander the Great and various Muslim forces, the Hindus managed to culturally resist these intrusions on the grounds of their caste system and faith

[146] King Vikramāditya is a legendary ruler who is said to have defeated the Śaka dynasty around the 1st century BCE. The name Vikramāditya, which literally translates to 'the Sun of Heroism,' was also a title adopted by several kings in ancient India.

in the *śāstras* (2013 [1970]: 155). Yet, in Svāmī Karapātrī's view, English domination on the subcontinent had a different impact on India than previous forms of domination.[147] Svāmī Karapātrī argued that European dominance intentionally aimed to undermine both the caste system and faith in Hindu *śāstras*. This goal was primarily achieved through British education policies and European scholarship on Hindu texts, resulting in a disconnection between Hindus and their caste structures as well as their devotion to Vedic scriptures. In fact, a key concern for Svāmī Karapātrī was the spread of English schools and the impact of their ideology and methods on Hindu society. In Svāmī Karapātrī's view, European education tended to challenge the authority of the *śāstras* and the existence of the caste system, undermining Hindus' faith in the establishment. Accordingly, although in a 1975 article, Heimsath noted that the implementation of Macaulay's plan (see p. 50) was already in jeopardy, in 1970, Svāmī Karapātrī wrote that Macaulyism had been effective in shaking the foundations of Sanātana Dharma:

> Macaulay's education plan dismantled many of our cultural strongholds. He [Macaulay] argued that there was no need to directly destroy Hindu Dharma and that, due to English education, within 30 years in Bengal, there would not be a single practitioner of *mūrtipūjā*. Although his desire could not be fulfilled, the foundations of our śāstric and dharmic beliefs were certainly shaken by English education. Today, even those who embrace the concepts of culture (*saṃskṛti*) and Hindu-ness (*hindutva*) exhibit a disdain for the *śāstras* and the practices and thoughts (*ācār-vicār*) advocated by the *śāstras*. The main goal of that education was to eradicate the pride and belief of Hindus in their *śāstras*, *dharma*, and śāstric culture (Karapātrī 2013 [1970]: 155–156).

To counter this trend and prevent further 'Europeanization' of Hindus, Svāmī Karapātrī emphasized the importance of maintaining an educational system independent of government policies (Śarmā 1988: 62). When he expressed his concerns about India's educational model, the subcontinent had enjoyed over 20 years of freedom from British rule. However, he lamented that the Indian political class was mainly educated in English institutions, and despite India's political independence, substantial work remained to be done in order to achieve true intellectual independence. To keep Sanskrit studies independent from government control, Svāmī Karapātrī established a school called the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣāmaṇḍala, which was based on the traditional model of the *guruśiṣyaparaṃparā*. Eventually, multiple branches of this school emerged throughout northern India, each accommodating hundreds of Sanskrit students. To represent the needs of Sanātana Dharma to the government, Svāmī Karapātrī formed a political party named the Akhila Bhāratīya Sanātana Dala, as well as a youth organization called the Dharmavīra Dala, and a women's group, the Mahilā Saṅgha (Gabin 2009: 29–30). Svāmī Karapātrī also ventured into a critique of the philosophical milestones of European society, challenging the thought of scholars like Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Darwin, and others,[148] as their ides were spreading in the subcontinent through British education. Svāmī Karapātrī was also concerned about the activities of early Indologists and the Indological 'rationalization' of the Vedic corpus, which

[147] This position is shared by Halbfass, too (1990: 217, see also p. 11).
[148] These critical analyses can mainly be found in the *Marxvada aur Rāmarājya* (2018 [1957]).

contributed to undermining the faith of Hindus in the *śāstras*. According to Svāmī Karapātrī, European researchers were motivated not only by curiosity but also by a desire to undermine the credibility of Sanātana Dharma for the propagation of Christianity.[149] Overall, Svāmī Karapātrī criticized Indological research for challenging established commentarial traditions and for evaluating the Hindu *śāstras*' statements and interpretations of Vedic meanings in what appeared to be an arbitrary manner. He wrote:

> The one who has studied the *Vedas*, which consist of *mantras* and *Brāhmaṇas*, with meaning derived from the teachers' lineage (*ācārya-paramparā*), and is diligent in studying Mīmāṃsā, *Kalpasūtras*, and the manuals (*paddhatis*); who thoroughly examines the meanings according to grammar, *Nirukta*, Mīmāṃsā, *Kalpasūtras*, and the manuals (*paddhatis*) whose interpretations are confirmed by the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstra*, the *Nibandha*, Śaṅkara, Śabara, Kumārila, Maṇḍana, and others, who adhere to the custom (*rīti*) of the *yajña* that continues even today. Is his meaning [of the Vedas, viz., his interpretation of the Vedic words] credible? [Or] should we believe in the random quest of someone who can't even pronounce a single *mantra* according to the tradition (*rīti*) of the Vedics? (Karapātrī 1943: 132).

Evidently, Svāmī Karapātrī considered it quite inappropriate for European researchers to evaluate the content of the *Vedas*, as they lay outside their tradition (*paramparā*), lacked in-depth knowledge of the Hindu *śāstras* (as mentioned above), and had not undergone the rituals enabling them to engage with Vedic matters (*upanayana*, etc.). However, the results of European research circulated throughout the subcontinent and influenced many Hindus. In Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis, Indologists marked the beginning of a new phase in Vedic research, characterized by scholars pursuing new interpretations of the *Vedas* rather than relying on the traditional ones. Svāmī Karapātrī regarded Svāmī Dayānanda's Vedic exegesis as a result of this trend. Overall, Svāmī Karapātrī recognized a growing interest in reevaluating the meanings of the *Vedas*, moving away from established commentary

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[149] About this, Svāmī Karapātrī wrote: "[…] In a letter to one of his relatives, Max Müller wrote: "I am publishing a simplified version of the *Ṛgveda* to highlight the weaknesses of Hindu Dharma for Christians, so as to facilitate the spread of Christianity." It is clear that by claiming that the *Vedas*–on which the faith in Hindu Dharma is based—are created by man and describing them as songs of people tending to cows and sheep, along with reporting some silly meaning coming up to his mind, there emerges a weakening of faith and belief in the sacred texts, which might lead Hindus to stray from the Hindu Dharma. For this reason, even today, Christian missionaries are making a concerted effort to teach Sanskrit to Christian propagators, placing great emphasis on enabling them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the *Vedas*, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and more. They engage in debates with Hindu scholars, defeat them, and propagate Christianity (Karapātrī 2013 [1970]: 154). I was unable to retrieve this citation while searching in *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller* (Müller 2005). Nonetheless, similar concepts emerge from his correspondence. For instance, Müller wrote "[…] I of course shall be glad if the *Rig-veda* is dealt with in the *Edinburgh Review*, and if Wilson would write from the standpoint of a missionary and would show how the knowledge and bringing into light of the *Veda* would upset the whole existing system of Indian theology, it might become of real interest" (Müller 2005: 112). He further writes to his wife: "I hope I shall finish that work [the *Veda*], and I feel convinced, though I shall not live to see it, that this edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India, and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what that what that root is, is, I feel sure, the only way of uprooting all that sprung from it during the last 3,000 years" (Müller 2005: 346).

traditions. He believed that this shift was due to the British educational system, which had led many Hindus to distance themselves from the traditional mindset that prioritized *śāstra* authority above all. He wrote:

> Even the Jains and Buddhists, who opposed the *Vedas*, recognized that the meanings of the *Vedas* (*vedārtha*) were those described by the Pūrvottara Mīmāṃsā. While they did not believe in the authority of the *Vedas*, they did not argue that this was not the meaning of the *Vedas* (*vedārtha*). Some diplomats (people with agendas, negative connotation), German and English scholars, who were preoccupied with spreading their Christian *dharma* to persuade Indians to disbelieve the *Vedas*, or were driven by some form of curiosity, became actively involved in the inquiry into the meanings of the *Vedas* (*vedārtha-vicāra*). Acknowledging the Aryan people's strong belief in the *Vedas* and recognizing that it was impossible to undermine their authority or eliminate them, the European scholars began to create confusion around their meanings. A personal letter from Max Müller highlights this fact: in a letter, he shared his intention: "I believed it was essential to produce an edition of the *Vedas* for the promotion of the Christian faith. With this, the limitations of Vedic Dharma will become clear." At times, in order to gain the trust of the Vedics, he described the words of the *Vedas* as "the first language of humankind" and spoke very highly of them. Then, he began to suggest that these *mantras* could decorate a museum but had no role in lingering around in today's world. Consequently, some people, due to their stubbornness to see history, asserted that the *śūdras* had no place in the caste system (*varṇavyavasthā*), were non-Aryan, and slaves (*dasyus*). [They argued that the *śūdras*] were included at a later time in the Hindu Dharma, and then engaged in the production of Vedic commentary (*vedabhāṣya*) to sow discord among us. Some sought to prove that the *Vedas* were recent, others aimed to demonstrate that they had a human author by refuting the non-human origin (*apauruṣeyatā*) of all the *Vedas* (*pauruṣeya*). In conclusion, the primary objective of these people was to challenge the foundations of Vedic Dharma. Some may have participated solely out of curiosity. In addition to Max Müller, numerous other Western scholars, such as Weber and Roth, dedicated considerable effort to the study of the *Vedas*. Some praised Sāyaṇa's commentary, finding it significantly helpful for understanding the meanings of the *Vedas* (*vedārtha-nirṇaya*). However, it should also be noted that Roth and others advised against even touching Sāyaṇa's commentary, asserting that sectarianism (*sāmpradāyiktā*) was embedded within it. For this reason, Sāyaṇa's commentary supposedly obstructed the understanding of the true meanings of the *Vedas*. As a result, a growing number of scholars in ancient languages and history began examining the meanings of the *Vedas* (*vedārtha*) to grasp their true meanings. These scholars extracted several types of meanings, including physical (*bhautik*), geographical (*bhaugolik*), historical (*aitihasik*), and supernatural (*adhidaivik*) meanings. Under their influence, and being influenced, Svāmī Dayānanda and others rejected the interpretations of Sāyaṇa. Svāmī Dayānanda also aimed to extract other meanings. He believed that viewing the *Brāhmaṇas* as part of the *Vedas* was part of a deceptive play (*poplīla*) since they [the *Brāhmaṇas*] contained concepts, such as the *avatāras*, that he disliked. Because he

> [Svāmī Dayānanda] did not acknowledge the *Brāhmaṇas* as part of the *Vedas*, it became impossible to describe sacrifices like the *agnihotra*, as the *Saṃhitās* alone cannot provide the necessary injunction for it [the performance of the ritual]. Consequently, the nature of the sacrifices became merely formal. He sensed an underlying notion of violence in animal sacrifice. What followed was his effort to extract meanings from the *Vedas*, such as the worship of the Supreme Self (*parameśvara*), the education of human beings, and innovations like railroads and the telegraph (*tāra*), among others. Now, people's faith in the old meanings began to decline, while their interest in the new meanings grew. Consequently, the quest for new meanings commenced. Those who upheld the old meanings (*purāṇ arth*) started to be regarded as "wedded to the line" (*lakīr kā phakīr*), and the scholarship of those who did not engage in this new exploration and research began to be viewed as without value. Here, following the hidden design (*kūṭanīti*) of Lord Macauley, English education had been implemented to promote the spread of Christianity. People's faith in their *śāstras*, *Itihāsas*, and ancestors was dwindling. There was little respect for the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstra*, the *Nibandhas*, and the writings of the Purvottara Mīmāṃsā. Even if someone believed in these texts, their lack of proficiency in Sanskrit hindered their ability to understand their meanings […] (Karapātrī 1943: 131).

Svāmī Karapātrī clearly critiques European scholarship, especially for its effect on Hindus. In chapter 4, I came to the conclusion that Svāmī Dayānanda's approach to the *Vedas* resembles that of the Europeans and therefore have to agree with Svāmī Karapātrī's views on the connections between European and Svāmī Dayānanda's scholarship. For Svāmī Karapātrī, the impact of European education and research on Hindus was more detrimental than the European intellectual outputs themselves. Although he also engaged with European ideas and literature, this interaction was primarily limited to a few writings, such as the *Mārxvād aur Rāmrājy,* and his focus was mainly on hindering the filtration of these ideas in the subcontinent. For example, in his *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī could have extensively criticized the philological methods used by European Indologists in their study of the *Vedas*. However, while he dedicated a small section to it, this cannot be compared to the attention he gave to Svāmī Dayānanda's work. Furthermore, Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of the *Vedas* is the primary reason for the publication of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (see subchapters 7.2 and 7.3). One might argue that this choice of targets partly stems from a language barrier: Svāmī Karapātrī could read English[150] but likely had no knowledge whatsoever of German or French. Although this is a significant aspect, I do not believe that language barriers are the reason he did not engage extensively with European scholarship, as he could have easily arranged for someone to translate the Indological works for him. Instead, I maintain that for Svāmī Karapātrī, the primary concern arose as European concepts began to influence the Hindu understanding of their *śāstras*. As I already mentioned (see chapter 3), Svāmī Dayānanda was a Hindu *brāhmaṇ* with a traditional education who presented himself as the

[150] This is common understanding I apprehended during my fieldwork in Varanasi and Jhoteswar between October 2019 and October 2020 (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction).

bearer of the true meanings of the *Vedas*. This constituted a far more 'dangerous' enemy than the European researchers. While the European researchers could easily be identified as 'the other,' an Indian Hindu proclaiming the retrieval of the long-lost meanings of the *Vedas* seemed significantly more 'dangerous' than a group of Europeans wearing suits and analyzing the *Vedas* through philological methods. Therefore, I believe that Svāmī Karapātrī feared the implications of European scholarship more than the scholarship itself, and while briefly addressing the issue at the source,[151] he still primarily engaged with—what he identified as—the European ideas absorbed in the subcontinent in the form of Svāmī Dayānanda's scholarship. Svāmī Karapātrī particularly feared Indians and Hindus currently active in the country attempting to undermine the faith in the *śāstras* and abolish the caste system, as this could 'breach' Sanātana Dharma. Although Svāmī Dayānanda and the Ārya Samāja remained significant targets for Svāmī Karapātrī in this regard, they were not the only 'indigenous' forces working in that direction.

6.3 Svāmī Karapātrī and Politics

According to Śarmā (1988: 52), during the time of Svāmī Karapātrī, India was in a dire state: although there had been several attempts at a 'real—not only military but also intellectual—' independence from the colonial state, the Indian political establishment, for the most part educated abroad or in English schools, was fundamentally incapable of achieving such a goal. Not to mention that the ruling class worked under the banner of development (*vikās*) without interest in preserving Sanātana Dharma (Śarmā 1988: 52).[152] According to Svāmī Karapātrī, a government not grounded in the principles outlined in sacred texts fostered a tendency toward *adharma* and an aversion to *dharma*, which, in his view, was the root of all misfortunes (Śarmā 1988: 52–53). Thus, although Svāmī Karapātrī made great efforts to highlight the challenges that needed addressing, he still remained largely unheard in terms of political action. For instance, on April 28, 1947, Svāmī Karapātrī launched a *satyagraha* movement, mobilizing thousands of people to advocate against the partition of India, to halt cow slaughter, to uphold the dignity and sanctity of temples, to eliminate legislation contrary to the *śāstras*, and to align the system of government with the *śāstras* (Gabin 2009: 30). On this occasion, Svāmī Karapātri was incarcerated until May 22, 1947. His movement then continued in Mathura and Delhi, where he was once again jailed for another six months. In 1948, Svāmī Karapātrī founded the *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada*, a political party aiming at restoring the kingdom of Rāma,[153] which was characterized by adherence to the *śāstra*s and the

[151] See, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the section on "Refutation of the Thought of the Westerner," *pāścāttyamatakhaṇḍanaṃ*, *VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 909–1156).
[152] For example, in the 1950s, the Indian National Congress secured the Indian Parliament's approval for the Hindu Code Bill, thereby de-institutionalizing the caste system.
[153] Svāmī Svarūpānanda defined the kingdom of Rāma as "there, where even dogs have justice." Svāmī Svarūpānanda made this observation in August 2020 in the context of the celebrations for the anniversary of Svāmī Karapātrī's birthday at Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram in August 2020 (see in the Introduction, subchapter 1.1).

application of *dharma* at every level.[154] *Sanmārga* and *Siddhānta* became important tools for spreading the political party's programs. The *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada* won a few seats in the *Loka Sabhā* as well as the *Vidhāna Sabhā*s (regional assemblies) of North India.

For the most part, Svāmī Karapātrī's political engagement was interested in (i) the preservation of the caste system and (ii) the opposition to cow slaughter. In the following pages, I briefly address Svāmī Karapātrī's activities in these areas. Alongside his literary works, Svāmī Karapātrī demonstrated political activism that often landed him in jail.

6.3.1 The Preservation of the Caste System

The *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada* opposed the *Hindu Code Bill*, claiming that the bill conflicted with the "Indian Culture" (Banningan 1952: 175), as it challenged and threatened the existence of the caste system and, by extension, Sanātana Dharma.[155] In 1954–1955, Svāmī Karapātrī organized demonstrations against the *Hindu Code Bill*. It is estimated that in the context of these manifestations, the police *laṭhi*-charged 95.000 demonstrators in front of the Chandigarh Secretariat, resulting in the injury of many (Gabin 2009: 32). On February 19, 1954, along with a large group of followers, Svāmī Karapātrī protested when a group of Harijans led by reformers entered the *garbhagṛha* of the Viśvanātha Mandir in Varanasi. He was imprisoned, and when the Court ruled in 1957 that the Harijans could not be prosecuted for their actions, in 1958, Svāmī Karapātrī declared that the sanctity of the Viśvanātha temple had been compromised and initiated the construction of a new one.[156] In this regard, Svāmī Svarūpānanda said (05.11.2019, in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram):

> Svāmī Karapātrī prohibited the Harijans from entering the Viśvanāth. Karapātrī said that the merits (*puṇya*) that the priests obtained from doing the *pūjā* to Lord Viśvanāth

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[154] Tripathi (1978: 148–149) refers to the *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada* as a political party slowly fading away. The reason for that–he says–has to be mainly located in the fact that there was a shortage of "devoted workers" and "staunch followers." The *sadhus* who would be the natural supporters of the party were guilty of political indifference, this being caused not only by their life-choice, but also due to their illiteracy. In addition to that, sect rivalries further reduced the *sadhus*' adherence to the *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada*. Lutgendorf (1994: 386) adds that according to "some observers" the "unbending personality" of Svāmī Karapātrī played a major role in the 'isolation' of the party. Baxter goes on saying that the *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada* "[…] is absolutely opposed to anything foreign, to such an extent that in comparison the nationalist Mahasabha and Jana Sangh are identified with the full range of Western ideas" (Baxter 1969: 79). He further quotes from Weiner that, "the ideals of the Ram Rajya Parishad are so orthodox and so politically unconventional that the English-language press in India and the Westernized intelligentsia pay little attention to the program and activities of this party–in spite of the fact that over 2 million voters… gave it their support in the 1952 general elections" (Weiner 1957: 174–175). Svāmī Karapātrī was irremovable on certain issues and was not ready to blur the principles of his party for convenience and support, primarily maintaining his positions regarding a rigid observance of the caste rules. At the time of Tripathi, although the political party was not formally dissolved, it was already virtually dead.

[155] In these regards, Svāmī Karapātrī wrote the *Hindūkoḍabil Pramāṇa Kī Kasauṭī Par* (lit., A Test on the Authority of the Hindu Code Bill, 1949). Smith (1963: 464) refers to this publication as a "[…] document replete with Sanskrit quotation, moral exhortations, metaphysical subtleties, and even arguments for the existence of God."

[156] The Naī Viśvanātha Mandir is located in Mīra Ghaṭa on Tripura Bhairwi Road, Varanasi. Although the temple is an active center of worship, it remains a secondary temple that, in terms of affluence, cannot be compared to the number of visitors the Viśvanātha Mandir receives each year.

were also acquired by just seeing (*darśana*) the temple's spire (*śikhara*). Therefore, the Harijans can have the vision (*darśana*) of the temple's spire (*śikhara*).

[On the construction of the new Viśvanāth]

On one occasion, they brought the Harijans into the Viśvanāth temple, and one of them stood atop the *śivaliṅga* [...].[157] At that moment, Svāmī Karapātrī felt that there was no longer any reason to perform the vision (*darśan*) of Lord Viśvanāth and decided to build a new temple. He believed that the dignity (*maryādā*) of the temples should remain intact: in the Viśvanāth temple, only the priests should be allowed in the *garbhagṛha*, while the rest of the people should do the *darśan* from outside the *garbhagṛha*. This arrangement would ensure that there was no discrimination.

In the new Viśvanāth temple, there is this arrangement: even in our temples, this is the rule; no one is forbidden to enter [the temple, but everyone is prohibited to enter the *garbhagṛha*]. The energy (*ūrjā*) that is in the *mūrti* disappears if the *mūrti* is touched by a menstruating woman, impure people, people eating cow meat, etc. And the *mūrti* itself becomes harmful to people. The central point is that in the Sanātana Dharma, rebirth is contemplated. The birth of a person is prompted by Īśvara based on the fruits accrued by a person through past actions. Based on these fruits, a person's position in life is determined, along with the duties and rights one must adhere to. Those who do not share this belief should not go to the temple, as to them the *mūrti* is nothing but a stone, and what is the purpose of performing *darśan* of a stone? According to the thoughts and instructions of the *śāstras*, that *mūrti* is God (*bhagvān*): if I do not agree with the *śāstras*, then the *mūrti* is not God (*bhagvān*) for me.

6.3.2 The Protection of Cows

The second focus of Svāmī Karapātrī's political action seems to be the defense of cows: on October 18, 1962, he led a protest march from Akola to Bombay, advocating for the closure of a slaughterhouse. He initiated a campaign to collect signatures and telegrams urging a ban on cow slaughter. In 1964, the then Prime Minister of India, Gulzari Lal Nanda, who took over after Jawaharlal Nehru's death, assured that a prompt resolution would be sought (Gabin 2009: 36). On the 7th of November 1966, Svāmī Karapātrī led a peaceful demonstration of the Sarvadalīya Gorakṣa Mahābhiyāna Samiti (All-Party Committee for the Protection of the Cow) for the ban on cow-slaughtering. For the occasion, about a million people[158] gathered in New Delhi. It is said that some agitators tried to sabotage the movement, which resulted in a big chaos: the police charged, many *sadhus* were injured, and some even died. On that occasion, Svāmī Karapātrī was jailed again for another six months (Gabin 2009: 36).

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[157] At this point, Svāmī Svarūpānanda's voice is overshadowed by the coughing of one of his attendants, making it impossible for me to grasp the brief sentence in between, except for the word Gandhi. It's possible that Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī meant for Mahatma Gandhi to be involved in leading the Harijans to enter the temple, but I can't say that for sure.

[158] Instead, Lutgendorf speaks of 125.000 protestors only (Lutgendorf 1994: 386).

6.4 Final Remarks

I already discussed the general shift from a Sanātana Dharmī identity to the concept of a Hindu nation (see p. 75). While the early Sanātana Dharmī movements focused on organizing to preserve their orthodox environment against the Ārya Samāja and other reform programs, groups like the Hindu Mahāsabhā shifted their focus to representing the entire Hindu Nation rather than just an 'orthodox' community. This led to an underplaying of the contrasts between the Ārya Samājīs and the Sanātanīs.

Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, Svāmī Karapātrī engaged the Rāma Rājya Pariṣada to collaborate with right-wing political groups such as the Jana Saṅgha and the Akhila Bhāratīya Hindu Mahāsabhā. Notably, the Rāma Rājya Pariṣada aligned on several issues with both the Jana Saṅgha and the Mahāsabhā, including opposition to the Hindu Code Bill, the ban on cow slaughter, the Sanskritization of Hindi, and the belief that the government favored Muslims over Hindus (Lutgendorf 1994: 390). However, very soon, Svāmī Karapātrī distanced himself from these groups and wrote the *Rāṣṭrīya Svayaṃsevaka Saṃgha aur Hindu Dharma* (2013 [1970]) and *Vīcāra Piyūṣa* (n.a. [1975]) to critique Hindu nationalism, claiming these groups to be a "subtle" and "dangerous" opponent of Sanātana Dharma. Svāmī Svarūpānanda, who had also been the first president of the Rāma Rājya Pariṣada, wrote:

> [...] just a short while after the establishment of the Parishad, a new political party called Bharatiya Jana Sangh was established, which—though extremely removed from the Parishad in its principles—gave the outward illusion of being similar to the Parishad. The objective of both the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha was the establishment of a Hindu nation, but these two differed from the Parishad not only in their plans of action, but also in their principles (Gabin 2009: 17–18).

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Svāmī Karapātrī sought to reverse the transformation process from a Sanātana Dharma identity to a Hindu national identity, aiming for a return to Sanātana Dharma. However, isolated from other political groups, the Rāma Rājya Pariṣada soon declined.

In this chapter, I positioned Svāmī Karapātrī as a continuator of 19th-century Sanātana Dharma groups. I highlighted his opposition to the Ārya Samāja and emphasized that, while this was a significant aspect of his work, it was not his sole focus. I proposed that Svāmī Karapātrī was regarded by his followers as an *avatāra*. I illustrated his efforts to revitalize Vedic rituals while striving to present a more comprehensive image of him as an Advaita Vedānta and *bhakta* scholar. I depicted him as consistently advocating for the defense of Sanātana Dharma, preserving the caste system and the Hindu *śāstras*, and promoting cow protection. I discussed his views on European intellectual influence, education, and Indology.

From this discourse, it might seem that *mūrtipūjā* is not truly at the center of Svāmī Karapātrī's focus. However, the practice of *mūrtipūjā* is a significant part of his agenda, as he personally practiced the worship of icons. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that *mūrtipūjā* is not the primary emphasis in his defense of Sanātana Dharma. Instead, his main focus is on safeguarding the *śāstras*, particularly the Vedas and their 'traditional' meanings. This is

because, from Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective, a proper understanding of the *śāstras* allowed for the derivation of all aspects of Sanātana Dharma, including the caste system, cow protection, and *mūrtipūjā*. This stance becomes clear when he scholarly defended the practice of icon worship in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī made an extensive reflection on the meanings of the *mantras* and how to evaluate them (see chapter 10). Following this logical thread, once Svāmī Karapātrī asserted that Vedic *mantras* must be interpreted according to tradition, the entirety of Svāmī Dayānanda's program—including the ban on icon worship—, aimed at correcting centuries of misinterpretations of the *Vedas,* theoretically collapses (see chapter 10).

In the following chapter, I present the context and sources of the Ārya Samājī and Sanātanī debates, locating the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* within these debate traditions.

7. The Vedārtha Pārijāta and the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma Debates

According to Tripathi (2016: vii, 40), India developed a vibrant tradition of debate that has enabled knowledge systems to thrive. In the 19th and 20th centuries, *śāstrārtha*, lit., 'the meaning of the authoritative texts,' became the prominent term to denote scholarly debates (Tripathi 2016: 5–6). Since the dissemination of Svāmī Dayānanda's ideas, a rich *śāstrārtha* tradition has emerged between Ārya Samājīs and the 'defenders of orthodoxy,' the Sanātanīs, both in the form of oral debates and printed material. Svāmī Karapātrī's *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is part of this tradition and the primary textual source of this dissertation.[159] Both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī have prominent roles in promoting the development of debate practices in the subcontinent and are remembered as skilled public speakers.

In this chapter, I first examine the aspects and characteristics of the debates between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs, and then I present a list of Sanātanī publications opposing the Ārya Samāja's tenets. Next, I analyze the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* by exploring the significance of its title (*The Night Jasmine of Vedic Meanings*), the foreword—specifically the stated reasons for its publication—and the content of the treatise. I conclude this chapter by explaining the reasons for selecting this publication over others, despite the substantial literary output that testifies to the Samājī-Sanātanī debates. These are (i) the author's importance, (ii) the treatise's scope, (iii) the text's objectives, (iv) its position among similar works, and (v) the continuous significance of the Ārya Samāja in the 20th century.

7.1 The Debates Between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs

The debates between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs occurred in both public discussions and written formats. In subchapter 3.1.5, I noted that transcripts of the *śāstrārthas*, such as those of the 1869 Varanasi debate, did not faithfully report the discussion that took place, as each faction edited a version that celebrated victory over the other. According to Tripathi (2016: 320), Pandit Jvālā Prasād, a Sanātanī who wrote the *Dayānandatimirabhāṣkara* (see publication n. 11), repeatedly invited Svāmī Dayānanda to debate. At the beginning of the 20th century, Jvālā Prasād participated in debates with Ārya Samājī Nityānand Brahmacārī, and several *śāstrārthas* also occurred between Sanātanī Bhimsen Śarmā and Nityānand Brahmacārī and other Ārya Samājīs scholars at various locations: Mumbai (1901-10), Delhi (1900), Agra (1901), Alipur (Punjab) in 1902, and Munger in 1904. (Tripathi 2016: 320). To my knowledge, there are no transcripts of these meetings. In contrast, according to Svāmī Svarūpānanda's testimony, two Sanātanī scholars, Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī and Lālā Prasād

[159] In 1969, Svāmī Karapātrī published the *Vedasvarūpavimarśaḥ* (Considerations on the nature of the *Vedas*). In this work too, he adressed Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective on the *Vedas*. However, in this case, Svāmī Dayānanda is not the primary target of this publication. After skimming through the text, I concluded that most of Svāmī Karapātrī's references to Svāmī Dayānanda found in the *Vedasvarūpavimarśaḥ* are presented in greater detail ten years later in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (see Karapātrī 1969, and also Pellegrini 2009: 51–52). Therefore, I focused on the translation of portions of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* only.

Miśra, recorded their *śāstrārthas* with Ārya Samājī scholars in writing. These debates took place in the context of the *Sarvaveda Śākhā Sammelans*, which are cycles of conferences on *Veda*-related matters. As I already mentioned (see p. 97), a few decades later, Svāmī Karapātrī revived the tradition of the *Sarvaveda Śākhā Sammelans* and invited Ārya Samājī scholars for discussion. Additionally, Svāmī Svarūpānanda notes that parts of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* are based on Kālūrām Śāstrī's and Lālā Prasād Miśra's recordings of their debates with the Ārya Samājīs. Although I could not trace the material Svāmī Svarūpānanda refers to, I found several publications by Kālūrām Śāstrī, in which the scholar criticizes the Ārya Samāja. I could also trace some of Svāmī Karapātrī's arguments found in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (see subchapter 9.6) in the writings of Kālūrām Śāstrī (see subchapter 7.1.2). Thus, it is likely that Kālūrām Śāstrī debated with the Ārya Samājīs and then proposed similar concepts again in his writings.[160]

> The Sanātanīs used to engage in *śāstrārtha* with Dayānanda and the Ārya Samājīs. Their position [that of the Sanātanīs] has been adopted by Svāmī Karapātrī, who documented it in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. These *śāstrārthas* took place during the *Sarvaveda Śākhā Sammelans*. Kālūrām Śāstrī and Lālā Prasād Miśra participated in these *śāstrārthas* and then recorded them in writing (Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 04.11.2019).

Since I could not trace transcripts of these oral debates, in my work, when referring to the Ārya Samājī-Sanātanī debates, I primarily refer to a series of books and pamphlets published by both factions. However, as I demonstrate in the following pages, oral and written debates were closely intertwined, and at times, oral debates would trigger a series of written responses, and vice versa (see the example of *Mere Pacchis Minutes*, p. 110). Thus, in addition to public debates, the animosity between these two factions triggered a rich literary output in the form of books, pamphlets, and journal articles, getting back at each other. Through my archival investigations in India and Venice (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction) and online searches (mainly on *archive.org*), I discovered numerous books, pamphlets, and journal articles attesting to this debate; Tripathi (2016; 2017) and Jones (1976)[161] list many of these works. The sheer volume of these publications is astonishing: booklets of this sort continue to surface on *archive.org* and are likely to keep appearing; there are probably many more housed in private libraries that I am currently not aware of. Nonetheless, after a few remarks on the nature of these written debates, I list some of the Sanātanī literary outputs directed at the Ārya Samāja. While noting the extent of this literature, I also must add that much of its content is repetitive. This is not surprising, given that these publications focus on similar sources while contesting Ārya Samāja's perspectives, mainly on the caste system, Hindu textual traditions, and practices such as *mūrtipūjā*. These publications can be categorized into two types based on their target: (i) those that challenged the opponent's general arguments and (ii) those that replied to a specific publication of the adversary. These often triggered further responses, thus creating chains of publications where each one aimed to refute the

[160] In contrast, I could not locate publications by Lālā Prasād Miśra.
[161] Jones primarily refers to the publications based in Punjab, as this is the geographical focus of his book Arya Dharm (1976).

previous one. Additionally, a key feature of these works is their irreverent tone, in that they emphasize personal mockery over substantive criticism. This is, however, not surprising, as it reflects a style rooted in India's traditional debate history.

In the *Nyāyasūtra*, the debate (*kathā*, literally, speech or discussion) is categorized into three types: *vāda*, *jalpa*, and *vitāṇḍā*. *Vāda* represents a friendly debate conducted in a spirit of cooperation aimed at pursuing 'truth.' In contrast, the *jalpa* debate primarily focuses on achieving victory, irrespective of whether this aligns with a quest for truth. A successful *jalpa* requires both a thesis and a counterthesis that are inherently opposed; such situations arise when contradictory attributes are assigned to the same subject. The validation or refutation of both theses should be based on evidence (*pramāṇa*) and logical reasoning (*tarka*). However, the tactics used may include quibbling or equivocation (*chala*), sophisticated responses, and false equivalences in reasoning (*jāti*). Since the aim of victory is paramount, employing such strategies is allowed within the regulations of this argumentative framework (Matilal 2011: 83–84). The third type of debate, *vitaṇḍā*, is defined by its lack of effort to substantiate the opposing viewpoint. In this format, the debater focuses exclusively on refuting the opponent's position without allowing the adversary the opportunity to counter their own stance. This approach has led some to argue that it is not a "fair" exchange (Matilal 2011: 85–86) and that, in this context, victory is achieved not only "through tricks" but also through "motiveless malignity" (Matilal 2011: 87). Matilal argues that many respectable philosophers avoid substantiating their opposing viewpoint because they "would like to suspend judgment," or they believe their truths are self-evident and do not necessitate proof (Matilal 2011: 87). Based on the sources I reviewed, I can conclude that the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma controversy mainly features *jalpa* and *vitāṇḍā* debates, with a tendency toward the latter.

As Jones notes (1976: 120), the initial goal of the Ārya Samājīs was to proselytize their religion. He refers to this as *pracār kā kām*, the work of preaching, consisting of *maṇḍan*, demonstrating one's own position, and *khaṇḍan*, refuting other viewpoints.[162] Svāmī Dayānanda was likely aware of classical norms that esteemed debates aimed at the pursuit of truth (*vāda*) in contrast to those focused on achieving victory (*jalpa*) or simply proving the adversary's flaws (*vitāṇḍā*). Thus, while he claimed to engage in truth-directed discourses, he rather engaged in the latter two forms of debate (Scott 2023: 152). The Ārya Samājīs, starting with Svāmī Dayānanda, were the first to initiate the debate with the Sanātanīs as they critiqued contemporary 'orthodoxy.' The argumentative style of the Ārya Samājīs was full of personal attacks and mockery; Svāmī Dayānanda was particularly well-known for employing harsh language towards his opponents (Tripathi 2016: 314). According to Scott (2023: 141), by the beginning of the 20th century, the Ārya Samajīs had acquired a notorious reputation in these regards, to the point that the term 'Ārya' came to signify individuals characterized by

[162] According to Jones (1976: 120), this endeavor intensified after the death of Svāmī Dayānanda, as the movement could no longer rely on the charisma of its leader. Svāmī Dayānanda did not limit his criticism to contemporary Hindu orthodoxy. He was quite contemptuous of Jainism, Buddhism, contemporary Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam as well, as evidenced in chapters 12, 13, and 14 of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 398–540). Tensions persisted following Svāmī Dayānanda's death, particularly with the Muslim and Christian communities (see Jones 1976: 139–153).

habitual insulting behaviour. Scott (2023: 160–161) discusses that personal attacks served as a moral tool to denounce unethical actions and prompt the audience to advocate for moral reform. The Ārya Samājīs, in addition to addressing the caste system, the extent of the *śāstras*, and what they perceived as superstitious Hindu practices, frequently challenged 'modern Hinduism' as such. They accused the *brāhmaṇs* of being the "popes" of India and labelled them as "wealth-stealing promoters of false religion" (Scott 2023: 161-162), thereby reiterating the Protestant critique of Catholicism (see p. 56).[163] These debates strategically challenged caste, gender, and religious norms, also positioning the human body as a battleground for public discourse. Sanātanīs, for instance, were described as "eaters of night soil" (Scott 2023: 158).[164] The satirical and carnivalesque nuances in the written debates can likely be traced back to the connection between written and oral debates, the latter often occurring in the contexts of public festivals where the use of colorful language was generally accepted (see Scott 2023: 159). Additionally, public debates were often the highlight of these events (*melā*), and the festive atmosphere implicitly afforded debaters a "license to insult" (Sanyal 1996: 96, cited in Scott 2023: 159).

The Sanātanīs promptly fought fire with fire; in the late 1880s, they commenced prolific literary outputs to defend their orthodoxy. According to Jones, "the teaching, as well as the personality, of Swami Dayanand remained for Sanatanists a prime target of criticism" (Jones 1976: 111). The Sanātanīs directed their critiques toward the Ārya Samājīs without feeling the need to substantiate their position, which they believed should never have been up for discussion in the first place; instead, they focused on proving the faults of their adversaries. They also resorted to *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍa* types of debates, personally attacking and mocking their adversaries. Verbal aggression sometimes resulted in physical violence. Tripathi (2016: 322) discusses communal clashes between the Ārya Samājīs and the Sanātana Dharmīs, reporting instances where outcastes joining the Ārya Samāja were violently attacked (Tripathi 2016: 322). The Ārya Samājīs capitalized on these incidents to depict themselves as persecuted defenders of free speech (Scott 2023: 163). For example, in his 1936 book *Mere Pacchis Minut* (My Twenty-five Minutes), Manasārām Śastrī recounts being forcibly silenced by Sanātanīs during a conference. This severe censorship compelled Śastrī to change his strategy and to print his allegations against the Sanātanīs. His text addressed sexual accusations against Svāmī Dayānanda and exposed the *Purāṇas* for their depiction of beef consumption, divine ejaculation, sex workers, and the episode in which Kṛṣṇa transformed

[163] Jones (1976: 110) provides several examples of Ārya Samājī publications challenging the *brāhmaṇs* as the popes of India: (i) the *Pōpe Mukh Chaper* (Rebuke to the Popes) by Lala Chiranji Lal, published in 1889 by the Anglo-Sanskrit Press in Lahore; (ii) the *Ārya Ǯajmān aur Pōpe Pandhē kī bāt chīt* (Dialogue between an Ārya and his Pope Pandha) by Varna Nar Singh, published in 1890 by the Zafr-ul-Matabi Press in Sialkot; (iii) the *Sawāl-o-Ǯawāb Bōp Bētā wa Ta'rīfāt-i-Pōpan wa Barahān Mah* (A Dialogue between the Father and a Son, or a Satire on the Brahmins and the Twelve Months) by Lala Kashi Ram, published in 1890 by the Mirza Press in Sialkot, (iv) the *Pōpe Nāsh Mālā* (A Rosary of the Destruction of the Popes) by Lala Mul Rah, published in 1890 by the Dabdaba-i-Iqbali-i-Rabbi in Ludhiana. Scott (2023: 162) adds (i) the *Pauranik Pope par Vaidik Top, arthat Sanatan Dharm ki Maut* (A Vedic cannon on the Puranic pope, or the death of the Sanātanī religion) by Manasaram Shastri, published in 1933. This last publication is a rejoinder to Kālurām Śāstrī's *Āryasamāj kī Maut* (see publication n. 20, p. 122).

[164] This rhetoric frequently caused legal issues which were processed under the Indian Penal Code (Scott 2023: 158).

Arjuna into a woman before engaging in intimate activities with him in the forest (Scott 2023: 163–164). Conversely, Marchetto (2009: 23) reports that Ārya Samājīs engaged in disruptive actions against the meetings of the Sanātanīs in Varanasi. In the foreword of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, it is noted that the Ārya Samājīs used to throw stones at the Sanātanīs when they gathered in assemblies.

Even if the Ārya Samāja literature opposing the Sanātanīs is abundant and vigorous, Sanātanī literature similarly provides a strong opposing stance toward the Ārya Samāja. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will present a collection of Sanātana Dharmī publications focused on refuting the beliefs of the Ārya Samājīs. As can be already inferred from some of the titles, this literature appears primarily intended to ridicule Svāmī Dayānanda and the Ārya Samāja. The following list of publications is not exhaustive but helps illustrate the critical importance of these debates and the considerable attention they garnered, as well as the volume of literature they produced. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are likely many publications related to these debates that have escaped my knowledge. Yet, I sourced the following titles from the works of Jones (1976: 109), Scott (2023), and Tripathi (2016: 319–320), and archival research in India, Venice, and online (mainly from *archive.org*).[165] I have divided the list into works that generally address Ārya Samāja and its programs and those that focus exclusively on the *mūrtipūjā* debate, listing them according to their publication dates (where possible). Additionally, I list the publications of Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī separately due to his relevance, since Svāmī Karapātrī drew material from his critique of the Ārya Samāja (see subchapter 9.6). The titles reported by Jones[166] often refer to publications written in Urdu; I am unable to engage with these texts and have therefore limited myself to reporting the titles and corresponding titles' translations provided by Jones. Although there are more publications of a general character rather than those specializing in *mūrtipūjā*, I must add that *mūrtipūjā* is, for the most part, also discussed within the works dealing with Ārya Samāja in general.

1. The *Dayānanda Sarasvatī Mukha Capeṭikā* (A Slap on the Face of Dayānanda Sarasvatī) by Thakurdas Jaini, published in 1882 by the Jagdīśvar Yantrālaya in Mumbai (cited in Tripathi 2016: 319–320 and Scott 2023:158, 270).
2. The *Mahāmohavidrāvaṇa* (Dispelling the Great Illusion) by Pandit Mohanlāl Vedāntācārya, published in 1883 in Varanasi. The primary purport of this treatise is the confutation of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought. Here, Pandit Mohanlāl points out that the

[165] Scott (2013: 158, 270) lists a few Sanātana Dharmī publications whose titles evoke corporeal imagery to mock the Ārya Samāja and Dayānanda Sarasvatī. These are: "*A Slap on the Face of Dayananda Saraswati*," "*A Slap on the Face of Critics of Pilgrimage*," "*A Nose Ring in Arya Samaj's Nose*," "*Pandit Buddhdev's Foot on Rishi Dayananda's Head*," and "*The World's Foot on the Arya Samaj's Head*." Scott refers to the first two publications by their original titles in Hindi (see respectively the *Dayānand Sarasvatī Mukh Capetikā* and the *Tīrthanindak Mukhcapet ikā*); while I was able to locate and go through the *Dayānand Sarasvatī Mukh Capetikā*, I could not find *Tīrthanindak Mukhcapet ikā*. On the other hand, Scott does not mention the original title of the "*A Nose Ring in Arya Samaj's Nose*," "*Pandit Buddhdev's Foot on Rishi Dayananda's Head*," and "*The World's Foot on the Arya Samaj's Head*." He refers this information to the Gerald Barrier Collection of the University of Chicago Library. This Collection is in the form of microfilm, and I was therefore unable to access this material.
[166] Jones (1976) reports publications from the Punjabi region because his study is centered on this area.

Brāhmaṇas are part of the *Vedas* and not, as Svāmī Dayānanda posits, a later and spurious addition to the Vedic *mantras* (cited in Upādhyāya 1983: 384 and Tripathi 2016: 321).

3. The *Qawā'id Ārya Granth Shōdhak Sabhā* (Rules for the Correction of Books issued by the Ārya Samāja) by Lala Salig Ram, published in 1885 by the Chashma-i-Nur Press in Amritsar (cited in Jones 1976: 109).
4. The *Bhajan Sanātan Dharm Updesh* (A Song Sermon of the Eternal Religion) by Kaka Ram, published in 1889 by the Anglo-Sanskrit Press in Lahore. Here, Kaka Ram ridiculed the "folly and ignorance" of Svāmī Dayānanda and his followers (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
5. The *Ārya Samājiōn kē Lekchar kā J̌awāb* (Reply to a Lecture of the Ārya Samājīs) by Pandit Nana Lal, published in 1889 by the Anglo-Sanskrit Press in Lahore. This is concerning widow and child marriage (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
6. The *Dayā Nand kē ghalat tāwīlen namber-i-awal Niyōg* (Wrong Interpretations of Dayā Nand, N.1, Regarding Widow Remarriage) by Pandit Thakur Das, published in 1890 by the Narankari Press in Lahore (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
7. The *Musaddas-i-Vīr Bhāī Prakāś* (Stanzas Manifesting Fearlessness) by Lala Kidari Mal, published in 1890 by the Iftikhar-i-Delhi Press in Delhi. "This is an exhortation to the orthodoxy to rise and defend themselves" (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
8. The *Tīrthanindak Mukhcapetikā* (A Slap on the Face of the Critics of Pilgrimages) by Sītārām, published in 1891 by the Ramik Yantrālaya in Kapur.
9. The *Sanātan Dharm Updesh aur Pakhandī mat Līlā* (The Teachings of the Sanātana Dharma and the Doings of the False Creeds) by Pandit Kaka Ram, published in 1892 by the Victoria Press in Lahore (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
10. The *Risāla Ma'sūm bā Srī Swāmī Dayānand Saraswātī kī Mahimā* (A Treatise called for the Glory of Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī), published in 1892 by the Vilasa Press in Lahore (cited in Jones 1976: 111).
11. The *Dayānandatimirabhāṣkara* (lit., Throwing Light on Dayānanda's Blindness) by Pandit Jvālā Prasād, published in 1906 by the Venkateshwata Steam Press in Mumbai (cited in Tripathi 2016: 319–320). The book is about 300 pages long and follows the chapter division of the *Satyārthaprakāśa*, thus making a thorough analysis and critique of the contents of the book. Pandit Jvālā Prasād quotes entire paragraphs from the *Satyārthaprakāśa* and then comments on them. This publication created a chain of rejoinders:
    a) The *Bhāskaraprakāśa arthāt Paṇḍita J̌wala Prasad-kṛta Dayanandtimirabhāskara kā Uttara* (Throwing Light on Throwing Light, or the Answer to the *Dayanandtimirabhāskara* by Pandit Jvālā Prasād) by Svāmī Tulasī Rām, published in 1913 by the Swami Machine Press in Meerut. This is an Ārya Samājī response to Pandit Jvālā Prasād's work; it is about 450 pages long and maintains the original structure of the *Satyārthaprakāśa*.
    b) The *Dharmadivākara* (The Sun of Dharma) by Baladev Prasād—Jvālā Prasād's brother—, published in 1901, and pertaining to the confutation of three chapters of the *Bhāskaraprakāśa*. Additionally, the *Bhāskarābhāsanivāraṇa* by Bhavani Prasad Nambaradar of Devatikalan, published in 1914 (second edition), although not included in the series of rejoinders is also a Sanātanī rejoinders to Svāmī Tulasī Rām' work.
    c) The *Divākaraprakāśa arthāt Dharmadivākara kā Uttar* (Throwing Light on the Sun of Dharma, or the Answer to the *Dharmadivākara*) by Svāmī Tulasi Ram, published

in 1903 by the Svāmiyantrālay in Merat. This is about a 70-page-long booklet answering to Baladev Prasād.

12. The *Sanātanadharmoddhāraḥ* (The Uplift of Sanātana Dharma) by Umāpati Dviveḍī, published in 1912 by Pandit Nakchhed Ram Dube in Varanasi (cited in Tripathi 2016: 320–321). This book was created in alignment with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's desires. It covers a vast range of topics concerning Sanātana Dharma, such as the extent of the *Vedas*, considerations on the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, icon worship, and more. It is all in all a book of about 200 pages on the refutation of Svāmī Dayānanda's doctrines (especially his views on the *Vedas* and icon worship).[167]
13. The *Satyārthaprakāśa kī Chīchāledaḍ* (The Smudging of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*)[168] by Premācārya Śāstrī, having the same title of Kālūrām Śāstrī's 1927 book (cited in Tripathi 2016: 321).
14. The *Yathārthaprakāśa* by Ānand Svarūp, published in 1934 by the Radha Swamy Satsang Sabha in Agra.
15. The *Ṛgved men Paurāṇik Kathā* (Purāṇic Stories in the *Ṛgveda*) by Ṭākur Induśekhara Siṅgh Rāṭhaur – "Indu" Bīhaṭabīram, from Sītāpur. This is an article of about 20 pages published in Svāmī Karapātrī's magazine *Sanmārga* in the issue October/November 1943 (*kārtik pūrṇimā*). In the article, Indu argues that while Ārya Samājīs dismiss the Purāṇas for containing fanciful narrations and obscenities, many of these so-called impossible and obscene tales are also found in the *Vedas*. He also explores the question of the corporeality of the gods. He reports Vedic verses that describe the bodies of the gods and suggest the worship of non-conscious objects. Additionally, he argues that Ārya Samājī scholars disagree on the number of 'authentic' Vedic *mantras* and dismiss several of them based on the fact that they repeat themselves. Additionally, Indu writes a section wherein he discusses the current divisions among Ārya Samāja scholars.

7.1.1 Undated works

16. The *Satyārthaprakāśa Samīkṣā* (An Analysis of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*) by Jagannatha Das, written in Gujarati.[169]
17. The *Dayananda Cāla Kapaṭa Darpaṇa* (The Mirror of Trickery and Deceit of Dayānanda). This publication is cited by Tripathi (2016: 320); however, he does not provide references for the author and publication date. I was unable to retrieve this publication based solely on the title.

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[167] Tripathi references this publication to *Kāśī kī Pāṇḍitya Paraṃparā* (Upadhyāya 383–384). However, this reference actually pertains to the *Mahāmohavidrāvaṇa*, which immediately follows in Tripathi's text. Here, there may have been an editing error.

[168] Tripathi (2016: 321) translated the word *chīchāledaḍ* as 'predicament.' Instead, I chose the word 'smudging,' which maintains the evocative meanings of *chīchāledaḍ*.

[169] According to Tripathi (2016: 319), already in 1848, a certain Anantaram converted to Islam and wrote *Tohaful-Hind* in reaction to the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. Tripathi also references later Musim rejoinders: *A Refutation of the Satyartha Prakash of Pt. Dayananda Saraswati* by Gulam Mohamad (Hazi Hanif Sadiq) and *Haque Prakasha* in Urdu by Sanaullah Amritsari (Tripathi 2016: 321). The conflict between the Ārya Samāja and Muslim communities was a recurring theme, especially prominent under the leadership of Pandit Lekh Ram (Jones 1976: 145–153).

18. The *Ambar-i-irfānī, radd-i-'Itr-i-Rūhānī* (Refutation of the Doctrines of the Ārya Samāja) by Kishen Singh (cited in Jones 1976: 109).
19. The *Satyārtha Darpaṇa arthāt Satyārth Prakāś ke 12 veṃ samullās par vicar* (A Mirror on the True Meanings, or a Reflection on the twelfth Chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*) by Ajit Kumār Śāstrī (cited in Tripathi 2016: 320). This book aims to refute the 12th chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa,* which primarily deals with Svāmī Dayānanda's critique of Buddhist and Jaina thoughts.[170]

7.1.2 Works By Kālūrām Śāstrī[171]

20. The *Āryasamāj kī Maut* (The Death of the Ārya Samāja) by Kālūrām Śāstrī, published in 1915 in Kanpur. This book deals with different doctrines of the Ārya Samāja, focusing on the Ārya Samāja's perspectives on the *Vedas*, the caste system, *mūrtipūjā*, the role of women, the funerary rituals, and so forth (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*)
21. The *Dayānand dvārā Svanirmit Jhūṭhe Vedmantr* (The false Vedic *Mantras* arbitrarily made by Dayānanda), by Kālūrām Śāstri, published in 1915. This is a pamphlet of only seven pages (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*).[172]
22. The *Satyārthaprakāśa kī Chīchāledaḍ* (The Smudging of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*) by Kālūrām Śāstrī, published in 1927 by the Maraceṭ Press in Kanpur, is a booklet written in Hindi of only 30 pages (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*).
23. The *Vaidika Satyārthaprakāśa upanām Āryasamāj kī Antyeṣṭi* (The Vedic *Satyārtha Prakāśa*: the funeral rites of the Ārya Samāja) by Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī,[173] published in 1936 by the Mardan Press in Kanpur. In this publication, Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī criticizes Svāmī Dayānanda's writing, following the structure of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* up to chapter 11. Kālūrām Śāstrī thus excluded from his analysis chapters 12–14 from the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, wherein Svāmī Dayānanda criticizes foreign religions (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*).

7.1.3 Works Exclusively Concerning Mūrtipūjā (Sanātanī rejoinders)

1. The *Risāla tā'īd But Parastī* (A Treatise in Support of Icon Worship), published in 1888 by the Khai Khuwah Press in Lahore, and
2. The *Risāla-i-Tardīd-i-Dalīl-i-But Parastī* (Refutation of Reasons for Icon Worship), published in 1890 by the Boz Bazar Press in Amritsar, both authored by Lala Dev Dayal. Both these publications (1 and 2) triggered the following Ārya Samājī rejoinders (cited in Jones 1976: 110):

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[170] Tripathi (2016: 321) refers to this publication; however, both in Tripathi's book and in the version I found on *archive.org*, details such as the date and the publishing house are missing.
[171] There is one more work by Kālūrām Śāstrī (the *Āryasamāj men mūrti-pūjā*) that deals exclusively with the issue of icon worship. I therefore listed it under the works focusing on *mūrtipūjā* only.
[172] Unfortunately, the quality of this scan is so poor that it is difficult to read the pamphlet.
[173] Tripathi (2016: 319) attributes the *Vaidika Satyārthaprakāśa* to Akhilānanda Śarmā and lists it among the books attacking Svāmī Dayānanda. According to my research, Akhilānanda Śarmā is, however, an Ārya Samājī scholar who wrote books in support of Svāmī Dayānanda's image, like the *Dayānanda-Digvijaya* (1910/11, *vikraṃ* 1967).

a. The *Mūrti Prakāś* (Exposure of Icon Worship) by Pandit Lekhram, published in 1888 by the Chashma-i-Nur Press in Amritsar.
b. The *Likchār nambar ēk Mūrtī Khandan ya'nī but prastī kē tardīd* (Lecture N. 1, Refutation of Icon Worship, that is the Impropriety of Icon Worship) by Pandit Kishan Narayan, published in 1889 by the Nar Singh Press in Multan.
c. The *Murtī Pūjā Khandan* (Refutation of Icon Worship) by Lala Durga Prasad, published in 1891 by the Virajanand Press in Lahore.

3. The *Mūrtipūjā* by Gosvāmī Śrī Jīvanalāljī Mahārāj and Khemrāj Śrīkṛṣṇdās, published in 1910 by the "Śrīvenkaṭeśvar" Team Press in Bombay. This is a roughly 200-page book containing a series of speeches delivered by Goswami Jivanacharyaji Maharaj Singh, with the support of Sahityacharya Pandit Ambikadutt Vyas. The foreword discusses how the Kali Age and the spread of other religions have led some Indian pandits to question Sanātana Dharma and its practices. To counter this, around 1893/1894, Goswami Jivanacharyaji Maharaj Singh, with the support of Pandit Ambikadutt Vyas, conducted vigorous lectures across various locations, including Sindh, Punjab, Amritsar, Lahore, Calcutta, and Marwar, drawing thousands of listeners. These lectures primarily revolved around the preservation of icon worship and the confirmation of the theory of the *avatāras*. This text stems from one of those lectures (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*).
4. The *Āryasamāj men mūrtipūjā* (The Icon Worship according to the Ārya Samāja) by Kālūrām Śāstrī, published in 1925 by Kāmadāprasāda Dīkṣita. This is a 15-page publication that directly addresses Ārya Samāja's reasons for their ban on icon worship. This booklet aims to prove that even Svāmī Dayānanda inadvertently enjoins the worship of objects in several of his explanations of the Vedic *mantras*. Some of the *mantras* analyzed here by Paṇdit Kālūrām Śāstrī are also analyzed 54 years later by Svāmī Karapātrī in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Aside from scholarly argumentations, Kālūrām Śāstrī maintains a mocking attitude towards his opponents: "the Ārya Samājīs are the biggest enemies of reading and writing. They do not read and do not write at all. Then, when there is a deficiency in writing and reading, who will gain knowledge from the continuous new editions of the Ārya Samāja's religious books?"[174] In subchapter 9.6, I mention when Svāmī Karapātrī reports arguments that are also reported in *Āryasamāj men mūrtipūjā* (I retrieved this publication during archival research at the Library of the Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram in Jhoteshwar).[175]
5. The *Prāmāṇik Kāśī Śāstrārth* (The authoritative debate of Kāśī) by Svāmī Keśav Purī Vedāntācārya, Published in 1969 by the Mādhav Pustakāly in Delhi. This is the third reprint of Satyavrat Samashrami's account of the 1869 debate in Varanasi. Satyavrat Samashrami, the editor of the Sanskrit magazine Pratna Kampra Nandinī, published his account in December 1869 in his magazine. Then, in 1916, Mathurā Prasād Dikṣit reprinted the 1860 report, and for the third time, Svāmī Keśav Purī Vedāntācārya

[174] *Āryasamāj men Mūrtipūjā* (Śāstrī 1925: 3): *āryasamājī likhne paḍhne ke param śatru hain, ye bilkul hī likhte paḍhte nhin, jab likhne paḍhne men heī ṭoṭā hai tab āryasamāj ke dhārmik granthon kī bār bār āvṛttiyāṃ karke jñān prāpti kaun karegā?*
[175] I have already discussed that Kālūrām Śāstrī is one of Svāmī Karapātrī's sources for the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*.

republished it in 1969 under the title of *Prāmāṇik Kāśī Śāstrārth* (approximately 10 years before the publication of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*). This is a roughly 60-page booklet published to commemorate the centenary of the 1869 *śāstrārtha* of Varanasi (see also p. 34). (I retrieved this publication during archival research at the Library of the Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram in Jhoteshwar).

6. The *Mūrtipūjā Vijñān* (The Science of Icon Worship) by Mādhavācārya Śāstrī, published in 1956/1957 (*vikraṃ* 2013) by the Mādhav Pustakālya Dharma Press in Kamalnagar, Delhi. Mādhavācārya Śāstrī writes this booklet of approximately 60 pages, in which he identifies the threats posed by the Ārya Samāja to the practice of icon worship. He thus discusses the worship of the *śivaliṅga* and the *śāligrāma*, the reverence for *tulasī*, the *ārtī* ceremonies,[176] the practice of feeding the gods (*bhog*), and so forth (I retrieved this publication from *archive.org*).

7.2 The Vedārtha Pārijāta

The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* belongs to this long tradition of publications enlivening the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma contrasts and is the primary textual source of this dissertation. Here, I first deal with the editorial details of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*; I explain the title's meaning and outline the text's structure. Following that, I explore the reasons that motivated Svāmī Karapātrī to write this book; last, I clarify why I chose to focus on this particular work amidst the vast literary output I just presented.

Svāmī Karapātrī authored the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, a two-volume treatise of about 2000 pages; he wrote in Sanskrit, while Pandit Vraj Vallabh Dvivedī translated the text from Sanskrit into Hindi. While the Sanskrit original, at times, takes for granted a certain knowledge on the side of the reader, the Hindi version contains more contextual explanations, which were very helpful for navigating the text. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* was published for the first time in 1979; I own the fifth edition of the treatise, which was printed in 2016 in 500 copies under the supervision of the Vedaśāstra Research Centre in Kedarghat, Varanasi, and published by the Śri Rādhā Krṣṇa Dhanukā Prakāśan Saṃsthān of the Dharma Saṅgha Saṃskṛt Vidyālay in Vrindavan. On *archive.org*, the 1979 edition is available and seems to be the same as the 2013 version. '*Vedārtha Pārijāta*' literally means 'the night jasmine of the meaning of the *Vedas*.' *Pārijāta* thus means 'night jasmine' or *nyctanthes arbor tristis*, a white flower with an orange pistil that opens at night. Pellegrini (2016: 57) observes that in the Indian context, numerous writings feature the term *pārijāta* in their titles, probably because of the allegorical meanings connected to this flower. Pellegrini (2016) primarily identifies three of these: (i) the *pārijāta* blossoms between September and October, during the *aśvina* month, when there occur the celebrations of *navarātri*, the festival glorifying the victory of the goddess Durgā over the demon Mahiṣāsura, who represents the darkness of ignorance. The blooming of the flower at this time of the year echoes the victory of light and knowledge over darkness and night. (ii) The *pārijāta* flower is particularly distinctive because it blooms at twilight, opening at night

[176] Common Hindu practice of worshipping gods waiving a flame before the deities.

and falling at dawn. This characteristic mirrors the transitional state of *saṃnyāsīs*, living between the categories of day and night. As described in the *Bhagavadgītā* (2.69), "That which is night for all beings, therein is the [self-]controlled awake. That wherein are awake, that is night for the seeing sage" (Feuerstein 2011: 117).[177] Thus, akin to the sage who transcends ignorance and perceives light amidst the darkness of night, the *pārijāta* flower too exhibits an inverted order compared to other flowers; it remains vigilant at night while entering a state of dormancy during the day, the time when the active and outward life that is 'obscured by ignorance' takes its course. This flower thus further symbolizes the *saṃnyāsī* and his ability to illuminate previously obscured concepts. Moreover, (iii) the *pārijāta*'s color code, with its white petals and orange pistil, is often viewed as a metaphor for the renunciant; when taking renunciation, a novice initially wears white clothing and, after performing the interiorization of the sacrificial fires, dons the saffron robe, whose colour appears to symbolize that the renunciant has become the sacrificial fire itself. Additionally, the wild night jasmine thrives in secluded areas, particularly around ravines, making it an emblem of the wilderness where *saṃnyāsīs* typically roam. After considering these factors, one may hypothesize that *Vedārtha Pārijāta* could signify both 'the night jasmine of the meaning of the *Vedas*' and 'the night jasmine is the meaning of the *Vedas*,' implying that *saṃnyāsa*, or renunciation, represents the ultimate purpose and meaning of the *Vedas*. While both explanations are grammatically accurate, the first is more probable. Therefore, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* metaphorically hints at 'throwing light' on the Vedic meanings.

The first volume of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* has a foreword written in Sanskrit, Hindi, and English.[178] The first half of the first volume starts with a long section on the *pramāṇa* theory (*prāmāṇyavāda*) and the refutation of the related theories of the Naiyāyikas, Jainas, and Buddhists (*naiyāyikajainabauddhādikhaṇḍanaṃ*, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.1: 1–483). The second half of the volume is devoted to the refutation of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought (*dayānandamatakhaṇḍaṃ*, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.1: 484–908). This section addresses topics such as the origin and eternity of the *Vedas*, the true nature of the gods, whether or not the *Brāhmaṇas* are part of the *Vedas*, the Vedic recensions, and so forth. Two sub-chapters are also devoted to the confutation of the thoughts of Brahmadatta Jijñāsu (*jijñāsumatasamīkṣaṇaṃ*, lit., investigation on the thought of Brahmadatta Jijñāsu, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.1: 789–834) and Bhagavat Datta (*bhagavaddattamatakhaṇḍanaṃ*, lit., the confutation of the thought of Bhagavat Datta, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.1: 834–908). These two scholars are known as well-known Ārya Samājīs of the second generation (the disciples of Svāmī Dayānanda's disciples).[179] In the second volume, the first section is a "Refutation of the thought of the Westerners" (*pāścāttyamatakhaṇḍanaṃ*, see also footnote n. 151), while the major part of the second volume is dedicated to "The Confutation of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought" (*dayānandamatakhaṇḍanaṃ*, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.2: 1164–1739). This second section

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[177] *BhG 2.69*: *yā niśā sarvabhūtānāṃ tasyāṃ jāgarti saṃyamī| yasyāṃ jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ||* (Feuerstein 2011: 116). I already cited this verse from the *Bhagavadgītā* in the context of Svāmī Dayānanda's narration of the night of Śivarātrī (see p. 28).

[178] The English version is a translation by Elliot M. Stern, a French scholar presented as a "research fellow in Varanasi."

[179] See https://thearyasamaj.org retrieved on 02.02.2023.

follows the structure of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda almost *verbatim*. Thus, as in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda writes the sections on "The falsity in *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*) and "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvaṃ*), Svāmī Karapātrī directly responds with a section on "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.2: 1616–1639).[180]

The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is a *śāstrārtha* in printed form, situated across the *jalpa* and *vitāṇḍā* debate styles. In particular, the second volume, where Svāmī Karapātrī engages with the confutation of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, can more clearly be identified with the *vitāṇḍā* debate style. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī is committed to demonstrating the falsity of his adversary's positions without proving his own. That Svāmī Karapātrī focuses on disproving Svāmī Dayānanda's assertions rather than affirming his own truth might further be based on the fact that Svāmī Karapātrī is a proponent of the *svataḥ pramāṇya* theory, viz., that 'truth' is self-evident and does not need further validation. Additionally, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is the introduction to Svāmī Karapātrī's intended commentary on the *Vedas*. Therefore, the fact that in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī focused on disproving Svāmī Dayānanda's positions rather than presenting his own vision aligns with the context of the publication: the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* serves to amend Svāmī Dayānanda's reading of the *Vedas*, before Svāmī Karapātrī can proceed to write a Vedic commentary, wherein he reasserts the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* (Karapātrī 1986-1992, see Pellegrini 2009: 45–50).

Svāmī Karapātrī does not use gross bodily metaphors or scurrile language for personal attacks on Svāmī Dayānanda; however, he resorts to sarcasm and mockery to criticize him. While commenting upon his opponent's reflections, Svāmī Karapātrī always seems to reach one of the following three conclusions: his statements are false because (i) they clearly contradict the *Vedas* and their auxiliary texts, (ii) they are self-contradictory, and/or (iii) resemble the reasoning of a child or a fool. Yet, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, personal attacks against Svāmī Dayānanda are minimal, as Svāmī Karapātrī's goal is to confute his adversary based on scholarly positions and not derision. Thus, Svāmī Karapātrī primarily analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda's reasoning, providing extensive citations from *śruti* and *smṛti* to support his own positions, or more accurately, to refute those of Svāmī Dayānanda. For the publication of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Markandeya Śāstrī, Vallabh Dvivedī, and Musalgaonkar Śāstrī highlighted the passages from *śruti* and *smṛti* and referenced them both in the Sanskrit and the Hindi versions of the texts. For the most part, Svāmī Karapātrī quoted from Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's works, the *Nirukta*, the *Śrauta* and *Gṛhyasūtras*, the *Jaimini Sūtras* with the commentary of Śabara, the *Mahābhāṣya*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, the *Mahābhārata,* and the

[180] The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* thus corresponds to both styles of argumentation according to the target I referred to at p. 108: (i) those that challenge the opponent's specific arguments—typically the caste system, the Hindu canon, and *mūrtipūjā*—and (ii) those that reply to a specific publication of the adversary. Thus, in the first volume, Svāmī Karapātrī deals with several points of disagreement with the Ārya Samāja, although heavily relying on the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* but not targeting it only. In the second volume, he focuses on the punctual analysis and confutation of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (the reason for that I explain in a moment).

Purāṇas.[181] Notwithstanding Markandeya Śāstrī, Vallabh Dvivedī, and Musalgaonkar Śāstrī's work, the extent and nature of the quotations are not always clear. At times, Svāmī Karapātrī provides a lengthy paraphrase of other works. For instance, in the section on the "Examination on the real nature of the gods" (*devatāsvarūpanirūpaṇaṃ*, *VP*, 2016[1979] Vol.1: 626–675), Svāmī Karapātrī faithfully follows Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra* in the sections corresponding to the *pramitādhikaraṇa* (1.3.24–25, see also Apte 1960: 181–184) and the *devatādhikaraṇa* (1.3.26–33, see also Apte 1960: 184–207), although no reference is provided in this regard. In line with a tendency among Indian scholars noted by Freschi (2015: 98–101), Svāmī Karapātrī was not overly concerned with using material from earlier thinkers. He likely saw himself as part of the traditions of those he cited and probably believed that for most Sanskrit readers, the sources he referenced would have been obvious. Additionally, using these sources helped to strengthen the authoritative claims in his critique of Svāmī Dayānanda's views.

While the threat to *mūrtipūjā* preoccupied the Sanātanīs, their primary concern was Svāmī Dayānanda's Vedic exegesis, from which he also derived his ban on icon worship. This concern is also evident in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*'s section dedicated to defending *mūrtipūjā*. As I argued in subchapter 5.2, for Svāmī Karapātrī, one of the pillars of Sanātana Dharma was the belief in the *śāstras*, this term including the entirety of the Hindu literary corpus from the *Vedas* to the *Purāṇas*. However, he attributed a prominent position to the *Vedas,* prioritizing them over the rest of the literature. In the foreword to the first volume of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Paṭṭābhirām Śāstrī (the author of the foreword to the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*) writes that the *Vedas* are "the source of *dharma*" and "the life breath of Mother India" (Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 1: 16–17). From this, it follows that the preservation of the *Vedas* is of prime importance. Accordingly, Paṭṭābhirām Śāstrī notes that the *Vedas* are structured recitations passed down through generations: students imitate the phonetic recitation of their teachers, creating an unbroken chain of knowledge transfer known as *saṃpradāya* (Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 1: 17). In addition to established vocal composition rules, there are also established rules for the interpretation of the meanings of *Vedas* (*vedārtha*). The Pūrvamīmāṃsā, *Brahma Sūtras*, and the *Nirukta* by Yāska offer clear instructions for systematically interpreting Vedic texts. To reveal the true meanings of Vedic terminology, Hindu scholars have created foundational techniques in phonetics (*śikṣā*) and grammar (*vyākaraṇa*). In addition to these methods, one must navigate a complex set of rules in Mīmāṃsā, which includes logical arguments from Naiyāyika texts, as well as insights from Purāṇic texts and *Dharmaśāstras*. Paṭṭābhirām Śāstrī concludes that the mastery of this comprehensive body of knowledge is essential for effectively understanding the meanings of the *Vedas*.[182] Paṭṭābhirām Śāstrī further notes that, in the past, when *nāstikas* (such as the Buddhists) threatened the *Vedas*, they tried to uproot them completely. Scholars like Kumārila, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Udayanācārya, Vācaspatimiśra, and Appayadīkṣita defended the *Vedas* against these attacks. However, a "new doctrine" has emerged that is "more dangerous" than those of the past: that

[181] Some of these sources, above all the *Purāṇas* are not recognized by Svāmī Dayānanda as authoritative textual sources.
[182] According to Svāmī Karapātrī, one reason European scholars struggle to grasp the purport of the *Vedas* is that they do not fully master the entire Vedic auxiliary corpus.

of the Ārya Samāja. The great danger connected to the Ārya Samājīs is that they are not direct revilers of the *Vedas* but rather profess their reverence for them. Yet, they do not accept the 'traditional' meanings and a significant portion of the Vedic auxiliary literature. They recognize only the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas* and disregard the *Brāhmaṇas*, thereby endangering these texts in a more subtle manner. In other words, they are trying to alter both the recensions and the meanings of the *Vedas* (Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 1: 18). Paṭṭābhirām Śāstrī argues that this is why Svāmī Karapātrī chose to compose the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* in an effort to disprove Svāmī Dayānanda's doctrines. In addition to the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī determined to also write a commentary on the *Vedas* based on the *āstika* textual traditions to put to rest the 'new' interpretations of the *Vedas* (Karapātrī 1986-1992, see Pellegrini 2009: 45–50). Thus, this indicates that Svāmī Karapātrī intended to resolve the century-long diatribe between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs. This intention is further confirmed in his attempt to organize a continuation of the 1869 *śāstrārtha* of Varanasi to finally solve the conflict around *mūrtipūjā* (see subchapter 3.1.5). Yet, although Svāmī Karapātrī clearly wanted to put a point break to the Ārya Samājī-Sanātanī debate, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* itself triggered reactions among the Ārya Samāja ranks.

In 1984, the Ārya Samājī Viśudhānanda Miśra published a response to the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ*. The *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* is a three-volume treatise of about 2000 pages following the structure of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, where Viśudhānanda Miśra analyzes Svāmī Karapātrī's thought almost *verbatim*: he writes in Sanskrit, while his wife Nirmalā Miśra translated the text into Hindi. The author is somewhat contemptuous of Svāmī Karapātrī's work, accusing him of partiality in his criticism of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought. In the foreword, we read:

> I believe that no other scholar has shown such malicious hatred or been as presumptuous as Karapātrī jī in claiming that all the letters, words, and sentences of the Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā are worthless, as he has vowed to eliminate the dregs of the Ārya Samāja] (Miśra Viśudhānanda 1984 Vol. 1: 16).

Additionally, in the English foreword of the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ*, we read:

> […] Sri Karpatriji has used highly defamatory and abusive language against Maharshi Dayananda, and it plunged us into deep anguish and pain and has shaken our faith in his fairness, though differences in opinion can not in any way be questsoned [sic] as ill-will. […] A closer reading of the 'VEDARTHAPARIJATA' has revealed that Karpatriji has brought out his misleading composition, in a completely biased, superstitious, partisan and malicious way" (Miśra Viśudhānanda 1984 Vol. 1: 35–36).

The publication of the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* triggered a reaction among the Sanātanī ranks, and, in 1988/89 (*vikraṃ* 2045), the Śaṅkarācārya of Purī Svāmī Niranjandeva Tīrthā published the *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ* in response to Viśudhānanda Miśra. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ* is a book of about 200 pages, where Svāmī Niranjandeva Tīrthā writes a *vārtikaṃ* in Sanskrit (with Hindi translation by Svāmī Sukhabodha Āśrama) in corroboration of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and confutation of Viśudhānanda Miśra's introduction to his opus. The *Vārtikam* is a reaction to Viśuddhānanda's introduction and not a *verbatim*

analysis of his work. This might reveal the unwillingness to engage with Viśudhānanda Miśra's material as well as a way to diminish the rival's work. In fact, Svāmī Niranjandeva Tīrthā questions Viśudhānanda Miśra's scholarship, suggesting his inability to engage with the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* because of his poor knowledge of the *śāstras*.

7.3 Final Remarks: Why the Vedārtha Pārijāta?

The question arises: among the numerous publications addressing the Sanātanī response to the Ārya Samāja, why specifically concentrate on the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*? In the following pages, I answer this question in five points: (i) relevance of the author, (ii) extent of the treatise, (iii) purpose of the text, (iv) position among other similar publications, and (v) continuous significance of the Ārya Samāja inside the 20th century.

(i) The significance of the author is interlinked with the visibility of his works. As discussed in chapter 6, Svāmī Karapātrī emerged as a key figure in 20th-century India, and his writings garnered substantial attention. For instance, as I already mentioned (see p. 97), in 1979, the Mahārāja of Varanasi publicly introduced the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* to the public. Moreover, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is now utilized as a textbook in several *gurukulas* across North India.

(ii) The extent of the treatise: Although quantity does not necessarily mean quality—and can sometimes indicate the opposite—Svāmī Karapātrī's treatise is a comprehensive and detailed analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought. As I already mentioned, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* contains about 2000 pages published in two volumes; the treatise does not deal with the issue of *mūrtipūjā* only, but encompasses the whole of Svāmī Dayānanda's program. In his works, Svāmī Karapātrī showcases his extensive understanding of traditional literature, grounding his discussions in the *śāstras* instead of resorting to trivial criticism or personal mockery. While he does occasionally mock Svāmī Dayānanda, this is primarily delivered in a sarcastic tone and as a final point in his scholarly arguments. In other words, when Svāmī Karapātrī compares Svāmī Dayānanda's reasoning to that of a child, he did so after disproving his positions in a scholarly way. He thus 'embellishes' his argumentation with light mockery but does not engage in meaningless personal attacks.

(iii) The purpose of the text: As I mentioned, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* was designed by Svāmī Karapātrī to be the introduction to his commentary on the *Vedas*. This positions the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* as the direct counterpart of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, the introduction to Svāmī Dayānanda's commentary to the *Vedas* (and in fact the entirety of this text is commented within the second volume of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*). Thus, as it is also stated in its foreword (Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol.1: 20), in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī has the objective to silence Svāmī Dayānanda's meanings of the *Vedas* to then reassert the 'traditional' meanings in his commentary.[183]

[183] As I already mentioned, a portion of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* also criticizes European scholarship on the *Vedas*. This further proves Svāmī Karapātrī's desire to counteract the 'new' meanings of the *Vedas*.

(iv) The *Vedārtha Pārijāta*'s position in reference to similar publications: As noted, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is one of several Sanātanī publications criticizing Svāmī Dayānanda's scholarship. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* also includes arguments already laid out by previous Sanātanī scholars, especially those of Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī (see subchapter 9.6), and can therefore be regarded as an anthology of Sanātanī perspectives on the Ārya Samāja. Additionally, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* triggers a chain of rejoinders: the Ārya Samājī *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* and the Sanātana Dharmī *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ*.

(v) Contemporary relevance of the Ārya Samāja-Sanātana Dharma conflict in the 20th century: One might ask why there appears to be a gap of several decades between the majority of the works I listed in subchapter 7.1 and the publication of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. The answer might lie in the fact that around and immediately after India gained independence from the British Raj in 1947, the primary focus of Hindu communities was to establish a common unity to aid in the creation of an independent state first, and then a state that prioritized their needs above those of the Muslims and other minorities. As argued by Dalmia and Fuchs (2019: xiv-xv), 19th- and 20th-century Indian scholars sought to establish, expand, and redefine communities and their boundaries, as well as to forge larger alliances and overarching frameworks. Above all, the communal clashes and tensions with Muslims moved Hindus to form a united faction, transcending internal conflicts. Indeed, despite the rich literary output highlighting the contrasts between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanī groups, it is important to note that there were also points of agreement and cooperation between the two groups, such as the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi and cow protection. Similarly, I already mentioned that, for a while, Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs collaborated in the performance of the *śuddhi*, at least until it became a tool of mass conversion and started being carried out without the ritual expertise of the Sanātanīs (see p. 74, and Jones 1976: 202–215). Thus, according to the adage that the enemy of your enemy is your friend, with the enemy here being, for the most part, the Muslims, it followed that the animosity between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs was significantly less intense during Svāmī Karapātrī's time than in the 19th century. Furthermore, as communal clashes escalated, the sense of otherness between Hindu and Muslim communities intensified, and the urge to resolve internal conflicts grew.

Svāmī Karapātrī saw a risk in the increasing numbers of Muslim and Christian converts, but also felt the necessity to highlight the persisting differences between the perspectives of Ārya Samāja and Sanātana Dharma. As mentioned in subchapter 6.2, Svāmī Karapātrī's leitmotif was the defense of Sanātana Dharma, and the *Vedas*, being the foundation of *dharma*, were to be preserved above all else. Svāmī Karapātrī accused the Ārya Samājīs (as he did with Nationalist philosophers of 20th-century India) of reinterpreting Hindu texts, retaining the passages that supported their views while ignoring those that opposed them. Consequently, Svāmī Karapātrī perceived the Ārya Samājīs (and the Hindu nationalists) to be more dangerous than Muslims and Christians, as they reinterpreted Hindu textual traditions in new ways, thereby changing the 'traditional' meanings and, consequently, the *śāstras*

altogether. In "Prācīn Vedabhāṣy aur Ādhunik Anusandhān" (Karapātrī 1943),[184] Svāmī Karapātrī noted that, because of the influence of European scholarship, after Svāmī Dayānanda, people's faith in the Vedic 'traditional' meanings[185] began to decline, while interest in the 'new' meanings grew. Those who upheld the 'traditional' meanings started to be regarded as "wedded to the line" (*lakīr kā phakīr*), and the scholarship of those who did not engage in this new exploration and research began to be viewed as without value. According to Svāmī Karapātrī, because of Macaulay's English education plan (see p. 50), the respect of the people for the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, the *Nibandhas*, and the treatises of the Purvottara Mīmāṃsā (representing the 'traditional' meanings) was diminishing. Even if some people had faith in them, their lack of knowledge of Sanskrit made it impossible for them to understand their meanings. In this situation, people turned to the Westerners: when Indian scholars expressed profound ideas, there was little respect for them. Conversely, if a foreign scholar or woman scholar (here, Svāmī Karapātrī is referring to Annie Besant) said something, this was considered even more significant than Vedic teachings. There was a great eagerness to understand Western thought regarding the *Vedas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Mahābhārata*; many scholars even began to extract science from the *Vedas* and Vedic research, pointing to the discovery of the 'new,' or 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*. This trend spread all over the subcontinent. In 1943, Svāmī Karapātrī specifically referred to a large center for Vedic research in Lahore, where Ārya Samājīs were working to identify 'new' meanings of the *Vedas* (see Karapātri 1943: 131–132). Svāmī Karapātrī thus revealed his concerns for the Ārya Samāja's endeavor in Vedic research, which he perceived as a dangerous trend expanding in the subcontinent.

Additionally, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*'s section on "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), Svāmī Karapātrī focused extensively on the topic of interpretation of the Vedic *mantras*, demonstrating the utmost relevance of Vedic exegesis, from which the entirety of Svāmī Dayānanda's program is said to derive. The logic is simple: if it is proven that the 'traditional' meanings of the *Vedas* are the 'true' ones and Svāmī Dayānanda's 'new' meanings are wrong, it follows that the opposition to *mūrtipūjā* and the other points of Ārya Samāja's reform program are without any basis (see chapter 10).

I argue that the reason for the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* to be published a few decades after the intense exchanges between Ārya Samājī and Sanātana Dharmī is the intention to remind of the significant differences between the two groups. This is probably done with the desire to draw the attention of the Sanātanīs to the pillars of Sanātana Dharma: the caste system and the *śāstras* (with their 'traditional' meanings), which are endangered by the Ārya Samājīs. For Svāmī Karapātrī, the Ārya Samāja's attempts at changing the meanings of the *Vedas* meant the disruption of the 'continuity' of Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2.3) and its

[184] I have already quoted some of the passages from the "Prācīn Vedabhāṣy aur Ādhunik Anusandhān" (1943) while discussing Svāmī Karapātrī's concerns regarding European scholarship and Svāmī Dayānanda's new quest for Vedic meanings (see p. 99). While I previously referenced this material to illustrate Svāmī Karapātrī's general concerns about the abandonment of 'traditional' meanings, in this chapter, I cite these passages to emphasize Svāmī Karapātrī's effort in highlighting the significant differences between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātanīs.

[185] Svāmī Karapātrī uses the expression 'old meanings,' *purāṇ arth*).

established practices (the caste system, *mūrtipūjā*, and so forth). It follows that for Svāmī Karapātrī, Svāmī Dayānanda represented a subtle and, therefore, dangerous enemy of Sanātana Dharma. This also highlights Svāmī Karapātrī's staunchness: while probably recognizing the potential of the Ārya Samāja as an ally in political and social objectives, this was no reason for him to compromise on the interpretation of the meanings of the *Vedas*.

In conclusion, because of the (i) relevance of its author, (ii) its extent, (iii) purpose, (iv) standing among other publications, and (v) contemporary significance, I argue that the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* distinguished itself from other similar publications, making it an ideal textual source for studying and deepening the understanding of a Sanātana Dharmī response to the Ārya Samāja positions on icon worship.[186]

[186] It would have been an interesting endeavor to not only analyze Svāmī Karapātrī's comment on Svāmī Dayānanda's ban on icon worship but also to engage with the entire *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and analyze the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* and then also the *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ*. Yet, as I already mentioned in the Introduction (subchapter 1.1.1), the research material is too vast, and this endeavor will have to be postponed for future research.

8. Mūrtipūjā in Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī

In this chapter, before introducing the textual debate on *mūrtipūjā* found in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, I analyze Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's positions on *mūrtipūjā* outside of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and *Vedārtha Pārijāta* contexts. I do this because, on the one hand, in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda analyzes authoritative statements regarding icon worship and bases his positions on his interpretations of these sources without thoroughly outlining his views on the topic as he does in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. Therefore, I present Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective on icon worship outside of the more exegetical context of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* to better understand the origins of his viewpoints and provide a better contextualization for the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. This is particularly relevant because, after examining Svāmī Dayānanda's views on icon worship in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, I concluded that he is unlikely to have derived his positions from his exegesis work. Therefore, his positions, rather than being the result of the analysis of the contents of the *Vedas*, must have had a different origin, which I trace down to European influences, as I argued in chapter 4.

In contrast, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapatri did not write an apologia for *mūrtipūjā*. Instead, he focused on Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of the authoritative sources, challenging his exegesis and the positions derived from it. This indicates that in 'In support of *mūrtipūjā*' (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), Svāmī Karapātrī indirectly defended the practice of *mūrtipūjā* by countering Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis and exposing flaws in his interpretation of the authoritative sources. Svāmī Karapātrī points out that in the 11th chapter of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda wrote that *mūrtipūjā* is also bowing to worship any material object (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 363; see also p. 170).[187] From this, Svāmī Karapātrī derived that for the Ārya Samājīs, the acts of folding hands and reverence to non-conscious objects are the equivalent of icon worship. Svāmī Karapātrī utilized this understanding to demonstrate that throughout his interpretation of the texts and his writings, Svāmī Dayānanda, too, inadvertently corroborated acts of reverence towards non-conscious beings. Thus, although in this debate, Svāmī Karapātrī momentarily considers *mūrtipūjā* to be any act of reverence toward non-conscious beings, such as stones and knives, this is likely only a temporary expedient for the debate. I therefore explore here in the following pages Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā* outside the debate context. Additionally, there seems to be a gap between the conception of *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and the practices known under this name observed today and at the time of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī across India and beyond.

In the next pages, (i) I briefly address scholarly research on *mūrtipūjā* and its relation to the Vedic world by looking at the works of Bühnemann (1988), Banerjea (1956), and Lubin (2015). (ii) I then reflect on Svāmī Dayānanda's positions on icon worship as he presented them in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda lists sixteen reasons for banning icon

[187] Svāmī Karapātrī drew Svāmī Dayānanda's position from his critique of the Sikhs found in the *Satyārta Prakāśa*. Here, Svāmī Dayānanda wrote that when the Sikhs fold hands in front of their book (the Guru Granth Sahib) this is an act of icon worship.

worship, which I argue are motivated by the desire to pursue social progress. I note that many of these points resonate with leading concepts of the European critique of *mūrtipūjā* and conclude that Svāmī Dayānanda's stance on icon worship stems from practical concerns for social progress, while philosophical and exegetical are secondary justifications. Furthermore, I show Svāmī Dayānanda's reinterpretation of worship practices as alternatives to *mūrtipūjā*, especially that of the *pañcamahāyajña*, or the five great sacrifices. Lastly, (iii) I explore Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā* outside of the debate context of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta.* Considering that in his section on 'In support of *mūrtipūjā*' (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), Svāmī Karapātrī equated *mūrtipūjā* with the worship of the non-conscious, my question is: did Svāmī Karapātrī truly view the reverence for the objects of the *yajña* as the worship of non-conscious objects, and this as *mūrtipūjā*? Svāmī Karapātrī was an exponent of Advaita Vedānta and a practitioner of *mūrtipūjā.* The idea that *mūrtipūjā* is simply the worship of non-conscious objects would go against the doctrines of the Smārta tradition. Based on a few interviews with Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī and Svāmī Sadānanda Sarasvatī (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction), I will uncover Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā* and its connection to Vedic practices. To do so, I will briefly enter the discussion of *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* (the *brahman* without qualities and without form), *saguṇa nirākāra brahman* (the *brahman* with qualities but without form), and *saguṇa sākāra brahman* (the *brahman* with qualities and with form).

8.1 Scholarly Discourses on Mūrtipūjā

Mūrtipūjā is likely the most widespread practice among contemporary Hindu practitioners in India and the Hindu diaspora. The term *Mūrtipūjā* is composed of the words '*mūrti*' and '*pūjā*,' meaning the worship of icons, images, or idols.[188] According to Banarjea (1956: 43), before the word *mūrti* came into use, the same idea was expressed by terms such as *pratikṛti* and *pratimā*, which came to denote objects of worship in the course of time. According to Bühnemann (1988: 31), the etymology of the term '*pūjā*,' despite extensive discussion, remains inadequately explained. For M. Charpentier, it probably derives from the Tamil root *pūcu*, 'to smear,' while, according to Thieme, it derives from '*pṛñcā*,' conceiving '*pūjā*' as the honoring of a guest. In the *Śiva Purāṇa* (16.29–30), the term '*pūjā*' is defined as that by which *pū*-(*r*) is produced (*jā*-*yate*), '*pū*(*r*)' meaning the achievement of the fruit. According to the *Kulārṇavatantra* 17.70, '*pūjā*' is called so because it destroys [the effects] of previous (*pūrva*) births, prevents births (*janma*) and deaths, and gives complete (*saṃpūrṇa*) fruit (see Bühnemann 1988: 31). Today, *mūrtipūjā* refers to the act of worshipping one or more deities through (ideally) sixteen offerings (*ṣoḍaśopacārapūjā*)[189] at home or in temples. While the *ṣoḍaśopacārapūjā* serves as the model for every *mūrtipūjā*, there are also variations like the

[188] The term 'idol' is often avoided in academic context, due to its negative connotations from the Christian tradition.
[189] According to Bühnemann (1988: 64), there is hardly any identical list of the sixteen offerings, which vary a lot after the *mūrti* has been given the *abhiṣeka* or bath.

simpler *pañcopacārapūjā*, implying only five offerings,[190] or the occasional *pūjās*, often more elaborate or modified forms of the standard one (Bühnemann 1988: 10).

The question of the presence of *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas* has deeply interested Indological scholars. In subchapter 4.2, I argued that European scholars mostly identified a gap between 'ancient' and 'modern' India, the latter viewed as a degeneration of the former. Scholars like Colebrooke, Goldstücker, and Max Müller (see chapter 4.4) claimed that *mūrtipūjā* was a modern practice, a token of degeneration from Vedic practices that was not contemplated in the *Vedas*. After the scholarship of the first European researchers, the question of icon worship in the *Vedas*, as well as the pursuit of determining its antiquity, continued to interest academia. All in all, scholars agree that the *Vedas* do not provide evidence of practices identifiable as the *mūrtipūjā* commonly performed in temples and households today. Similarly, researchers appear to concur that the worship of icons is a relatively late phenomenon. The first testimonies of *mūrtipūjā* are perhaps recorded in Pāṇini, as when Patañjali used the term *arccā* in the *Mahābhāṣya* when he commented that the Mauryas had images of gods (*arccā*) made for obtaining gold (see Banerjea 1956: 40). Despite this, there is also a parallel hypothesis considering the existence of pre-Vedic icon worship practices. Findings from the Indus Valley civilizations, especially the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, have revealed numerous terracotta figurines and partial stone sculptures that may depict iconic representations of deities. Notably, one of these terracotta figurines has been identified as the prototype of Śiva-Paśupati as it portrays a three-headed horned figure seated in a specific yogic position (the *kūrmāsana*, where the heels are positioned crosswise under the buttocks), surrounded by a rhinoceros, a water buffalo, an elephant, and a tiger, along with men. This has raised the suspicion that pre-Vedic icon worship practices may have existed (Banerjea 1956: 41). However, the existence of icon worship practices before the Vedic era is only partially relevant to this case study: the central point of the Ārya Samājī-Sanātana Dharmī debate revolves around the presence of *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas*.[191] Thus, considering that modern-like *mūrtipūjā* practices seem to be absent from the *Vedas*, the question arises as to whether there is a connection between the Vedic ritual and contemporary *mūrtipūjā*. According to Piano (2019: 256), starting from the Gupta era (IV-V century CE), *pūjā* gradually took the place of the Vedic sacrifice (*yajña*) and remains to this day the primary form of worship in both Hindu temples and homes. According to Lubin (2015), with the gradual decline of the Vedic world, there is a concurrent rise of *pūjā* practices, resulting in both a 'contamination' of Vedic rituals with *pūjā* elements, as seen in the late *Grhyasūtras*, and the Vedicization of *pūjā*, as, for instance, with the insertion of Vedic *mantras* into the *pūjā* rituals. Additionally, the popularization of the *pañcāyatanapūjā*, which involves the adoration of a pantheon of five deities—Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, and Devī—allegedly initiated by Ādi Śaṅkarācarya, contributed to the spread and canonization of *mūrtipūjā* (Bühnemann 1988: 49).

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[190] The five offerings are sandalwood paste (*gandha*), flowers (*puṣpa*), incense (*dhūpa*), lamp (*dīpa*), and food (*naivedya*) (Bühnemann 1988: 64).

[191] Yet, according to his vision of the Indian past as a golden era, Svāmī Dayānanda would clearly argue against such a possibility.

In his study on *The Vedic Homa and the Standardization of Hindu Pūjā* (2015), Lubin argues that early Vedic texts show no trace of *pūjā* practices. However, later Vedic traditions attest to a transition from Vedic rituals to *pūjā*. Lubin thus examines the gradual simplification of Vedic *śrauta* rituals noted in the late *Gṛhyasūtras*, which describe simple Vedic rituals resembling modern forms of *pūjā*. Similarly, Vedic ritual formats, such as those of the *homa*, *madhuparka*, *vrata*, and *śānti*, were eventually woven into *pūjā* pre-existing layouts together with Vedic *mantras* (Lubin 2015: 144–145).[192] According to Thieme, the *pūjā* formats incorporated elements of older rites, like the reception of an honored guest, as well as elements of the traditional service given to a king, like the offering of an umbrella and a fly-whisk (Bühnemann 1988: 30). Similarly, the *bali* rites described in the *Gṛhyasūtras* include offerings resembling the ones occurring in the *pūjā*; in the *sarpabali*, snakes are treated as guests: they are given water for bathing, collyrium, a mirror, garlands, and garments. In the *śrāddha* rituals, the *brāhmaṇs* substituting their deceased fathers accept similar offerings. In the ceremony of the return of the Vedic student to his home (*samāvartana*), the student is adorned and clothed and looks into the mirror (Bühnemann 1988: 30–31). While Bühnemann (1988: 31) highlights these similarities, she also observes that this continuity of elements does not signify the identity of rites. According to Lubin (2015), the *pūjā* elements entering the Vedic rituals, especially the system of offerings, were innovations in the Vedic religion and borrowing from a substrate or neighboring culture where *pūjā* was likely to have been practiced.[193]

Bühnemann also explores how Vedic *mantras* are added to the *pūjā* formats. The 'adaptive reuse'[194] of Vedic *mantras* in *pūjā* ceremonies is believed to represent more than a simple reinterpretation and reuse of this material. Since the Vedic *mantras* represent the 'truth' transmitted by the seers, they carry importance in multiple; thus, their 'adaptive reuse' was often meaningful (Bühnemann 1988: 67).[195] According to Gonda (1972: 2, cited in Bühnemann 1988: 67–68), using a *mantra* for a different purpose suggests that a religious community believes there is a fundamental identity or similarity between the original act associated with the *mantra* and the rite it has been adapted to. Thus, Gonda's observation would likely align with Svāmī Karapātrī's thought and his understanding of the 'constancy' of Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2). In contrast, Svāmī Dayānanda, who, like many early European Indologists, saw a gap between the Vedic world and 'modern Hinduism,' would interpret the reuse of Vedic *mantras* in the context of icon worship as misuse and desacralization of Vedic truths (and this is exactly topic of debate in chapter 10). In summary, there appears to have been, on the one hand, a gradual simplification of Vedic rituals that incorporated elements of

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[192] The *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Śeṣasūtra* and *Vaikhānasa Gṛhyasūtra* portray fully established frameworks for *mūrtipūjā* (Lubin 2015: 148).

[193] This supports the hypothesis that pre-Vedic icon worship may have existed, or that such practices were present alongside the Vedic world among non-Aryan communities.

[194] On this, see Freschi's and Maas's concept of "adaptive reuse" (Freschi and Maas 2017: 11–14).

[195] For instance, the *mantra* '*gaṇānāṃ tvā gaṇapatiṃ havāmahe*' (*ṚV 2.23.1*), 'originally' addressed to Bṛhaspati, has become a leading *mantra* in the worship of Gaṇapati/Ganeśa due to the words '*ganānāṃ … gaṇapatiṃ*.' Those who employed this *mantra* for Gaṇapati/Ganeśa's worship were likely aware that the verse was originally directed to Bṛhaspati. However, as a verse of the *Veda*s, the *mantra* was also believed to encompass the worship of Gaṇapati/Ganeśa (Bühnemann 1988: 67).

the *pūjā* rituals (which likely already existed in the religious substratum), and on the other hand, a progressive Vedicization of *pūjā* rituals. Thus, *pūjā* and Vedic rituals influenced each other through parallel and overlapping processes. Elements from the Vedic *yajña*, such as the use of *mantras*, were adapted into *pūjā*, while aspects of *pūjā*—like its simpler procedures—also shaped how Vedic rituals were practiced. Rather than being a straightforward progression, the relationship between *pūjā* and Vedic ritual involved mutual adaptation, resulting in ritual forms that combined features of both traditions.

8.2 Svāmī Dayānanda and Mūrtipūja

Svāmī Dayānanda located the origins of *mūrtipūjā* in India with the Jainas. He argued that the Vaiṣṇavas created their own icons based on the Jaina representations but in a completely different fashion. Thus, instead of portraying naked renouncers, the Vaiṣṇavas clothed, perfumed, and jeweled their *mūrtis*. Eventually, they wrote 'fanciful books' like the *Purāṇas* under the name of great sages like Vyāsa. Additionally, they created stone images of gods and buried them in the ground.[196] They then claimed to dream of *mūrtis* buried in various locations and sent someone to excavate them. Once the icons were discovered, they asserted that these needed to be enshrined so devotees could pay homage and have their wishes fulfilled. Those who had concealed the icons and subsequently dreamed about them would then become the priests of the temples where the icons had been enshrined and live off the offerings of the devotees (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 317–318).

In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda presents sixteen key arguments against *mūrtipūjā*, emphasizing a wide range of motivations why people should abandon it (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 323). Here, icon worship is presented as a practice conflicting with the development of both the individual and the nation. The feelings of faith and devotion associated with *mūrtipūjā* are perceived as hindering one's self-exertion, which leads to fatalistic mindsets, both on the personal and social level. These considerations should be understood within the political context of British India, where Svāmī Dayānanda wrote. Therefore, Svāmī Dayānanda's list needs to be viewed in light of his desire for independence. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that Svāmī Dayānanda's stance on *mūrtipūjā* appears to prioritize practical and society-oriented reasons over spiritual and theological ones. Additionally, this list reveals significant European influences on Svāmī Dayānanda's thought, which I explore below (see also chapter 4). The following are Svāmī Dayānanda's sixteen reasons against *mūrtipūjā*:

1- Nobody's mind is ever tranquil until it is directed toward the incorporeal God, for it finds rest in Him since He has no physical form. Therefore, icon worship is 'irreligious.'
2- *Mūrtipūjā* creates poverty (money needs to be spent on temples) and leads to pride and neglect of duties.

[196] On the custom of burying *mūrtis* under earth, see Hüsken (2021).

3- People gathering in the temples create opportunities for adultery, conflicts, diseases, and disputes.
4- When people believe this is the sole path to virtue, wealth, pleasure, and salvation, they become devoid of courage.
5- The priests' unity is destroyed, for by worshipping images of opposing characters, names, and forms, they adopt contradictory religious paths, separate themselves from one another, and ruin the country.
6- Idolaters believe that their victory and the enemy's defeat depend on their faith and thus lead idle lives. When they are defeated, the independence of the country and the possession of wealth pass into the hands of their enemies. They then suffer many troubles from falling into the hands of the enemy, like a potter's ass or an innkeeper's pony.
7- Since a person gets angry, resorts to force, and uses offensive names when told by someone that an effigy is made of him or a stone is used in place of him or his name, why should God not get angry and destroy the men of evil mind who place stones in His stead in the heart, which is the temple of God?
8- Idolaters wander from temple to temple in distant countries, suffering much trouble. They neglect the duties of religion and spiritual life, being harassed by robbers and cheated by the dishonest persons.
9- They give money to wicked priests, who spend it on whoring, adultery, eating flesh, and drinking wine, as well as quarrels over trivial matters, a situation that destroys the enjoyment of a gift and causes much distress.
10- They do not honor their parents or their elders but pay their respects to stone images, showing ingratitude towards their family.
11- If the icons are broken or stolen, they beat their breasts and weep bitterly.
12- The priests, being oppressed by the company of others' wives, and the priestesses by that of strange men, lose the pleasure of conjugal life.
13- They are destroyed and completely ruined by mutual animosity due to the servant's lack of proper obedience to the master's commands.
14- The mind of the man contemplating an inanimate object becomes gross and stunted in reason, or the inanimate nature of the thing contemplated influences the contemplator's mind.
15- God created fragrant flowers and other pleasant substances to cleanse the impurities of the air and water and to promote health. The priests pluck them. How long would they have spread fragrance in the open air to purify it? Yet they destroy them before they complete their life cycle. They are thrown into gutters, where, mixing with dirty water, they produce a stench. Did God create fragrant flowers to be offered to stones?
16- Flowers, sandalwood paste, rice, and other offerings to the stones are discarded into the mud of the gutter or cesspool. There, they rot and produce a foul stench in the air, similar to the nuisance caused by people. Thousands of worms are constantly generated and die in it.

Salmond has analyzed these sixteen reasons and concluded that for Svāmī Dayānanda, icon worship is clearly associated with "illicit sex, stench, putrefaction, and political subjugation" (Salmond 2006: 84). In my view, the primary motivation behind this list of reasons seems to

lie in the pursuit of social progress. I thus identify four primary reasons foundational to Svāmī Dayānanda's list and ban on icon worship: (i) waste, (ii) idleness, (iii) political fragmentation, and (iv) decline in moral standards.

(i) Waste: in the sense of waste of energy and resources. For instance, with reason n. 2, Svāmī Dayānanda shows that icon worship is a waste of money. Similarly, with n. 8, he shows that pilgrimages are a waste of money, resources, and energy; money given to the temple priests is also a waste (n. 9). Furthermore, icon worship is a waste of energy in that people, instead of serving their parents and the elderly, serve stones (n. 10) and become desperate if these are broken or stolen (n. 11). Likewise, the materials used for the *pūjā*, such as flowers, sandalwood, and grains that are presented to the icons as offerings, are soon thrown away and become rotten, creating a stench (n. 15 and n. 16). These last two points are linked to the Ārya Samājī reinterpretation of the *deva-yajña* (see p. 135). Svāmī Dayānanda, in fact, suggests that in the context of the *yajña*, substances are rarefied in the sacrificial fire so that their properties are enhanced and purify the air. In contrast, the flowers that are plucked too soon to be offered to the gods lose their ability to purify the air through their fragrance and instead serve the opposite purpose by decaying quickly and therefore creating a stench and polluting the air. These quasi-environmental concerns reveal Svāmī Dayānanda's struggle to present para-scientific arguments in his discourse. Additionally, the concern about the waste of resources, such as money and energy, must be considered in the context of colonial domination and Svāmī Dayānanda's desire to utilize all available resources to mobilize people against British rule. Moreover, the concern with waste aligns with the idea of European scholars like Goldstücker, who proposed that when modern Hindus will understand the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, they will stop wasting their time on 'superstitious' practices and rise again like in the past (see p. 54Early Indology and Svāmī Dayānanda).

Another central theme underlying this list is that (ii) *mūrtipūjā* allegedly induces idleness in people. According to Svāmī Dayānanda, those who perform icon worship, instead of working to achieve their goals, worship God and leave it to Him to grant their needs and wishes. It follows that people have no courage (n. 4), do not fight against their enemy, and wait for the salvific intervention of God, thus losing their property and freedom (n. 6). Additionally, their minds are troubled (1) and become as idle as the stone they worship (n. 14). This point closely aligns with European scholarship. As I discussed in chapter 4 (p. 68), in his lecture on "The Worship of Tangible, Semi-Tangible, and Intangible Objects" (Müller 1879), Müller suggested that religions evolve toward more and more abstract forms of worship. This implies that the more abstract a religion's object of worship, the more advanced its followers are, especially regarding their intellectual development. Additionally, Max Weber (1978: 610) argued that the Biblical prohibition against the veneration of images is what steered Europe and Christianity towards greater intellectual and rational thinking. Svāmī Dayānanda thus shared with several European scholars that 'idleness' goes hand in hand with *mūrtipūjā* (see p. 66).

Similarly, for Svāmī Dayānanda, icon worship causes (iii) political fragmentation: the worship of different gods creates opposing factions in society, thus hindering the creation of a cohesive people (n. 5). Additionally, the fatalism associated with the adoration of the gods implies political apathy, suggesting that people do not react when the country falls under

foreign rule (n. 6), and the authoritative roles within society are not maintained (n. 13).[197] As I previously mentioned, Goldstücker voiced the opinion that once the Hindus understood the 'original' meanings of the *Vedas*, they would be able to advance along the society's evolutionary path. Yet, the notion that abandoning *mūrtipūjā* (and consequently devotion to many gods) was a solution to cure Indian fragmentation and foster national unity and the capacity to resist foreign rule remained, for obvious reasons, outside the realm of Indological study. This is clearly one of Svāmī Dayānanda's independent developments of thought regarding icon worship.

(iv) Loss of moral standards is another concern for Svāmī Dayānanda, as he posits that temple community life creates occasions for adultery (n. 3 and n. 12) and disputes (as well as the spread of diseases, n. 3), and that money offered to temple priests is spent to satisfy their basic instincts (n. 9). As I reported in subchapter 4.4, European scholars expressed similar concerns regarding icon worship and its connections to sexual licentiousness and low morality. On one hand, temple priests and *brāhmaṇs* in general were perceived as those living off the offerings of the devotees, while, on the other hand, texts such as the *Gītagovinda* scandalized the morality of European scholars. In chapter 4 (p. 65), I also reported a travel account of Claudius Buchanan, who depicted the Jagannath Ratha Yatra of Puri as an obscene and bloody festival.

Point n. 7 from Svāmī Dayānānda's list seems to fall outside these categories, as it indicates that God may be offended by being equated to a stone. As Salmond argues (2006: 82), this is reminiscent of the God of the Old Testament who punished the Jews for adoring the Golden Calf.

In summary, this list reveals significant European influences on Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to icon worship and indicates that the primary concern underlying his ban on icon worship is the mobilization and development of society, starting at the individual level, with a focus on self-exertion, promptness, and a strong moral compass.

8.2.1 Svāmī Dayānanda's Theological Discourse and the Worship of God

Svāmī Dayānanda is not the first one calling into question the practice of *mūrtipūjā*. Alongside Rammohan Roy and 18th- and 19th-century European scholars, similar discourses emerged in pre-colonial South Asian religious and textual traditions, in both Hindu and Muslim circles. Yet, for the most part, as I already mentioned (p. 69), these pre-colonial discourses on icon worship primarily revolved around theological and philosophical speculations. In contrast, in Svāmī Dayānanda's discourse, theological and philosophical speculations seem to hold secondary importance compared to the political and practical reasons I just explored in the previous subchapter. This notwithstanding, alongside his ban

[197] N.12 of Svāmī Dayānanda's list probably hints at the fact that those who worship icons recognize only the authority of their gods and cease to recognize the authority of their masters according to social customs. Thus, the hierarchical structure of society fails to function, and consequently, society does not work.

on icon worship, Svāmī Dayānanda develops a discourse on God and a set of 'correct' religious practices, which I explore below.

Svāmī Dayānanda posited the existence of one only God, or Īśvara, as a singular, formless (*nirākāra*) entity that embodies 'positive qualities' (*saguṇa*) and is free of 'negative qualities' (*nirguṇa*). By *saguṇa*, he indicated that Īśvara has all attributes of 'infinite character,' such as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. Conversely, Īśvara is *nirguṇa* as it lacks the characteristics of matter, *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*, along with any qualities associated with 'finite character' (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 85–86). God permeates every soul yet remains fundamentally different than man; man is to God like a servant to a master, a subject to a king, and a son to a father (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 222). Svāmī Dayānanda further argues that there exists no Vedic pantheon of multiple gods, nor does God divide or manifest as multiple deities. This position is quite controversial in relation to the *Vedas* and the ritual world. Yet, Svāmī Dayānanda argued that the *Vedas* reveal the existence of one God only and not many gods (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 209). Accordingly, the various names of gods found in the *Vedas*, such as Agni, Mitra, Indra, Brahmā, Sūrya, Kubera, Rudra, Nārāyaṇa, and Ganeśa, are regarded as appellations of Īśvara, invoked in different contexts with particular focus on one or another characteristic of contingent relevance.[198]

An important aspect of Svāmī Dayānanda's theological discourse is that God does not assume any form or body because if He were to possess a body, this would contradict His nature of being all-pervading and omnipresent. In other words, for Svāmī Dayānanda, saying that God has a body would reduce Him to the conditions of embodied beings that experience sensations like heat, cold, and hunger. Additionally, if God possessed a body, there would need to be a creator for that body, leading to the contradiction of having a being superior to God and responsible for His creation (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 211). The fact that God cannot take up forms and bodies directly leads to the impossibility of worshipping Him through *mūrtis*. Similarly, Svāmī Dayānanda rebuked the theory of the *avatāras*, based on three main considerations: (i) the *Vedas* assert that God is free from birth, death, and incarnation; (ii) God, being devoid of the qualities of matter, cannot "be enclosed in a drop of semen or the cavity of the womb;" and (iii) to even speak of God's incarnation, who possesses all the qualities of 'infinite character,' is "like seeing a barren woman's son performing his marriage and then begetting a son thereby; that is, it is a self-contradiction" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 319).

For Svāmī Dayānanda, the notion of a single and bodiless God uniting the Hindus (or the Āryans/Vedics) under one religion has the advantage of hindering social divisions stemming from devotion to different gods and *saṃpradāyas*. Although Svāmī Dayānanda addressed these topics in his writings, it remains impossible to determine with certainty whether he genuinely adhered to the belief in a monotheistic and formless God. Therefore, I cannot argue on this level; however, after analyzing Svāmī Dayānanda's positions, I arrive at three primary considerations. Firstly, (i) Svāmī Dayānanda's sixteen points against *mūrtipūjā* reveal important sociological and political angles behind the ban on icon worship, as well as European influences. The depiction of a singular Godhead akin to the Christian one offers

[198] In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda lists all the hundred names of God (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 72, 74–87).

the advantage of positioning India at a higher point on the evolutionary scale of society[199] and fostering a more cohesive sense of religious community among the people, with evident social and political results. Secondly, (ii) the position that Svāmī Dayānanda's ban on icon worship and theological discourse is based on Vedic exegesis—and here, I anticipate the outcomes of the following two chapters—is highly unlikely, as his interpretations appear arbitrary and suggest he imposed his views onto the Vedic text. Thus, (iii) while Svāmī Dayānanda might have believed in the existence of one supreme God who cannot be worshipped through icons, it is also evident that his ban on *mūrtipūjā* was primarily grounded in concerns related to social mobilization and development rather than Vedic exegesis.

Additionally, when Svāmī Dayānanda discarded *mūrtipūjā* (along with other related devotional practices), he rejected much of the religious framework associated with 'modern Hinduism.' Svāmī Dayānanda thus designed a set of 'proper methods' for worshiping God. Here, too, he seemed to focus less on philosophical speculations and more on the practical outcomes of religion, along with the interactions between individuals and faith and their effects on society. He thus enjoined the (i) praise of, (ii) prayer to, and (iii) meditation on God (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 212–217). For Svāmī Dayānanda, praise, prayer, and meditation ultimately implied a mental recollection of God's 'positive' and 'negative' qualities. In other words, and in a manner reminiscent of Protestant discourses, Svāmī Dayānanda regarded God as a role model and a source of inspiration for self-improvement. He emphasized the importance of self-improvement, particularly from a perspective where divine mercy plays no role. The concept of sin forgiveness negatively impacted human behavior, increasing the chances that people might repeat their mistakes (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 219).

Thus, the ideal Ārya Samāja practitioner earns his accomplishments and seeks guidance from God for personal growth. (i) He praises both the positive and negative qualities of God to get closer to the divine and learn to work towards becoming as similar to God as possible. This praise is not merely a repetition of titles but serves as a guide and reminder for self-improvement. (ii) The Ārya Samājī's prayers to God align with his actions. Therefore, when he prays for a specific goal, he also strives to achieve that same goal. (iii) Through meditation (*upāsanā*), he gets closer to God and purifies his mind. Ultimately, this practice fosters strength and endurance and leads to advancements in both secular and spiritual realms of knowledge.

In addition to praise, prayer, and meditation, Svāmī Dayānanda also reinterprets the *pañcamahāyajña*, or the five great sacrifices, which he reinvents as acts of service to the community. These are the (i) *brahmayajña*, (ii) *devayajña*, (iii) *pitṛyajña*, (iv) *balivaiśvayajña*, and (v) *atithiyajña*.[200]

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[199] I refer here to Max Müller theorization of a evolutionary scale of society wherein a monotheistic creed is regarded as more evoluted in comparison to a polytheist one (see p. 70)

[200] *MS 3.68–72* (Olivelle 2005: 112): "A householder has five slaughter-houses: fireplace, grindstone, broom, mortar and pestle, and water pot. By his use of them, he is fettered" (3.68). "To expiate successively for each of these, the great seers devised the five great sacrifices to be carried out daily by householders" (3.69). "The

(i) The *brahmayajña* means learning and teaching the *Vedas* and other authoritative texts, along with the meditation and worship of God at sunrise and sunset (a form of *sandhyā*, see *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 245). This practice entails meditating on God's attributes; it should be conducted in a peaceful location with adequate ventilation and clean, fresh air, shortly before sunrise and just after sunset, after standard hygiene procedures and the performance of *prāṇāyāma*.

(ii) The *devayajña*, also known as *agnihotra* or *homa*, involves the sublimation of various substances in the fire. Unlike what is 'traditionally accepted,' for the Ārya Samājīs, burning these substances in the fire is not an act of offering to the gods. In fact, according to Svāmī Dayānanda, there exist no gods to whom these substances could be offered. Therefore, these substances are burned in the fire with the recitation of the Vedic *mantras* to purify the environment.

> *Agnihotra* is that in which something is thrown into fire for the purpose of purification of air and water or in the name of God or for the sake of obeying God's commands. It is obvious that when by burning fragrant, tonic, sweet, intellect improving, courage-imparting, fortitude-producing, strength-giving and disease-destroying substances in fire, air and rain water are purified, immense benefit results to all the objects of the earth and immense happiness to all creatures on account of their coming into contact with pure air and water. And consequently, the performers of *agnihotra*, on account of the benefit to others, gain immense happiness through the favor of God (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 249–250).

In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, when asked whether it would be more beneficial to apply sandalwood on people's foreheads or to feed them ghee instead of burning these items in the fire, Svāmī Dayānanda responds:

> If you knew the physical science, you would never talk so […] a substance thrown onto the fire gets rarefied and goes with the wind to distant places where it replaces stench. […] The odor has no power to drive off the impure air of the house and to introduce pure air from outside. It is the power of fire to decompose nasty things, and rarifying them it drives them out of the house and brings in fresh and pure air from outside (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 102).

Similarly, if Vedic *mantras* are not magic formulas for directing offerings to the Vedic deities, then what is the purpose of reciting mantras during fire oblations?

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sacrifice to the Veda is teaching; the sacrifice to ancestors is the quenching libation; the sacrifice to gods is the burnt offering; the sacrifice to beings is the Bali offering; and the sacrifice to humans is the honoring of guests" (3.70). "If a man never fails to offer these five great sacrifices to the best of his ability, he remains unsullied by the taints of his slaughter-houses in spite of living permanently at home" (3.71). "Gods, guests, dependents, ancestors, and oneself—when someone does not make offerings to these five, he has breath but no life at all" (3.72).

> The verses or mantras describe the advantages of the fire-offering and their recitation impresses them on the memory, and thus it tends to preserve and protect the loss of Vedic learning" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 102).

Additionally, Svāmī Dayānanda argued that the performance of the *devayajña* (or *agnihotra*, or *homa*) is compulsory, as the sublimation of substances in the fire is a necessary practice to counteract—what we would today refer to as—the carbon footprint of each person. Similarly, he posited that, during the Vedic Golden Era, intense ritual practices resulted in the absence of diseases, as air and water were constantly purified through the *devayajña*:[201]

> Persons commit as much sin as they occasion pain and misery to the creation by contributing to the production of diseases, which spring from their spoiling the air and water by discharging into them all the stench and impurities generated in their body (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 102).

(iii) The *pitṛyajña* consists of service to the *devas*, the *ṛṣis*, and the *pitṛs*. For Svāmī Dayānanda, the *devas* are men who renounce falsehood and accept the truth, the *ṛṣis* are individuals who, having learned all the sciences, teach them to others, and the *pitṛs* are knowledgeable people, masters of *brahmavidyā*, involved in activities aimed at the good and protection of all (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 256). Accordingly, the *pitṛyajña* can occur only when the learned are alive, not when they are dead. This act is to be performed in reference to the living alone, as only like that can service be provided, owing to both the server and the served being present at the same time and place.[202]

(iv) The *balivaiśvavedayajña* is to be done in honor of the *devatās* with cooked food; here, however, *devatā* means wise men and not god.[203]

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[201] Svāmī Dayānanda's characterization of the *deva-yajña* contradicts the 'traditional' or Mīmāṃsā interpretation which holds that this ritual is meant for offering to the Gods. In the *Vedārtha Pārijātā*, Svāmī Karapātrī criticized Svāmī Dayānanda's stance on the *deva-yajña* and the other four of the five great sacrifices (*pañcamahāyajña*) (see *VP*, Karapātrī 2016[1979] Vol. 2: 1504).
Next, I report passages from the *Manusṃṛti* on the *deva-yajña*: "From the oblation to All-gods that has been cooked, a Brahmin should offer portions in the domestic fire to the following deities every day and according to rule: first to Fire and to Soma; then to both of them together; to the All-gods; to Dhanvantari; to Kuhū—the goddess of the new moon; to Anumati—the goddess of the full moon; to Prajāpati; to heaven and earth together; and finally to Sviṣṭakṛt—Fire who makes the offering flawless" (*MS* 3.84–86, Olivelle 1998: 112).
[202] This characterization of the *pitṛ-yajña* is also in contradiction to the 'traditional' one. Thus, Manu (*MS* 3.82–83; Olivelle 1998: 112) describes the *pitṛ-yajña* in the following manner: "He should make an ancestral offering every day with food or water, or even with milk, roots, and fruits, gladdening his ancestors thereby" (3.82). "He should feed at least a single Brahmin for the benefit of his ancestors as part of the five great sacrifices; at this, he should never feed even a single Brahmin in connection with the offering to the All-gods (3.83)."
[203] On the *bali-yajña* Manu writes (3.87–93; Olivelle 1998: 113): "In this manner, having offered the burnt oblation properly, he should make the Bali offerings to Indra, Death, Lord of the waters (Varuṇa), and Moon, together with their attendants, making the offerings clockwise in the direction of each quarter" (3.87). "He should make an offering by the door, saying: "To the Maruts!"; by the water pot, saying: "To the waters!"; and by the mortar and pestle, saying "To trees!"" (3.88). "He should make a Bali offering to Śrī—the goddess of prosperity—by the head of the bed; to Bhadrajālī—the auspicious black goddess—by the foot of the bed; and to Brahman and the Lord of the house in the middle of the house" (3.89). "He should throw into the air a Bali offering to All-gods, as well as to beings that roam during the day and to those that roam at night" (3.90). "In the back house, he should make a Bali offering to Sarvānnabhūti—the power of all food. The remainder of the Bali oblation he should offer towards the south for the ancestors" (3.91). "He should also gently place on the ground offerings

The (v) *atithiyajña* is the service to guests. The guests are described as people who possess complete knowledge, do good for others, have their senses in check, are virtuous, are truthful in their speech, are free from deceit and cunning, and are always in motion.[204]

Evidently, with Svāmī Dayānanda, the *pañcamahāyajñas*, traditionally also directed towards the gods and deceased ancestors, become solely instruments for social service and improving air quality. The performance of the five great sacrifices thus replaced the care of the gods and the deceased ancestors with community service and efforts to improve the environment. Similarly, for Svāmī Dayānanda, the ban on icon worship aims to prevent fatalism and encourage people to engage in self-exertion. Likewise, the constant remembrance of God's 'positive' and 'negative' qualities nobilitate the Ārya Samājī, who views God as an example to emulate. In summary, Svāmī Dayānanda's discourse appears to delineate a social model rather than a spiritual alternative to 'Hindu' practices. By examining the entirety of his program, it becomes evident that he viewed 'religious practices' as a means to mobilize the 'Āryan community' toward a cohesive social consciousness, which is a vital prerequisite for forming a unity to oppose British domination.

8.3 Svāmī Karapātrī's Understanding of Mūrtipūjā

In the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, when Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda's positions, he borrows his definition of *mūrtipūjā* as the worship of the non-conscious and builds several of his arguments on that. However, I already doubted that this reflected Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of icon worship. Svāmī Karapātrī was a *saṃnyāsi* of the Daśanāmī Saṃpradāya, a follower of Ādi Śaṅkarācarya's Advaita Vedānta, and a renowned *bhakta* and performer of *mūrtipūjā* (see chapter 6). It is, therefore, extremely likely that he had an understanding of icon worship beyond the Samājī-Sanātanī debate. In the following pages, I explore Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective on this practice through the testimonies of Svāmī Svarūpānanda, a long-time companion of Svāmī Karapātrī, and Svāmī Sadānanda, the successor of Svāmī Svarūpānanda at the Śaṅkarācarya seat of Dwarka (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction). Below, I report in translation from Hindi two separate interviews I conducted with Svāmī Svarūpānanda and one with Svāmī Sadānanda on the meaning of *mūrtipūjā* for Svāmī Karapātrī.

(1) Interview with Svāmī Svāmī Svarūpānanda in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 30.07.2020) on the meaning of *mūrtipūjā* for Svāmī Karapātrī:

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for dogs, outcastes, dog-cookers, persons with evil diseases, crows, and worms" (3.92) "When a Brahmin honors all beings in this manner every day, he takes on a body of effulgence and goes by the direct route to the supreme abode" (3.93).

[204] On the *atithi-yajña*, Manu writes (3.94–95; Olivelle 2005: 113) After completing in this manner the Bali offering, he should feed a guest before anyone else and give almsfood to a mendicant student of the Veda according to rule" (3.94). "By giving almsfood, a twice-born householder obtains as much merit as he does by giving a cow to a poor man according to rule" (3.95) (the description of the *atithi-yajña* continues till 3.120).

There is a difference between the *mūrtipūjā* of the *saguṇākāra* and the gods. First, the *pūjā* of the *saguṇākāra* is the *pūjā* to what the object represents. For instance, in the month of Śrāvaṇa (July-August), when one performs *pūjā* to the *śivaliṅga*, one does not worship the earth. When one offers food to one's deity (*bhog*), then the deity is satisfied (*tṛpt*) only upon seeing the food. Between the worshipper (*upāsak*) and what is worshipped (*upāsy*) is established a relationship of love. The *upāsy*, or the 'chosen deity,' the *iṣṭadevatā*, is like the mother of the *upāsak*. The *upāsak* will always turn to their deity, who is the only one who loves us unconditionally. Any affection we feel or any affection someone has for us is always in relation to, or for the purpose of, the happiness of the one who has the feeling. The husband loves his wife for the sake of his own happiness. When in danger, one turns to their *iṣṭadevatā*. When I was once in Amritsar, there was an earthquake. Everyone went to the rooftop and began invoking their *iṣṭadevatā* […]. When one continues with the *upāsana*, the relationship with one's *iṣṭadevatā* becomes stronger until one, through reflection (*vicār*), understands that the *iṣṭadevatā* is nothing but one's own soul (*ātma*): this is the liberation (*mokṣa*) […]. Instead, the *pūjā* for the gods like Indra, etc., is a different matter. One turns to one god rather than another because one wants something. For example, if I want it to rain, I turn to Indra. To address the gods is to ask for some fruit, and that remains within the limits of the world (*saṃsāra*).

(2) Interview with Svāmī Svarūpānanda in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 26.02.2020) on the meaning of *mūrtipūjā* for Svāmī Karapātrī:

The *pūja* to the *mūrti* and the *pūja* to Indra are two different things. The *mūrtipūjā* is based on a support (*avalambana*) that the devotee recognizes as their deity of choice. For example, this includes perceiving (*bhāvanā*) Viṣṇu in the *śāligrāma*, or perceiving (*bhāvanā*) Śaṅkarajī (Śiva) in a *liṅga*-shaped stone extracted from the Narmada River. This is the *pūjā* to the *mūrti*. Although we cannot directly perceive the deity in these objects or supports, we perceive (*bhāvanā*) [Viṣṇu in the *śāligrāma*, and so on] as per the order (*ājñā*) of the *śāstras*. It is through this perceiving (*bhāvanā*) that we receive the results (*phala*): I am not doing *pūjā* to the *mūrti*, I am doing *pūjā* to the deity through the *mūrti*.

Those who oppose *mūrtipūjā* do so because they believe that *pūjā* is performed at the *mūrti*, which is not the case. For instance, during the month of Śrāvāna (July-August), we perform *pūjā* as if it were to the earth (*pārthiva pūjā*): we prepare a clay *śivaliṅga* and perform *pūjā* to it. This is not a *pūjā* to the earth (*miṭṭī*) but rather to Śaṅkarajī. If I truly performed *pūjā* to the earth, I would not dissolve the *liṅga* into water (*visarjana*), but after the *pūjā*, I would simply leave it where it is, which still would indicate that it is not worthy of worship (*apūjanīya*). Through the clay *liṅga*, following the instructions of the *śāstras*, we invoke Śiva and perform his *pūjā*. During the *pūjā*, when we present food offerings (*bhog*, *naivedya*), the deity does not physically consume them but is instead contented (*tripta*). Even a fruit offering brings joy (*prasann*) to the deity merely through its sight, and without the need for eating, God is contented. The *pūjā* [with offerings] is only a means of making God contented. In

the *pūjā*, in relation to the offerings, quality is more important than quantity. For example, there is a practice of presenting God with 56 different varieties of food (*chappan bhog*), but Sudāmā offered Him only a handful of rice, and Śabarī offered a simple wild fruit, yet God was still contented (*tripta*).

The *Bhagavata Purāṇa* explains that regarding the *pūjā* for deities like Indra, the type of desire (*kāmnā*) determines which god the *pūjā* should be offered to. For example, if there is a need for rain, the *pūjā* should be directed to Indra. However, this type of *pūjā* aimed at obtaining rain does not contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of *mokṣa*; it is intended for attaining worldly happiness (*sāṃsārik sukh*) instead."

(3) Interview with Svāmī Sadānanda in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 10.12.2024) on the relation between a formless *brahman* (*nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*) and the *brahman* with form and attributes (*saguṇa sākāra brahman*):

The lake filled with water is beautiful, but if a lotus flower blooms in the middle, then it is even more beautiful. When the *nirguṇa nirākāra* [*brahman*] becomes *saguṇa sākāra [brahman]*, then its beauty and sweetness increase (*vṛddhi*). Just like with sugarcane: the cane is very sweet, but if it were to produce fruit, similar to how mango trees yield mangoes, then that fruit would be even sweeter than the cane. *Saguṇa sākāra [brahman]* represents that fruit. To radiate its beauty and sweetness, the Supreme Self manifests as *saguṇa sākāra [brahman].*

The *brahman* that is eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), awake (*buddha*), free (*mukta*), and self-existing (*svabhāva*) is *nirguṇa.* However, faith cannot blossom from *nirguṇa*; for this reason, there are the 10 *avatāras* of the Lord. Although the Lord is eternal (*nitya*), cannot be the object of words (*aśabda*), cannot be touched (*asparṣa*), does not have a form (*arūpa*), and is devoid of fear (*abhaya*), He becomes *saguṇa sākāra [brahman]* for the prosperity (*kalyāṇa*) of beings, descending on earth as a human being (*avatāra*). He serves as an example for humanity by demonstrating the behavior worthy of someone who has been granted human life—out of a total of 8.400.000 matrices, only one is human! It is by manifesting itself through the *avatāra* as *saguṇa sākāra [brahman]* that the Lord shows men what they should do.

Obedience to the mother's command is essential.[205] It was by following his mother's command that Rām went into exile. He demonstrated the principle of '*mātṛ devo bhava*' (viz., the mother is like God). It is because of Rām that the statement that one must obey the mother's command was validated. Rām followed his mother's command and went into exile for 14 years. He showed the right behavior by acting in the first person. Like Rām, Kṛṣṇa also obeyed the commands of his parents, Yaśoda, Nandbābā, Devakī, and Vasudeva, with the same purpose. The *avatāra* descends down from above

[205] This statement should be contextualized by noting that Svāmī Sadānanda is both a *saṃnyāsī* of the Daśanāmī Saṃpradāya, follower of Ādi Śaṅkarācarya's Advaita Vedānta, and a devotee of *Śri Vidyā*, a religious path dedicated to the Goddess (Devī), who is often referred to as everyone's true mother, with each individual's birth mother being merely a reflection of the divine one.

(*avatārati*). […] The Lord came from Vaikuṇṭha (the divine abode of Viṣṇu) to Ayodhya as Śrī Rām, not because he lacked anything in the Vaikuṇṭha. […]

Through Vedic *mantras*, the Supreme Self is invited to place itself in the *mūrti* installed in the temple. People visit the temple to view the *mūrti* to purify their mind and sense faculties and attain their desires through the worship and adoration (*upāsanā-ārādhnā*) of the deity. Gradually, in this process, the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇ*)[206] is purified and transitions to meditation. In doing so, a person installs the *mūrti* of the temple in their mind through meditation.

If *yogīs* can enter another's body, it is clear how simple the same action can be for the *nirguṇa nirākāra* [*brahman*].[207] Therefore, there is no difference (*bedh*) between *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*. Thus, one must worship with complete faith; the greater the faith, the greater the fruit of worship. It is difficult to become fixed in the *nirguṇa*, because even if it exists, one cannot have proof of it through the senses, as it cannot be proven (*aprameya*). But I can have proof of it through the senses when it becomes *saguṇa sākāra*: even the greatest enlightened ones (*paraṃahaṃsas*), when they see the *saguṇa sākāra bhagvān*, give up their ascetic practices in Badrinath and go to have the vision (*darśan*) or listen to the stories of the Lord (*bhagavadkathā*). Why does the *avātara* take place? For the establishment of *dharma* and the liberation of humanity, so that men remain focused on *dharma* and behave in accordance with it […].

For the *pūjā* of the *saguṇa sākāra* form of the supreme self, 5 or 16 different types of ingredients are needed (depending on the number of offerings during the *pūjā*). […] In the case of *nirguṇa*, there is no need for ingredients (*sāmagrī*); our body is the abode of God (*devālaya*) because God (*bhagvān*) resides within it. However, understanding this requires a significant amount of time and the *pūjā* of the *saguṇa sākāra* for both outer and inner purification. A person's inner organ is impure because of his engagement with the illusory world (*laukik prapañca*). […] If I sit and meditate, the thought of home, wife, husband, and the goals we set in everyday life arises; that's where the mind goes. If, on the other hand, I sit in front of the *mūrti* and stare at it, then the mind focuses (*ekāgr honā*) on it, and the whole world fades away: home, family, wealth. Abandoning everything, sitting with the eyes closed before the *mūrti,* one forgets everything else but Him. For these reasons, there is more focus on the *saguṇa sākāra*. But it must be understood that there is no difference between *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*, as there is between water and ice. Only the superimpositions (*upādhi*) of name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) make the *nirguṇa* and the *saguṇa* seemingly different.

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[206] The *antaḥkaraṇ* is 'the inner organ,' which, according to Advaita Vedānta is composed of *ahaṃkāra* (the sense of ego), *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind) and *citta* (memory).

[207] The very same argument is used by Svāmī Karapātrī when commenting against Svāmī Dayānanda's position that God is formless and does not take on bodies (*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 1: 629). This concept is also expressed by Ādi Śaṅkarācarya in the *Vedādhikaraṇa* section of his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra* (1.3.27). Here, Ādi Śaṅkarācarya engages with the possibility that gods take on bodies and argues that since it is established that *yogīs* can take on different bodies, so can gods (who are more powerful than *yogīs*); similarly, the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* can take on bodies.

> The *mūrti* and the *avatāra*: the *mūrti* is fashioned in the image of the *avatāra* through meditation on it. The *mūrti* is known (*jñāta*). The *nirguṇa* is unknown (*ajñata*). The doctrine (*siddhānta*) is that one knows the unknown (*ajñāta*) through the known (*jñāta*).

Based on the information derived from these interviews, I can conclude that for Svāmī Karapātrī, *mūrtipūjā* was not the worship of the non-conscious. Instead, he regarded the *mūrti* receiving the *pūjā* as a support (*avalambana*) through which the devotee could reach out to their elective deity (*īṣṭadevatā*). Svāmī Karapātrī's, Svāmī Svarūpānanda's, and Svāmī Sadānanda's context is that of the Smārta tradition, characterized by the *pañcayatanapūjā* (Bühnemann 1988: 49), implying the adoration of a pantheon of five deities: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, and Devī, each serving as a representation of the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*, the *brahman* without qualities and form, the experience of which is the supreme goal (*mokṣa*). Thus, one or more of these deities (the *īṣṭadevatā* being the elective deity), together with their secondary forms,[208] can be the receivers of *pūjā*. Svāmī Svarūpānanda thus explained that for Svāmī Karapātrī, *mūrtipūjā* is not the worship of the non-conscious matter of which the *mūrti* is made but rather the worship of one of these five forms of *brahman* through the support of an icon.

Then, I highlighted a difference between *mūrtipūjā* and the *pūjā* to deities like Indra. First of all, there exists a conceptual difference between the deities of the Vedic pantheon and the five forms of *brahman*. The deities of the Vedic pantheon are understood as gods living in heaven; they are part of the manifestations, and although they enjoy the fruits of heaven and have god-like qualities and abilities, they are still living beings under the illusion of manifestation (*māyā*); they are the *devagaṇa*. These gods are the receivers of the *yajñas* and respond to the prayers of the ritual specialists on the basis of the formal performance of the ritual and the libations given according to the sacrificial science. Thus, the *pūjā* (this is the term used by Svāmī Svarūpānanda) to gods like Indra is performed based on the desires of the ritual's patron. A sacrifice is made to fulfill a desire, functioning as a business transaction in the *do ut des* style between humans and the gods. Instead, the performance of *mūrtipūjā* relies on a sentimental personal relationship (*bhakti*, typically characterized by love) between the devotee and the *saguṇa brahman* represented in the *mūrti*. In this context, there is no *do ut des* exchange between the devotees and the deity (although the devotees might approach their deities for having their wishes granted too); rather, it is a deepening of the love relationship (*bhakti*) through the repeated performance of *mūrtipūjā*, ultimately leading to the deity revealing their true nature as *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*. The *mūrtipūjā* is therefore presented as a tool for self-liberation.[209]

Lastly, through the interview with Svāmī Sadānanda, I briefly explored the relationship between the *mūrti*, the *avatāra*, and the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*. Why do passages of the *śruti*, which seem to relate to a *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*, with no qualities or body, pose no

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[208] For instance, the worship of a *mūrti* of Rām or Hanumān falls under the worship of Viṣṇu.
[209] This perspective is quite the opposite of those held by Svāmī Dayānanda and most European scholars, who viewed *mūrtipūjā* as a practice that hinders the intellectual development.

contradiction to the *mūrtipūjā* for Svāmī Karapātrī?[210] The *mūrti* is again presented as a support which helps the devotee to purify their internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) and then attain liberation (*mokṣa*). Similarly, the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* manifests as *avatāra* to show the right path to follow (*dharma*).

From the testimonies of Svāmī Svarūpānanda and Svāmī Sadānandanda, I infer that Svāmī Karapātrī did not view *mūrtipūjā* as the worship of the non-conscious, viz., the material of which a *mūrti* is made, but rather viewed *mūrtis* as support (*avalambana*) to worship what they represent, namely, one of the five forms of the *saguṇa nirākāra brahman*. According to the words of Svāmī Svarūpānanda and Svāmī Sadānanda, with the constant practice of *mūrtipūjā*, the relation between the worshipper (*upāsak*) and the worshipped (*upāsya*) becomes stronger until, through reflection (*vicār*), one realizes that the *īṣṭadevatā* is no different than the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*. In contrast, the *pūjā* or *yajña* to Indra and other deities is a ritual transaction between the patrons who ask the gods (the *devagaṇa*) to fulfill their wishes and the gods who, according to the performed ritual, grant the boon to the sacrifice. The nature of this transaction remains on the phenomenal level of fulfillment of worldly desires.[211]

In the following lines, I present one more brief discourse by Svāmī Svarūpānanda, which he delivered during an informal assembly while referring to my research topic. He began by discussing the key aspects of Svāmī Dayānanda's thought. After noting that Svāmī Dayānanda did not recognize the *Brāhmaṇas* as part of the *Vedas*, he made a few considerations regarding the *śakhas*, the meter, and the significance of Vedic pronunciation. Following this, he explored Svāmī Dayānanda's exegetical style[212] and his views on the 'destiny' of individual souls. Svāmī Svarūpānanda then referred to Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to *mūrtipūjā* and cracked a joke:

(4) Informal assembly with Svāmī Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī in Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 04.11.2019):

> Dayānanda's family used to perform *pūjā* to Śankarjī. During Śivarātri, they observed the appropriate vow (*vrat*); thus, on that occasion, during the *pūjā* to Śankarjī, a mouse climbed the *liṅga* and ate a grain of rice offered to Śankarjī. Observing this, Dayananda reflected that if the *liṅga* were truly Śiva, it would have pushed the mouse away; since it did not, he concluded that the *liṅga* was not Śiva but merely a stone. From this, Dayānanda deduced that *mūrtipūjā* is useless (*bekār*). What there is to understand about *mūrtipūjā* is that Śankarjī's *liṅga* is not Śankarjī: by invoking (*āvāhan karnā*) Śankarjī in the *liṅga*, we do Śankarjī's *pūjā*. We also prepare *śivaliṅgas* out of clay

[210] The reason for this question becomes evident in the next chapter, where Svāmī Karapātrī critiques Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of authoritative statements referring to the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* as a prohibition to icon worship (see subchapter 9.4).
[211] I briefly addressed these questions to contextualize Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of icon worship outside the debate context of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. I am aware that these few paragraphs cannot tackle the complexity of such a philosophical discourse. Yet, due to time and space constraints, I chose to forgo further analyses and simply relied on the interviews with Svāmī Svarūpānanda and Svāmī Sadānanda to gain a clearer understanding of his views as they are related by *guru-bhāī* and *guru-śiṣya* relations (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction).
[212] In subchapter 10.1, I report Svāmī Svarūpānanda's observations on this point.

wherein we invoke Śankarjī (*āvāhan karnā*), but that does not mean that we do *pūjā* to the clay. Through the *liṅga*, we worship (*ārādhnā karnā*) the Supreme God (*parameśvar*). This is the correct doctrine (*siddhānt*). Instead, Dayānanda is convinced that the *pūjā* is performed for the *liṅga* made of stone or clay. Let me tell you a funny story: there was a *bābā*[213] who was invited to a convention (*sammelan*). During the convention, the *bābā* stayed at the home of a lawyer who accompanied him to the convention every day. On the way, there was a temple dedicated to Śiva. One day, they passed by during the light offering ceremony (*ārti*), and while the conch shells were being blown, the dogs were barking. The lawyer thus turned to the Svāmī and pointed out that during the *ārti*, the dogs were crying while the Hindus were celebrating. He then noticed that even nature was against the reason (*akal*) of the Hindus, who are convinced that the *liṅga* is Śiva [that is why dogs were barking at the sound of the *ārti*'s conch shells]. With the light of the *ārti*, the priests clearly show that the *liṅga* is only a stone. Despite the evidence, Hindus believe that the *liṅga* is Śiva. Faced with this sense (*akal*), the dogs cry. The *bābā* then responded: "No, Mr. lawyer, you are wrong. The dogs do not cry for the reason you say, but because in their previous life, they were lawyers who never performed the *pūjā* to Śankarjī. For this reason, they were born again as dogs, and now they cry because they regret they did not do the *pūjā* in their previous life when they were human beings, a mistake that cost them to be reborn as dogs!"

8.4 Final remarks

In this chapter, I collected Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's positions on *mūrtipūjā* outside the debate contexts of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. First, I briefly addressed the scholarly research on *mūrtipūjā* and its links with the *Vedas* and Vedic practices. Then, in order to understand Svāmī Dayānanda's positions on icon worship outside of *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*'s more exegetical context, I explored his *opus magnum*, the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, wherein he presented his theological discourse and listed the reasons for his ban on icon worship. After analyzing this material, I concluded that, for the most part, Svāmī Dayānanda's theological discourse and ban on *mūrtipūjā*, rather than stemming from exegetical and philosophical speculations, appear to serve as a means of social development and an opportunity to create a national whole capable of confronting British rule.

Next, I explored Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā* outside the debate arena. I argued that Svāmī Karapātrī adopted Svāmī Dayānanda's notion that *mūrtipūjā* is the worship of the non-conscious for debate purposes. Yet, through the testimonies of Svāmī Svarūpānanda and Svāmī Sadānanda, I delineated Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of icon worship outside of the debate context. I thus established that, for Svāmī Karapātrī, the *mūrtipūjā* was not the worship of the non-conscious, viz., the matter of which the *mūrtis* are

[213] '*Bābā*' is a respectful form to refer to an elderly man.

made, but the worship of one of the five forms of the *saguṇa nirākāra brahman* that is represented by the icons.

In the next chapter, I report the first part of Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective on *mūrtipūjā* as it is found in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*.

9. The Worship of the Non-conscious

My analysis of the debate on icon worship[214] focuses on the section of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*). Svāmī Karapātrī wrote this section based on Svāmī Dayānanda's discussion on "The falsity of *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*) and "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvaṃ*), found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*.

As I mentioned in subchapter 3.2.1, the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* was not initially released as a single volume; instead, it was published in 16 separate issues. The first volume was issued in 1934 by Lajras Press in Varanasi, and the last two issues were released in 1935 by Nirṇaya Sāgara Press in Mumbai. While it remains unclear when exactly Svāmī Dayānanda wrote this work, the intention behind the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* is clear: it was to be the preface to the Vedic commentary he intended to compose. Svāmī Dayānanda died before completing this project; nonetheless, the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* remains a valuable testament to his thought. Similarly, as I discussed in subchapter 7.2, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* serves as an introduction to Svāmī Karapātrī's commentary on the *Vedas*, although he, too, passed away before finishing his exegetical project. My focus remains on the introductory volumes of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, as these are organized by topic rather than by *mantra* and, therefore, are more revealing of their thought.

The sections on "The falsity of *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" and "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" are found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* under the chapter "Regarding the authoritativeness and non-authoritativeness of the treatises" (*granthaprāmāṇyāprāmāṇyaviṣayaḥ*). In this chapter, Svāmī Dayānanda addresses the topic of authoritative and non-authoritative texts within the 'Hindu textual traditions.' He first states that the *Vedas* are the only compositions of non-human origin and, therefore, the only infallible treatises. Then, he argues that the *Tantras*, *Purāṇas*, and all literature related to astrology, salvation through fasting, bathing in holy water, undertaking pilgrimages, worshipping icons, and reciting the names of deities are the work of hypocrites and sectarians (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 267–291). Furthermore, he points out the 'indecency' and 'absurdity' of practices and stories described in the *Tantras* and *Purāṇas,* such as the Five Ms[215] and the tale of Brahmā's infatuation with his daughter Sarasvatī (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 272),[216] or the story of Indra and Ahalyā (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 274).[217] For Svāmī Dayānanda, the *Brāhmaṇas* are not

[214] In 2021, I published an article presenting preliminary observations on the worship of the non-conscious in the context of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (see Scarabel 2021).
[215] The Five Ms are five substances used by the *vāmācārī* Tantric schools (or the left-hand Tantric schools). These include *madya* (alcohol), *māṃsa* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mudrā* (hand gestures), and *maithuna* (sexual intercourse).
[216] Brahmā, upon creating Sarasvatī, became enamored with her beauty. Overcome by desire, he began to pursue her. Embarrassed and troubled, Sarasvatī attempted to evade her father and cursed him to not be worshiped on earth.
[217] The story goes: Ahalyā was married to the sage Gautama. Indra became infatuated with her beauty and longed for her. One morning, while Gautama was performing his rituals, Indra disguised himself as the sage and entered their hermitage. Ahalyā, either misled or willingly participating (depending on the narrative), engaged in sexual intercourse with Indra. When Indra left, Gautama returned and quickly understood what

part of the *Vedas* but rather serve as commentaries on them. Yet, Svāmī Dayānanda concedes partial authority to some of the *Vedāṅgas*, the *Upavedas*, and the *Upāṅgas*,[218] as long as they align with the meanings of the *Vedas*, logic, and empirical evidence (see subchapter 3.1.3).[219] Still, in this and the next chapter, it becomes evident that Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of the Vedic meanings is somewhat arbitrary. Svāmī Dayānanda does not rely on traditional literature for Vedic exegesis but instead imposes his views onto the Vedic *mantras*. His exegetical choices ultimately determine the Vedic meanings and also which portions of the Hindu textual traditions align with them and can therefore be regarded as authoritative.[220] In the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda interprets Vedic *mantras* and other texts as the source for his prohibition on icon worship. However, as I claimed in subchapter 8.2, Svāmī Dayānanda's primary motivations for a ban on icon worship are instead of practical and political origins. Furthermore, Svāmī Dayānanda's exegetical style seems to emulate the philological pursuits of European scholars, albeit without the discipline's rigor. In this chapter and the next, it will become clear that Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis is profoundly creative and that significant gaps often exist between the *mantras* and his interpretations.

In the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*'s section "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), Svāmī Karapātrī does not attempt to demonstrate the 'orthodoxy' of icon worship but instead limits himself to refuting Svāmī Dayānanda's reading of Vedic *mantras* and his positions found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. Svāmī Karapātrī does not explicitly link *mūrtipūjā*, as it is practiced today in temples and households, with the *Vedas*. He surely views *mūrtipūjā* as a practice not in contradiction with the *Vedas* but rather a 'natural' development of the Vedic roots, in line with his understanding of Sanātana Dharma as a continuous and ever-changing tradition. Nonetheless, in the context of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, he avoids this question and instead focuses on Svāmī Dayānanda's definition of *mūrtipūjā* as worship and reverence toward non-conscious beings, using this formulation as the foundation for his arguments

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happened. In his fury, he cursed Ahalyā to become a lifeless stone, declaring she would only be liberated when Lord Rāma stepped on her. Turning his wrath towards Indra, Gautama issued an even more severe curse—his body would bear a thousand vaginas (*yoni*), branding him with eternal shame. Humiliated, Indra fled. Eventually, the other gods transformed Indra's vaginas into a thousand eyes, earning him the title Sahasrākṣa (Thousand-eyed One). Centuries later, Ahalyā was released when Rāma stepped on her in the form of a stone.

[218] Following is Svāmī Dayānanda's enumeration of the semi-authoritative Hindu textual canon: the *Vedaṅgas*: phonetics (e.g., Śikṣā by Pāṇiṇi), ritual science (Mānava Kalpa Sūtra), grammar (the Aṣṭādhyāyī, the Mahābhāṣya, the Uṇādipāṭha, the Gaṇapāṭha and the Prātipadika), etymology (the Nirukta of Yāska and the Nighantu), metrics (the Sūtras and Bhāṣya of Ācarya Piṅgala) and astronomy and artimetics (the works of Vasiṣṭha and "other seers"). The four *Upavedas*, the Āyurveda (medicine, the *Caraka*, the *Suśruta*, and the *Nighantu*), the Dhanurveda (science of armaments and politics, these treatises are for the most disappeared but can be rebuilt based on the other sciences), the Gāndharvaveda (science of music, based on the Sāma music and thus the Sāmaveda) and Arthaveda (mechanics, physics and economics, "four treatises composed by Viśvakarmā, Tvaṣṭā, Devayajña and Maya"). The six *Upāṅgas*: the Pūrvamīmāṃsā (Jaimini and the commentary by Vyāsa); the Vaiśeṣika (Kaṇāda and the commentary by Gautama, the *Praśastapāda*); the Nyāya (Gautama and commentary by Vātsyāyana, the *Padārthavidya*); the Yoga (Patañjali and the commentary by Vyāsa); the Saṃkhya, (Kapila and the commentary by Bhāguri); the Vedānta (Vyāsa and the gloss of Baudhayana). The ten Upaniṣads are also to be accept as Upāṅgas: Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 268–270).

[219] On the contrary, Svāmī Karapātrī and the Sanātanīs contended that the *Brāhmaṇas* are an integral part of the *Vedas*.

[220] Svāmī Karapātrī considered this attitude a dangerous exploitation of the *śāstras*.

against the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. In other words, Svāmī Karapātrī tries to demonstrate that *mūrtipūjā* (in the sense of the worship of the non-conscious) is prescribed both in the *Vedas* and, unintentionally, by Svāmī Dayānanda as well. As discussed in chapter 8.3, this was not Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā*. However, according to the custom of the *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā* styles of debate (see p. 109), Svāmī Karapātrī does not care to state his own position and simply focuses on refuting Svāmī Dayānanda's views. Furthermore, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī's primary purpose is to refute Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis and reaffirm the Vedic 'traditional' meanings rather than compose an apology for icon worship.

As I already noted (see p. 77), philosophical conflicts and disagreements among *saṃpradāyas* and *darśanas* could only be resolved through an in-depth examination (*parīkṣā*) based on the *śāstras*. Both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī believed in the authority of the *Vedas*. However, while Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the *Brāhmaṇas* as part of the *Vedas* and recognized the authority of the *Vedāṅgas* and *smṛti*—and also the *Tantras* and *Purāṇas*—Svāmī Dayānanda only considered as authoritative the *smṛti* literature that did not contradict the *Vedas* (that is, his interpretation of the *Vedas*), logic, and empirical evidence. Additionally, he entirely dismissed the *Tantras* and the *Purāṇas*. While I have already established that the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is not a treatise in pursuit of 'truth' but rather a text aiming to refute the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, I want to stress that there is a partially shared foundation of textual authorities between Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī. This foundation is used by Svāmī Dayānanda to support his stances and by Svāmī Karapātrī to challenge Svāmī Dayānanda's positions.

In the next pages, I present the first part of Svāmī Karapātrī's "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), which corresponds to Svāmī Dayānanda's section on "The falsity in *mūrtipūjā* and the remembering the names [of the gods]" (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*). In the next chapter, I address the second part of "In support of *mūrtipūjā*," which focuses on Svāmī Dayānanda's section on "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets." Although my conceptual focus is on the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, I also fully report Svāmī Dayānanda's statements and arguments from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. I translated the relevant sections from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and present them here after comparing them with the English translation by Ghasi Ram (2010). As I already mentioned, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* triggered a written Ārya Samājī response, the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* (see p. 120), and the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* led to the publication of the Sanātanī *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ* (see p. 120). However, in this and the next chapter, I do not take into consideration these two treatises because of space and time concerns. Yet, I read the section within the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* commenting on Svāmī Karapātrī's section "In support of *mūrtipūjā*," and came to the conclusion that Viśudhānanda Miśra, the author of the text, does not really engage in a scholarly manner with Svāmī Karapātrī's positions but randomly comments on them and instead focuses on mocking his rival. Conversely, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ* is a critique of Viśudhānanda Miśra's introduction to his opus without a specific focus on icon worship. In other words, while the *Vedārthakalpadrumaḥ* is—at least in the section on *mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*—a text lacking in scholarly depth, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta Bhāṣya Vārtikaṃ* is, for the most part, just a general response to Viśudhānanda Miśra's work.

For these reasons, although the existence of these texts is significant as it testifies to an ongoing debate, neither of them adds substantial material to either side of the debate. I therefore did not include them in my analysis.

In this chapter and the next, I first present the text from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* in a table with two columns, placing the Sanskrit text on the left and the translation on the right. Next, I report Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis, including his direct quotes from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (which are often only partial) in the same table format. When reporting Vedic *mantras* and other texts quoted for authority, I rely on established translations of the relevant passages (whenever this is possible), especially in the case of the *Vedas*, for which I use Griffith's translations.[221] This is why the Vedic *mantras* are rendered in somewhat old-fashioned English.

In this chapter, I have organized the debate into five main thematic areas to present the discussion points in an organic manner. These are (i) the presence or absence of an injunction to *mūrtipūjā*, (ii) the presence or absence of prohibitions to *mūrtipūjā*, (iii) the meaning of the word *pratimā*, (iv) the worship of (*nirguṇa*)-*nirākāra brahman*, (v) the statements from the *Manusmṛti*, and (vi) instances of Ārya Samāja's *mūrtipūjā*. I present these sections primarily following the chronology of the arguments in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, which Svāmī Karapātrī also follows, though he occasionally includes digressions. I begin each section by explaining the key concepts of both Svāmī Dayānanda's reasoning and Svāmī Karapātrī's critique. Additionally, I formatted the text to make its various sections visible. Specifically, I employed *italics* to indicate the quotation of authoritative sources both in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Next, I underlined all instances where Svāmī Karapātrī directly quotes Svāmī Dayānanda in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. The quotations of authoritative texts presented by Svāmī Dayānanda are indicated in Svāmī Karapātrī's text using *underlined italics*. In the context of the glosses of authoritative statements, I reported the word glossed in *italics*. To prevent confusion, I refrained from using italics for Sanskrit or Hindi terms in the translation table.

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[221] In chapter 6 (p. 99), I reported Svāmī Karapātrī's views regarding the involvement of European scholars in Vedic exegesis. I also noted that Svāmī Dayānanda's approach to the Vedic text mirrors that of the early Indologists, though it lacks the same rigor of the discipline. Furthermore, in subchapter 10.1, I present Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective on the 'pervasiveness' of the meaning of the *mantras*, which is conveyed not only through the words of the *mantra* but through their application according to the *śāstras*. Therefore, adopting Griffith's translations (as well as those of Olivelle regarding the *Manusmṛti* and the *Upaniṣads*) might seem like a direct critique of Svāmī Karapātrī's views, as well as those of Svāmī Dayānanda, who, at least in theory, was also quite skeptical of European Indology. However, this is not the case. While considering Pollock's thoughts on the co-existence of three possible philological levels of a text (see Pollock 2024 and footnote n. 71), I present the meanings conveyed by Griffith as one of these interpretations without giving precedence to any particular level of translation. Ultimately, the context of this research is academic, and it makes sense to refer to the translation by Griffith, a well-known philologist. I also did not attempt to translate the Vedic *mantras* cited in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* for two main reasons. First, I encountered these citations at the center of an exegetical diatribe and, therefore, risked becoming susceptible to one perspective or another. Second, established English translations of Vedic *mantras*, such as Griffith's, are situated within the context of the entire *Saṃhitās*, allowing them to convey their meanings more effectively as they are grounded in their textual original context.

9.1 The Presence or Absence of an Injunction to Mūrtipūjā

According to the Mīmāṃsā, Vedic injunctions, or *vidhis*, or *vidhāna*, are one of the five parts of the *Vedas*.[222] Vedic injunctions are the most relevant of these five and are defined as "the portion of the Vedas which makes known (enjoins) a matter not known by any other source of knowledge" (Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar 2007: xxvii). I have discussed that the *Vedas* are, for Svāmī Dayānanda, the foundational source of all truth and encompass the entirety of knowledge, a view also shared by Svāmī Karapātrī—although the question of how the Vedic 'truths' are interpreted remains. It follows that the absence of injunctions to perform *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas* would sanction such practice as 'unorthodox,' while the presence of such an injunction would affirm its legitimacy.

Accordingly, Svāmī Dayānanda starts the section on "The falsity in *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" by asserting that in the *Vedas* there are no injunctions to the performance of *mūrtipūjā*. Svāmī Karapātrī counters Svāmī Dayānanda's arguments by presenting two Vedic verses in support of *mūrtipūjā*. Following the first table containing Svāmī Dayānanda's text, there is another table that presents Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis and rebuttal of Svāmī Dayānanda's argument:

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877] Vol. 2: 348]

tathaiva yat tantrapurāṇādigranteṣu mūrtipūjānāmasmaraṇādividhānaṃ kṛtam asti, tad api mithyaivāstīti vedyaṃ| kuta? vedādiṣu satyeṣu granteṣu tasya vidhanābhāvāt|	[…]And in the same manner, in the Tantras, Purāṇās and similar treatises, the injunction to mūrtipūjā and nama smaraṇa[223] is also false; that should be known. In what manner? Because there is no injunction to that in the truthful treatises like the Vedas.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979]: 1616]

yacca – "tantrapurāṇādigrantoktasya nāmasmaranasya mūrtipūjādīnām ca mithyātvam, vedādisatyagranthe tasya vidhanābhāvāt" (pṛ. 342) ity uktam, tad api tuccham, śastrānabodhāt| "*ehy aśmānaṃ ātiṣṭha aśmā bhavatu te tanuḥ*" "*viṣṇor nāmacidvavaktana*" ity	"What is said in treatises as the tantras, purāṇās, etc., regarding the nama smarana and the icon worship, etc. is false, because there is no injunction to these [practices] in the truthful treatises, like the Vedas, etc."[224] this which is said is vain, because of an improper understanding of the śastras. Because injunctions to mūrtipūjā are seen in these and

[222] The other four are the sacrificial formulas (*mantras*), the names (*nāmadheya*), the prohibitions (*niṣedha*), and the explanatory passages (*arthavāda*) (Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar 2007: xxvi).
[223] In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 318–319) writes that the repetition of God's names does not bring to any good: "[…] just as the mouth feels no sensation of sweetness from repeating the word sugar candy, nor the sensation of bittering from muttering the name of *neem* […]."
[224] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī paraphrases Svāmī Dayānanda's statement instead of quoting exactly from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*.

ādivaidikavākyeṣu mūrtipūjādividhānadarśanāt||	other Vedic statements:[225] "*hey come! Stay in the stone. May your body be the stone*" (AV 2.13.4), "*the desire of mentally speaking the name of Viṣṇu.*"[226]

9.2 The Presence or Absence of Prohibitions to Mūrtipūjā

After Svāmī Dayānanda posits that there is no injunction to *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas*, he strengthens his argument by stating that there are instead prohibitions (*niṣedha*) against it. According to Mīmāṃsā, *niṣedha*, one of the five parts of the *Vedas* (see footnote n. 222), is defined as "prohibitory sentences" that "turn people away from actions and imply that the prohibited acts if done lead to greater evil or highly undesirable results" (Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar 2007: xix). Prohibitions carry a stronger meaning than a lack of injunctions. Therefore, prohibitions against icon worship would not only imply that icon worship is a non-Vedic practice but also that it leads to negative outcomes. To support his statement, Svāmī Dayānanda cited two *mantras* from the *Yajur Veda*, specifically *YV* 32.3 and *YV* 40.8. The first one is the well-known *mantra* beginning with "*na tasya pratimā asti*,"[227] while the second one describes the Supreme Self as lacking finite qualities.

Since, for the most part, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī follows the structure of the *Ṛgvedādhibhāṣyabhūmikā*, one would expect that after presenting two examples of injunctions to *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas*, he would address Svāmī Dayānanda's statement regarding the existence of Vedic prohibitions against icon worship. However, this is not the case. Svāmī Karapātrī does not directly comment here on Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis of *YV 32.3* and *YV 40.8*. He skips these two *mantras* and moves to address Svāmī Dayānanda's next argument regarding the meaning of the word '*pratimā*.' However, while examining Svāmī Dayānanda's assertion that *pratimā* signifies *parimāṇa* or measure (see subchapter 9.3), he revisits Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of *YV 32.3*, particularly the phrase "*na tasya pratimā asti*" as a prohibition against icon worship. In the following table, I show that, in the context of the explanation of *YV 32.3*, Svāmī Dayānanda defines '*pratimā*' as 'representative' (*pratinidhi*), 'counterpart' (*pratikṛti*), 'likeness' (*pratimāna*), 'weight' (*tolanasādhana*), 'measure' (*parimāṇa*), or 'icon' (*mūrti*). Svāmī Karapātrī thus first notes that Svāmī Dayānanda asserts that '*pratimā*' can mean 'representative' or 'icon' in the context of "*na tasya pratimā asti*," which serves as a prohibition against icon worship. Then, he observes

[225] The verses quoted by Svāmī Karapātrī here are not 'direct injunctions,' as these would directly enjoin to perform *mūrtipūjā*. In this context, I rather suppose that the Vedic statements cited by Svāmī Karapātrī are a form of injunction by 'sense' (*artha*). In other words, the injunction to *mūrtipūjā* is based on these statements, although these statements are not direct injunctions (see Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar 2007: 30–39).

[226] This is probably a citation from *ṚV 1.156.3*: *tam u stotāraḥ pūrvyaṃ yathā vidaḥṛtasya garbhaṃ januṣā pipartana| āsya jānanto nāma cid vivaktana mahas viṣṇo sumatim bhajāmahe||* "Him have ye satisfied, singers, as well as ye know, primeval germ of Order even from his birth. Ye, knowing e'en his name, have told it forth: may we, Vishṇu, enjoy the grace of thee the Mighty one" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1920: 209).

[227] Svāmī Dayānanda cites *YV 32.3* also in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* as evidence against the possibility of God taking a form (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 321).

that Svāmī Dayānanda subsequently translates the same term as 'measure' to indicate that the term *pratimā* in the *Vedas* does not relate to the meaning 'icon' at all (see subchapter 9.3). Additionally, Svāmī Dayānanda concludes that *pratimā* consistently means 'measure' in the authoritative texts (see subchapter 9.5), thereby denying the possibility that the term might have different meanings depending on the context. This highlights a significant logical inconsistency in Svāmī Dayānanda's argument, to the point that I began to question whether this contradiction could be attributed to the text's editors. However, I could not find an alternative version for this section of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*.

Svāmī Karapātrī does not respond to Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of *YV 40.8*, the second *mantra* suggested as a prohibition against *mūrtipūjā*, nor does he refer to it later in his text. I am unsure about the reasons for this omission, as I suspect he regarded the *mantra* as a 'description' of *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* and, therefore, considered it not contradictory to icon worship (see subchapters 8.3 and 9.4).

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 348–349]

tatra tu pratyuta niṣedho varīvartate| tadyathā – *na tasya pratimā' āsti yasya mahadyaśaḥ| hiraṇyagarbha'ity eṣu mā mā hiṃsīty eṣā yasmān na jāta' ity eṣaḥ||yajuḥ. a.32|maṃ3|1.*	But on the contrary, there, there is indeed a prohibition: "*There is no counterpart of him whose glory verily is great. In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha, etc. Let not him harm me, etc. Than whom there is no other born, etc.*" (*YV 32.*3, Griffith 1899: 254).
bhāṣyaṃ - (*yasya*) pūrṇasya pruṣasyājasya nirākārasya parameśvarasya ([*nāma*] *mahadyaśaḥ*) yasyājñāpālanākhyaṃ mahākīrttikaraṃ dharmyaṃ satyabhāṣaṇādikarttum arhaṃ karmācaraṇaṃ nāmasmaraṇam asti, (*hiraṇyagarbhaḥ*) yo hiraṇyānāṃ sūryyādīnāṃ tejasvināṃ garbha utpattisthānaṃ, [(*mā mā.*)] tasya sarvair manuṣyair mā mā hiṃsīd ity eṣā prārthanā kāryā| (*yasmānna.*) yo yataḥ kāraṇān naivaiṣaḥ kasyacit sakāśāt kadācid utpanno, naiva kadāci ccharīradhāraṇaṃ karoti| [(*na tasya.*)] naiva tasya pratimā 'rthāt pratinidhiḥ, pratikṛtiḥ, pratimānaṃ, tolanasādhanaṃ, parimāṇaṃ, mūrtyādikalpanaṃ kiñcid apy asti, parameśvarasyānupameyatvād amūrttatvād aparimeyatvān nirākāratvāt sarvatrābhivyāptatvāc ca||	Explanation: *([nāma] mahadyaśaḥ)* remembering the name, (*yasya*) of the one who is the supreme *puruṣa*, unborn and without form, is an action that is following his command, which confers great fame, is rightful and makes you able to speaking the truth. (*hiraṇyagarbhaḥ*): it is the "*garbha*," the place of origin of "*hiraṇyānām*," all the lights like the Sun (Sūrya) and so on. (*mā mā*): all human beings pray this to him: "*mā mā hiṃsīt*," do not hurt us. (*yasmānna.*): because of this reason, who is never born from any whatsoever cause and who never takes up a body, (*na tasya*): that one has no "*pratimā*," or representative (*pratinidhi*), counterpart (*pratikṛti*), likeness (*pratimāna*), weight (*tolanasādhana*), measure (*parimāṇa*), can't be imagined through a form (*mūrti*), and so on, because *parameśvara* is incomparable, does not have material form, cannot be measured, has no form and is present everywhere.

ity anena pramāṇena mūrtipūjananiṣedhaḥ	From this authoritative statement, there is the prohibition to icon worship.
sa paryy agāc chukram akāyam avraṇam asnāviraṃ śuddham apāpavidhaṃ| kavir manīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūr yāthātathyato 'rthān vy adadhāc chāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ|| ya. A. 40|maṇ. 8||	"*He hath attained unto the Bright, Bodiless, Woundless, Sinewless, the Pure which evil hath not pierced. Far-sighted, wise, encompassing, he self-existent hath prescribed aims, as propriety demands, unto the everlasting Years*" (YV 40.8, Griffith 1899: 306).
bhāṣyaṃ - yaḥ (*kaviḥ*) sarvajñaḥ, (*manīṣī*) sarvasākṣī, (*paribhūḥ*) sarvopari virājamānaḥ, (*svayambhū*) anādisvarūpāḥ parameśvaraḥ (*śāśvatībhyaḥ*) nityābhyaḥ (*samābhyaḥ*) prajābhyo vedadvārā 'ntaryāmitayā ca (*yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāt*) vihitavān asti, (*sa paryyagāt*) sarvavyāpako 'sti| yat (*śukraṃ*) vīryyavattamaṃ (*akāyaṃ*) mūrtijanmadhāraṇarahitaṃ, (*avraṇaṃ*) chedabhedarahitaṃ (*asnāviraṃ*) nāḍībandhanādivirahaṃ, (*śuddhaṃ*) nirdoṣaṃ, (*apāpaviddhaṃ*) pāpāt pṛthagbhūtaṃ, yad īdṛśalakṣaṇaṃ brahma [tat] sarvair upāsanīyam iti manyadhvaṃ||	Explanation: that one which is (*kaviḥ*) omniscent, (*manīṣī*) the supreme witness, (*paribhūḥ*) shining over all, (*svayambhū*) the Supreme Lord whose real form is without beginning, who by being the indwellling witness (*yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāt*) enjoins through the Vedas to the (*śāśvatībhyaḥ*) eternal (*samābhyaḥ*) subjects, (*sa paryyagāt*) and is all pervading. That one (*śukraṃ*) who is the most powerful one, (*akāyaṃ*) who does not carry a physical form and has no birth, (*avraṇaṃ*) who is not divided into parts, (*asnāviraṃ*) is not bound by 'energy channels'[228] and so on, (*śuddhaṃ*) which has no defects, (*apāpaviddhaṃ*) and is without sin, the brahman that is endowed with such qualities, you should know that that should be worshipped by all.
ity anenāpi śarīrajanmamaraṇarahita īśvaraḥ pratipādyate| tasmād ayaṃ naiva kenāpi mūrtipūjane yojayituṃ śakya iti	By this also is understood that God is without a body, birth and death. For this reason this [God] can never by anyone be worshipped through icon worship.

9.3 The meaning of the word pratimā

The following section is mainly centered on assessing the meaning of the word *pratimā*. According to Svāmī Dayānanda, the word *pratimā* in the *Vedas* does not carry the meaning of *mūrti*, or icon, but it has the meaning of *parimāṇa*, measure. In this context, Svāmī Dayānanda brings two textual authorities in corroboration of his thesis: *AV 3.10.3* and *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4*. The *mantra AV 3.10.3* is a clear and infallible authority for Svāmī Dayānanda.

[228] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary, this term is defined as 'any tubular organ (as a vein or artery of the body).' However, in this context, I translated the word as 'energy channels' because I here Svāmī Dayānanda is likely referring to the body channels through which, according to *Tantra* texts, the energy of every individual flows (see Chapter 2 for the episode where Svāmī Dayānanda dissects a corpse to search for these 'energy channels,' ultimately concluding that they do not exist).

In contrast, the Kena Upaniṣad *1.4* is quoted here because this and the next four verses (*KU 1.4–8*, see footnote n. 245) are, in his opinion, in agreement with Vedic meanings and not against logic and empirical evidence. However, I find it difficult to understand the reasoning behind citing this Upaniṣadic verse in this context, as it does not address the question of the meaning of the term *pratimā*, nor does it contain the word. This verse might have been inserted here by Svāmī Dayānanda's editors, but I was unable to locate alternative versions of the text. In any case, for Svāmī Dayānanda, *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4* delineates a separation between God and the phenomenal world, thereby establishing the impossibility of worshiping God through icons. To clarify this argument, and since it does not relate to the definition of the word '*pratimā*,' I present it along with Svāmī Karapātrī's response in the next subchapter (9.4).

Returning to the question of the meaning of the word '*pratimā*,' Svāmī Dayānanda explains the *mantra AV3.10.3* to prove that the meaning of *pratimā* is 'measure' and not 'icon.' Svāmī Karapātrī accuses Svāmī Dayānanda of being inconsistent as he gives two different meanings to the word *pratimā*: that of a *mūrti* when it comes to interpreting a prohibition against icon worship in "*na tasya pratimā asti*," (*YV 32.3*); and that of *parimāṇa* (or 'measure') in *AV 3.10.3* and other authoritative passages.[229] Additionally, Svāmī Karapātrī accuses Svāmī Dayānanda of inadvertently promoting a form of icon worship in his explanation of *AV 3.10.3*, as he enjoins the worship of the night as the 'measure' of the full year (see p. 154). Thus, Svāmī Karapātrī adopts his adversary's position, claiming that *mūrtipūjā* is a 'wrong practice' because it corresponds to the worship of the non-conscious. It follows that Svāmī Dayānanda, by advocating for the veneration of "the night" as "the measure" of the full year, inadvertently supports this 'wrong practice.' "The night" here serves as a "measure" (*parimāṇa*) of the full year (*saṃvatsara*); this measure is a quality (*guṇa*), and qualities are non-conscious entities. In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 113) reports from the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (1.1.4) "the six categories of existence": *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, and *samavāya*. It is through these "six categories of existence" that reality, *dravya* or substance, is manifested. The *guṇa*, one of these categories of manifestation, is of 24 types, among which, together with form (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), touch (*sparśa*), and number (*saṃkhyā*), we also find measure (*parimāṇa*). In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 115), Svāmī Dayānanda writes that *parimāṇa* is "what shows weight, as light, heavy." Therefore, even according to Svāmī Dayānanda, the measure, or *parimāṇa*, is one of the qualities inherent to *dravya*, which is indeed a non-conscious being. Consequently, *parimāṇa* itself, which is here "the night" that is "the measure" of "the full year" (*saṃvatsara*), is a non-conscious entity; and it would be absurd to conceive that a quality inherent in a non-conscious being is, in fact, sentient. Thus, after having demonstrated that the worship of the night as the measure of the full year is like the veneration of a non-conscious being, Svāmī Karapātrī expresses the doubt that Svāmī Dayānanda might have referred to the existence of a tutelary deity presiding over the time period as the real recipient of the worship. However,

[229] Further on in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, he even claims that the only possible meaning of *pratimā* is 'measure' (see subchapter 9.5).

Svāmī Karapātrī concludes, this would also go against Svāmī Dayānanda's firm point that there are no divine entities in this world, apart from the formless Īśvara.

In other words, here Svāmī Karapātrī's strategy is to prove that Svāmī Dayānanda himself is inadvertently enjoining the worship of the non-conscious when commenting on *AV 3.10.3*: is Svāmī Dayānanda enjoining the worship of the full year (*kālaviśeṣa*), or is he enjoining the worship of the night as the quality (*guṇaviśeṣa*) located within the full year? Both these possibilities are problematic since they are, in fact, a veneration of the non-conscious. Is Svāmī Dayānanda enjoining the worship of a tutelary deity residing within the full year? This would also be self-contradictory, as Svāmī Dayānanda clearly states that there are no gods, but only one: Īśvara. This brings Svāmī Karapātrī to two main considerations: (i) Svāmī Dayānanda is self-contradictory in his characterization of the meaning of the word *pratimā*. (ii) There is no prohibition to icon worship, as seen in the previous section, according to Svāmī Dayānanda's explanation of *YV 32.*3,[230] (iii) Svāmī Dayānanda himself is enjoining icon worship.

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 349–350]

praśnaḥ – vedeṣu pratimā śabdo'sti na vā? uttaraṃ – asti| praśnaḥ – punaḥ kimartho niṣedhaḥ? uttaraṃ – naiva pratimārthena mūrttayo gṛhyante| kiṃ tarhi? parimāṇārthā gṛhyante|	Question: in the Vedas, is there the word *pratimā*, or not? Answer: there is. Question: then what is the reason of the prohibition [to the *mūrti pūjā*]? Answer: it is not that the icons are meant by the term *pratimā*. [Question:] what then? [Answer:] the [word pratimā] are meant as having the meaning of 'measure.'
atra pramāṇāni –	Here are the proofs [that the word pratimā means measure]:
saṃvatsarasya pratimāṃ yaṃ tvā rātry upāsmahe| sā na āyuṣmatīṃ prajāṃ rāyas poṣeṇa saṃ sṛja|| (atharva kāṃ. 3| va 10| maṃ. 3||)	*Thou whom with reverence we approach, O Night, as model of the Year, Vouchsafe. us children long to live; bless us with increase of our wealth*" (AV 3.10.3, Griffith 1916: 93)
[…] Here Svāmī Dayānanda cites and comments on KU 4.1 […]	
muhūrtānāṃ pratimā tā daśa ca sahasrāṇy aṣṭau ca śatāni bhavanty etāvanto hi saṃvatsarasya muhūrtāḥ| ś. kāṃ. 10| pra. 3| brā. 2| kaṃ 10||	"*The pratimā of the muhūrtas is of 10.800; there are that many muhūrtas in one year (saṃvatsara)*" (Śatapatha Brāhmāṇa 10.3.2.20).
vidvāṃsaḥ saṃvatsarasya yāṃ pratimāṃ parimāṇam upāsate vayamapi tvā tāmevopāsmahe|	The intelligent one worships "*yāṃ*" that [*ratri*, night] as "*pratimāṃ*" the measure (parimāṇa) of "*saṃvatsarasya*" the full year. We also

[230] However, Svāmī Karapātrī does not mention *YV40.8*, the second authority cited by Svāmī Dayānanda in corroboration of a prohibition to icon worship.

	"*upāsmahe*" shall worship only "*tvā*" that you (the *pratimā* as *parimāṇa* of *saṃvatsara*).[231]
arthādyāḥ saṃvatsarasya trīṇi śatāni ṣaṣṭiś ca rātrayo bhavanti, yata etābhir eva saṃvatsaraḥ parimīyate, tasmād etāsāṃ 'pratimā' saṃjñeti|	There are 360 nights in a year. Thus, one year is measured by them (the 360 nights). For this reason, is intended a measure, "pratimā," of these (360 nights)."
[(*sā na.*)] yathā seyaṃ rātrir *no*'smākaṃ *rāyaspoṣeṇa* dhanapuṣṭibhyām āyuṣmatīṃ *prajāṃ* (*saṃsṛja*) samyak sṛjet, tathaiva sarvair manuṣyair anuṣṭheyam iti||	Like the night "*saṃsṛja*" gives "*na*" us "*rayaspoṣeṇa*" riches and prosperity, health and "*prajāṃ*" progeny. In the same way, it has to be done by all human beings.[232]
(*muhūrta.*) tathā ye saṃvatsarasya daśasahasrāṇyaṣṭau śatāni ghaṭikā dvayātmakā muhūrtāḥ santi, te'pi 'pratimā' śabdārthā vijñeyāḥ||	There are 10.800 muhūrtas, which are each composed of two gaṭikas; These (the muhūrtas) are also to be known by the word 'pratimā.'

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1616–1617]

praśnaḥ vedeṣu – pratimā śabdo'sti na vā? uttaram – asti| pra. – punaḥ kimartho niṣedhaḥ? u. – naiva pratimārthena mūrtayo gṛhyante| kiṃ tarhi? parimānārthā gṛhyante iti svoktivirodhasya spaṣṭamudīyamānatvāt|	Question: in the Vedas, is there the word pratimā, or not? Answer: there is. Question: then what is the reason of the prohibition [to the *mūrtipūjā*]? Answer: it is not that the icons (mūrti) are meant by the term *pratimā*. [Question:] what then? [Answer:] the [word *pratimā*] is meant as having the meaning of 'measure' (*parimāṇa*). [However,] this (that *pratimā* means *parimāṇa*) is clearly proceeding against his own saying.
pratimāpādena mūrtigrahaṇa na sambhavati, parimāṇa tu bodhyata[233] ityasyaivārthasyāsmādvākyāt	The understanding of [the meaning] *mūrti* from the word *pratimā* is not possible, yet *parimāṇa* is [here] understood. Since this word

[231] In his English rendering of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Ghasi Ram translates Svāmī Dayānanda's explanation of *AV3.10.3* as: "May we adopt the same measure of the year as is adopted by the learned. There are 360 nights in a year. They are called the measure, Pratima, of the year because they measure it. All men should so act that the nights may bring them longlived children, strong in health and wealth" (*ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 292–293). This translation, however, seems to be designed to avoid exactly the kind of objections raised by Svāmī Karapātrī, and that is that Svāmī Dayānanda is here inadvertently enjoining the worship of the night, theoretically a non-conscious being, which makes a *mūrtipūjā* out of Svāmī Dayānanda's injunction. Ghasi Ram renders the verbs '*upāsate*' and '*upāsmahe*' as 'to regard,' instead of 'to worship.' However, other than 'to worship,' the meanings of the verb root 'upās' include 'to sit near,' 'to approach respectfully,' 'to honour,' 'to homage,' and so forth. The Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary does not include 'to regard' among the possible meanings of the verb root 'upās.' Ghasi Ram's translation might therefore intentionally avoid the understanding that Svāmī Dayānanda enjoined the worship of the night.

[232] Here, Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation evidently plays on his emphasis on man's self exertion.

[233] Although here, Svāmī Karapātrī is reporting Svāmī Dayānanda's position, he is not quoting but paraphrasing it. For this reason, I did not underline this sentence as a quotation from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*.

pratīyamānatvāt| ato "*na tasya pratimā asti*" (vā. saṁ. 32.3) iti mantre pratimāśabdena mūrtigrahaṇaṃ kurvāṇasya tasya kathaṃ na svoktivirodhaḥ?	(*pratimā*) has been recognized in relation to this meaning only (*parimāṇa*), then, how is it not self-contradictory the understanding of [the term] *mūrti* from the word *pratimā* in this *mantra* "*na tasya pratimā asti*" (YV 32.3)?
mūrtipūjāniṣedhakavākyānupalambhāc ca mūrtipūjāniṣedho 'prāmāṇika eva|	Moreover, since there is no perception (*anupalambha*) of statements prohibiting (*niṣedha*) the icon worship, the prohibition on icon worship is indeed not founded on authority (*aprāmāṇika*).
"*saṃvatsarasya pratimā yā tvā rātryupāsmahe| sā na āyuṣmatī prajā rāyaspoṣeṇa sasṛja*||" (atharva. 3.10.3) iti mantrasyaiva mūrtipūjāpratipādanārthatvāt| dayānandenaivāsya mantrasya mūrtipūjārthatvapratipādanāt| tathāhi mantrasyāsya dayānandīyo 'rthaḥ - "vidvāṃsaḥ saṃvatsarasya yāṃ pratimāṃ parimāṇam upāsate vayamapi tvā tāmevopāsmahe" (pṛ. 344) iti|	*Thou whom with reverence we approach, O Night, as model of the Year, Vouchsafe. us children long to live; bless us with increase of our wealth*" (AV 3.10.3). Since [this] mantra has the significance of illustrating a mūrtipūjā, even by Dayānanda himself this mantra is propounding that the meaning of this mantra leads to mūrtipūjā. In like manner, the meaning given by Dayananda to this mantra is: "The intelligent one worships that [*yāṃ ratri*, night] as measure/model (*parimāṇa*), the pratimā, of *saṃvatsara* (the full year), we also shall worship only (*upāsmahe*) that you *tvā* (the pratimā as the parimāṇa of saṃvatsara) (p. 344)."
ayaṃ abhiprāyaḥ - mūrtipūjā 'cetanatvād eva mūrter nāṅgīkriyate sāmājikaiḥ| nityacaitanyasya vibhoḥ paramātmana evopāsanaṃ tair aṅgīkriyate|	[Our] opinion is that icon worship is not accepted by the Samājīs only because of the state of non-consciousness (acetanatva) of the mūrti. Only the worship of the endless, conscious, all-pervasive Supreme Self is accepted by them.
paramasmin mantre saṃvatsarasya pratimopasanam aṅgīkṛtam|	However, in this mantra, the worship of the measure (pratimā) of one full year is accepted.
idam apy acetanāsyaivopāsanam| parimāṇarūpasya guṇasya sarvair apy acetanatvāṅgīkārāt|	But this is as worshiping the non-conscious, since the state of non-consciousness of a quality in the form of measure is accepted by everyone.
saṃvatsaro 'pi varṣaparimita kālaviśeṣa eva|	And also, a full year is only a specific time (kālaviśeṣa) measured in a year.
tanniṣṭho guṇaviśeṣa eva parimāṇam|	The measure is only a specific characteristic (guṇaviśeṣa) situated in that [saṃvatsara.]
ubhāv apy acetanāveva|	Both (saṃvatsara that is kālaviśeṣa and parimāṇa that is guṇaviśeṣa) are non-conscious entities.

yadi saṃvatsarakālādhiṣṭhātrī kācic cetanā devatopāsyatvenāṅgīkriyate, tadā tavāpasiddhānta eva syāt|	If some conscious being presiding over the time saṃvatsara is accepted as having to be worshipped as deity, then this alone would be a statement opposed to your own doctrine.[234]
saṃskāravidhau ca svāminā dayānandena likhitam – "*oṣadhe trāyasva*" bho oṣadhe bālaṃ trāyasva, "*mainaṃ hiṃsīḥ*" enaṃ mā hiṃsīḥ|	And also, in the Saṃskāravidhi, Mr. Dayānanda[235] writes: "*oṣadhe trāyasva*, oh herbs! You should protect the boy! '*mainaṃ hiṃsīḥ*,' do not harm him!" (YV 4.1).[236]
atra kuśarūpauṣadhiḥ prārthyate (pṛ. 74)| tṛṇasyācetanatvāt tatprārthanaṃ mūrtipūjanam eva|	Here, a herb in the form of kuṣa is prayed to. Since herbs are non-conscious, the prayer to that [herb] is also an icon worship.
"*auṃ viṣṇor daṃṣṭro' si*" atra kṣurasya viṣṇudaṣṭrātvam uktam| kiṃ nirākārasyāpi daṃṣṭrādikaṃ bhavati? idam apy acetanārcana mūrtipūjanam eva|	"*Auṃ, you are the tooth of Viṣṇu*." Here, it is said that the knife is the tooth of Viṣṇu.[237] But, how can a formless one have teeth? Worshipping this non-conscious one (the knife) is also like the worship of an icon.
"*auṃ śivo nāmāsi vadhitis te pitā namaste mā mā hiṃsīḥ*"| "he svadhite, he kṣura, enaṃ mā himsīḥ" iti 1933 saṃvatsare prakāśite saṃskāravidhi pustake: tadvyākhyānaṃ "he chure, tu is bacce ko mat mār"|	"*Gracious, thy name; the thunder*[238] *is thy father. Obeisance be to thee: forbear to harm me*" (YV 3. 63, Griffith 1899: 25). In the *Saṃskāravidhi*, published in the year 1933, [it is written]: "oh axe! oh knife! do no hurt him!" [and] this is explained as: "oh knife! do not kill that boy!"[239]
idānīntaneṣu pustakeṣu tadvyākhyāna nopalabhyate|	In the modern books, this explanation is not found.
manye siddhanta bhaṅgabhītyaiva tadapasāritaṃ sāmājikaiḥ| tathāpy	I believe that, because of the danger of breaking [Svāmī Dayānanda's] doctrine, this

[234] Here, I translate '*apasiddhānta*' as "statement opposed to (your own) doctrine." In the Mīmāṃsā, the terms is used in the similar sense of "wrong theory" (Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar 2007: xiv). The Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary translates the term as: "an assertion or statement opposed to orthodox teaching or to settled dogma."

[235] Here, "svāminā dayānandena" corresponding to the English "Mr. Dayānanda" seems to have a light mocking tone.

[236] This is from *YV 4.1*: *oṣadhe trāyasva*\| *svadhite mainaṃ hiṃsīḥ*\| "Protect me, Plant. O knife, forbear to harm him" (Griffith 1899: 26).

[237] Here, the knife is like Viṣṇu's tooth. Svāmī Dayānanda prescribes this *mantra* in the context of the life ritual of the first hair cut of a child (*cūḍākarmasaṃskāra*) that he describes in the *Saṃskāraviddhi*. In this context, Svāmī Dayānanda prescribes to pronounce the *mantra* "*auṃ viṣṇor daṃṣṭro' si*," "while looking into the direction of the knife" (*is mantr se chure kī or dekh ke*—) (Dayānanda 1997 [1877]: 72).

[238] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, '*svadhiti*' means 'axe' or 'heavenly axe,' or 'thunderbolt,' a 'saw,' or 'a large tree with haard wood.' In the Hindi translation of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, '*vidhita*' is translated as '*chūrā*,' a large knife, dagger, or blade (Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary).

[239] In the *Saṃskāraviddhi*, this *mantra* follows immediatedly after "*auṃ viṣṇor daṃṣṭro' si*," and it is therefore enjoined in the context of the first hair cut of a child (*cūḍākarmasaṃskāra*, see footnote n. 237). In the 1997 edition in my possession, under it is written; "having pronounced this mantras, on should take the knife in the right hand" (*is mantr ko bol ke chure ko dāhine hāth men leve*). Thus, in this edition, there is no reference to the meanings that, according to Svāmī Karapātrī, Svāmī Dayānanda orginally gave to this *mantra* (Dayānanda 1997[1877]: 72). In his *Āryasamāj men mūrti-pūjā*, under the section '*churā pūjan*,' Kālūrām Śāstrī comments on Svāmī Dayānanda *mūrtipūjā* to the knife (Śāstrī 1925: 14–18, see p. 117).

anyair api sāmājikair asya mantrasyāyam evārtho likhitaḥ|	[explanation] was removed by the Samājīs. Nevertheless, this meaning of this *mantra* is written also by other Samājīs.
vedeṣu tu – "*namaste astu vidyute namaste stanayitnave*" ityādibhir bahubhir mantrair vidyudādīnāṃ tadadhiṣṭhātrīṇāṃ devatānāṃ namaskārādikaṃ dṛśyate|	"*Homage to thee, the Lightning's flash, homage to thee, the Thunder's roar!*" (AV. 1.13.1, Griffith 1895), in the Vedas, this and many other mantras is seen a salutation to the lightening, etc., and to the gods presiding over that.
dayānandenāpi – auṃ pratipade svāhā, brahmaṇe svāhā, aśvinyai svāhā, aśvibhyā svāhā" nāmakaraṇaprasaṅge etā āhutaya uktāḥ|	Even Dayānanda describe these oblations (āhuti) in the occasion of the name ceremony (nāmakaraṇa): *auṃ*! hail to the first day of a lunar fortnight, hail to *brahman*, hail to aśvinī,[240] hail to the Aśvins.[241]
sānugāyendrāya namaḥ" sānugāya yamāya namaḥ, sānugāya varuṇāya namaḥ, sānugāya somāya namaḥ, marudbhyo namaḥ, vanaspatibhyo namaḥ, bhadrakālyai namaḥ, etābhyo devatābhya ekaikagrāso deyaḥ, ityuktam|	Salutation to Indra and his followers, salutations to Yāma with his followers, salutations to Varuṇa and his followers, salutations to Soma and his followers, salutations to the Maruts, salutations to the Vanaspatis (the kings of the woods), salutations to Śrī, salutations to Bhadrakāli, to these gods one single lump of food is to be given, so it is said. [242]
nahi sānugasya manuṣyāsyaikagrāsena tṛptiḥ sambhavati, tasmān manuṣyabhinnā eva deva iti tadrītyāpi siddhyati|	It is absolutely impossible that a single lump of food may satisfy a man and his followers. Therefore, also by this proceeding, it is established that gods are different than men.

[240] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, '*aśvinī*' is "a name of the Nakṣatra presided over by the Aśvins)."

[241] This is from the *nāmakaraṇaprakaraṇaṃ* (lit., the section on the naming cermony) of the *Saṃskāraviddhiḥ* (Dayānanda 1997[1877]: 62).

[242] This is from the *gṛhāśramaprakaraṇaṃ* (lit., the section on the state of the householder) of the *Saṃskāraviddhi*, under the subsection '*atha pitṛyajñaḥ*.' Here, Svāmī Dayānanda is prescribing the third *pitṛyajña*, or the service to the living mother, father, etc. According to a more 'traditional reading,' the *pitṛyajña* is one of the five rituals that the householder has to perform and consists in the offering of food and water to the ancestors (see p. 136). Here, it is written: "After that (ten oblations of rice mixed with repetition of *mantras*), one should donate an offering (*balidān*) with the following *mantras* (*tatpaścāt nimnalikkhit mantron se balidān kare*). According to these *mantras*, one should place a leaf or a dish in the said directions and if at the time of placing [the leaf or the dish] a guest come, so [the food on the leaf or the dish] should be given to him, otherwise it should be thrown in the fire (*in mantron se ek pattal yā thālī men yathokt diśāon men bhāg dharnā yadi bhāg dharne ke samay koī atithi ā jāy to usī ko de denā, nahin to agni men dhar denā*, Dayānanda 1997[1877]: 194). According to Svāmī Karapātrī, Svāmī Dayānanda writes together with these *mantras* that only one single lump of food is to be given. Thus, Svāmī Karapātrī challenges Svāmī Dayānanda's statements exactly on the fact that it is absolutely impossible that a single lump of food might satiate all the 'people' that are invoked by the *mantras*. Yet, that in the 1997 version of the *Saṃskāraviddhi* there is no mention regarding "a single lump of food." This might imply that either Svāmī Karapātrī is mistaken or that Svāmī Dayānanda's comments on this section were changed by later editors. However, I should mention that in his *Āryasamāj men mūrti-pūjā*, under the section '*bhog lajāne men svāmī jī kī ājñā*,' Kālūrām Śāstrī commented on the same section from the *Saṃskāraviddhi* making the same observation of Svāmī Karapātrī (Śāstrī 1925: 7–9).

satyārthaprakāśe 100 pṛṣṭhe "*vāstupataye namaḥ*" iti mantramuccārya eka grāso deya ityuktam|	In the Satyārthaprakāśa, at page 100, it is said: "having uttered the *mantra vāstupataye namaḥ* (salutations to the lord of the house), a lump of food is to be given."
nahi sāmājikānāṃ gṛheṣu vāstudevatānāmnā kaścid vidvān mānavo devo nivasati, yena tadartham ekagrāso deyaḥ syāt|	It is not that in the homes of the Samājis lives a respectable, a respectable wise human being by the name of Vāstudevatā, for whose sake a lump of food should be given.
sarvābhyo brahmādibhyas tīrthadevatābhyo 'śvinyādinakṣatradevatābhyo ghṛtāhutayo vihitāḥ| yady ete devā manuṣyā eva bhaveyus tadā tebhyaḥ pratyakṣam eva ghṛtadānavidhānaṃ kuryāt|	The ghee fire oblations (ghṛtāhuti) are enjoined for all, first for Brahma, etc., and [then] for all the gods of the tīrthas and the deities on the nakṣatras, such as the Aśvins, etc. If these gods were actually human beings, then there should be an injunction to the donation of ghee directly to them.[243]

9.4 The Worship of the (Nirguṇa)-Nirākāra Brahman

As I mentioned, I decided to discuss Svāmī Dayānanda's analysis of *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4* in a separate section because, although it comes in the context of the discussion on the meaning of the word *pratimā*, it is not relevant to that. Instead, by citing *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4*, Svāmī Dayānanda emphasizes the distinction between God and the phenomenal world, highlighting the impossibility of adoring Him through icons and advocating for direct worship.[244] Conversely, Svāmī Karapātrī implies that *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4* refers to the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* (the *brahman* without qualities, nor form). From Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective, authoritative statements on the *brahman* without qualities and form are not contradictory to the possibility of *mūrtipūjā* (see p. 141). Svāmī Karapātrī's critique of Svāmī Dayānanda's desire to directly worship the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* becomes a digression on the 'impenetrability' of the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*.

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 349]

yad vācānabhyudita yena vāgabhyudyate| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yadidamupāsate|| sāmavedīya-tavalakāropaniṣadi, khaṇḍa 1| man. 4||	"*Wich one cannot express by speech, by which speech itself is expressed—Learn that that alone is brahman, and not what they here venerate* " (KU 1.4, Olivelle 1998: 365).

[243] Svāmī Dayānanda asserts that the *devas* and *devatās* mentioned in the *Vedas* are wise people and not gods. His viewpoint suggests that during rituals, oblations are cast into the fire to purify the air. Reflecting on Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective, Svāmī Karapātrī questions why he recommends offering oblations to the fire (*ghṛtāhuti*) rather than directly donating ghee (*ghṛtadāna*) to these people. Essentially, if the deities receiving these offerings are, in fact, human beings, why not present the ghee directly to them instead of incinerating it in ritual fire?

[244] Svāmī Dayānanda also cites *KU1.4–8* in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* as authoritative statements against the icon worship (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 321).

ityādimantrapañcakaṃ mūrtyādiniṣedhakam iti bodhyaṃ	From this five mantras is understood the negation (niṣedha) a form (mūrti), etc.[245]
(*yadvācā.*) yad asaṃskṛtavāṇyā aviṣayam, yena vāṇī viditāsti, [(*tadeva.*)] tad brahma he, manuṣya! tvaṃ vidhi| yad idaṃ pratyakṣaṃ jagad asti naivaitad brahmāsti| kintu vidvāṃso yannirākāraṃ sarvavyāpakam ajaṃ sarvaniyantṛ saccidānandādilakṣaṇaṃ brahmopāsate, tvayāpi tad evopāsanīyaṃ, netarad iti|	That which is not the object of unrefined words but that through which speech is known. That is brahman, know that, man! This phenomenal world is not this brahman. But the wise one worships that brahman that is formless, all-pervading, unborn, governor of everything, having the attribute of sat, cit, and ānanda, etc.. Indeed, by you also that only is to be worshipped, not another one.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1618–1619]

yat tu – "*yad vācānabhyudita yena vāgabhyudyate| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*||" iti (sāmavedīyatalavakāropaniṣadi 1.4) mantramuddhṛtya vyakhyātam – "yad asaṃskṛtavāṇyā aviṣayam, yena vāṇī viditāsti, tad brahma, he manuṣya, tvaṃ viddhi| yata idaṃ pratyakṣaṃ jagadasti naivaitad brahmāsti| kintu vidvāṃso yannirākāraṃ sarvavyāpakam ajaṃ sarvaniyantṛ saccidānandalakṣaṇaṃ brahmopāsate, tvayāpi tad evopāsanīyam, netarad iti" iti, tad api tuccham, tātparyānavabodhāt|	"What speech does not enlighten, but what enlightens speech, know that alone to be the *Brahman*, not this which (people) here worship" (KU 1.4). Having selected this *mantra*, [Svāmī Dayānanda] explains: "That which is not the object of unadorned words but that through which speech is known. That is *brahman*, know that, man! This phenomenal world is not *brahman.* But, "But the wise one worships that *brahman* that is formless, all-pervading, unborn, governor of everything, having the attribute of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, etc.. Indeed, by you also that only is to be

[245] Svāmī Dayānanda refers here to the "5 verses" starting with *Kena Upaniṣad 1.4*, which means, *KU 1.4–8*. These verses relate of a *brahman* that is beyond speech (*KU 1.4*), thought (*KU 1.5*), sight (*KU 1.6*), ear (*KU 1.7*) and breath (*KU 1.8*). Although Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī cite these verses as *KU1.4–8*, in Olivelle's *The Early Upaniṣads*, the same verses are referenced as *KU1.5–9*. Other edited versions (e.g. Gītāpress Gorakhpur) of the *Kena Upaniṣad* maintain the same verse numbering presented also by Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī; I therefore decided to adhere to this numbering, although I use Olivelle translation:
KU 1.5: *yan manasā na manute yenāhur mano mataṃ\| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*\|\| Which one cannot grasp with one's mind, by which, they say, the mind itself is grasped—Learn that that alone is *brahman*, and not what they here venerate (Olivelle 1998: 365).
KU 1.6: *yac cakṣuṣā na paśyati yena cakṣūṃṣi paśyati \| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*\|\| Which one cannot see with one's sight, by which one sees the sight itself—Learn that that alone is *brahman*, and not what they here venerate (Olivelle 1998: 367).
KU 1.7: *yac chrotreṇa na śṛṇoti yena śrotramiṃ śrutaṃ\| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*\|\| Which one cannot hear, by which hearing itself is heard—Learn that that alone is *brahman*, and not what they here venerate (Olivelle 1998: 367).
KU 1.8: *yat prāṇena na prāṇiti yena prāṇaḥ praṇīyate \| tad eva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*\|\| Which one cannot breathe through breathing, by which breathing itself is drawn forth—Learn that that alone is *brahman*, and not what they here venerate (Olivelle 1998: 367).

	worshipped, not another one." This is vain/meaningless because there is no understanding of the purport [of the śruti.]
tathāhi – idantās padatvena brahmaṇa upāsyatvaniṣedhāpatteḥ|	For instance, one incurs into the prohibition (niṣedha) against worshipping brahman because of the state of the word of this-ness (idaṃ-tā).[246]
vastutas tu jātiguṇakriyāsvarūpasambandhānāśritya śabdānāṃ pravṛttir bhavati, brahmaṇa ekatvān na tatra brāhmaṇatvādivaj jātyāśrayeṇa śabdapravṛtti|	Actually, the application of relations of the nature of class (jāti), quality (guṇa) and action (kriya) [to brahman] is a use of words [in relation to brahman]. But, because of the oneness (ekatva) of brahman, there [can]not [be] use of words applying a jāti like brāhmaṇatva [of the brahmans].[247]
nirguṇatvān nīlam utpalam iti vad guṇāśrayeṇāpi na tatra śabdapravṛttiḥ|	Since [brahman is] attribute-less, there [can]not [be] use of the words applying a guṇa [to brahman], like a blue lotus.
niṣkriyatvāt pācako lāvaka iti vat kriyāyogenāpi no pravṛttiḥ|	Since [brahman is] devoid of action, and there cannot be use [of words] in combination with kriyā, like the one who cooks and reaps.
asaṅgatvād dhanī gomānitivac ca na brahmaṇi śabdapravṛttiḥ|	Since [brahman is] independent, there [can]not [be] use of words in relation to brahman, like 'dhanī' (the one having riches) and 'gomāt' (the one having cows).
asaṅgatvād eva śaktyā lakṣaṇayā gauṇyā vā vṛttyā na brahmaṇi śabdapravṛttiḥ sambhavati|	Since [brahman is] independent from the literal (śakti =abhidhā[vṛtti]), metaphorical (lakṣana[vṛtti]), and suggestive (gauṇyavṛtti=vyañjanavṛtti) sense, there

[246] With '*idaṃ-tā*,' Svāmī Karapātrī probably refers to the '*idam*' ('this') that is the accusative of '*upāsate*' in *KU 4.1*: "*yad idam upāsate*." According to Svāmī Karapātrī, since the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* is beyond speech, because of its finitude, the word '*idam*,' and speech in general, cannot reference it. Therefore, for Svāmī Karapātrī, that Svāmī Dayānanda enjoins the worship of 'this' *brahman* it is an absurdum. This is because the word '*idam*' and the injunction connected to it fail to define an refer to *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*. Similarly, from this perspective, *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* cannot be the direct object of worship.

[247] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī argues that when Svāmī Dayānanda comments on *KU 1.4*, he applies the categories of *jāti*, *guṇa*, and *kriya* to the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*, which is instead free of any category. Specifically, in the context of *jāti*, he explains that *brāhmaṇs* are single living beings (*vyakti*) who among themselves share the *brāhmaṇatva*, or the 'essence' or 'species' of being *brāhmaṇs*. Similarly, different cows (*go-vyakti*) are recognized based on their 'cow-ness' (*go-jāti*). In contrast, *brahman* is one and only and therefore has no *jāti*, or species referring to it.

	cannot be use of words in relation to brahman.[248]
śaktir api sambandhagrahasāpekṣā|	Even the literal meaning is dependent on the understanding of a relation.[249]
gaṅgāyāṃ ghoṣa ityādivat śakyārthasambandhābhāvān na brahmaṇi lakṣaṇayā 'pi śabdapravṛttiḥ|	Because of the absence of relation to a possible meaning like [that of] "the roaring of Ganga", etc., there [can]not [be] use of words, not even in the metaphorical sense (lakṣaṇa).
lakṣyamāṇaśauryakrauryādiguṇayogāt siṃho devadatta ity atra gauṇyā vṛttyā śabdapravṛttiḥ|	The use of words in the suggestive sense (gauṇya-vṛtti) like here in "the lion Devadatta" is by the union with qualities such as heroism and fierceness, etc..
"*asaṇgo nahi sajyate*" iti śrutyā sambandhaniṣedhād brahmaṇaḥ saṃskṛtāyā asaṃskṛtāyā vā vāṇyāḥ sarvathā'viṣayatvameva|	"*He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything*" (BṛU 3.9.26)[250] since the śruti [establishes] a prohibition of relations [concerning brahman], by no means at all brahman is the object of refined or unrefined words.
"*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*" (tai. u. 2.4) ityādiśrutibhiḥ sarvathā 'pi brahmaṇo vāco 'viṣayatvam uktam|	"*From which the words turn back together with the mind without attaining [it]*" (TaiU 2.4.1):[251] it is said everywhere by this and

[248] Words operate through three powers or functions (*vṛtti*) in conveying meaning. *Abhidhā* is the power conveying the conventional or literal meaning of words and sentences. *Lakṣaṇā* indicates the metaphorical sense, and *vyañjanā* corresponds to the power of suggestion (see Bhagwat and Bhat 1960: 113–114).

[249] In the sense of a word and the concept literally meant by that word.

[250] *BṛU 3.9.26*: *kasmin nu tvaṃ cātmā ca pratiṣṭhatau stha iti\| prāṇa iti\| kasmin ni prāṇaḥ pratiṣṭhita iti\| apāna iti\| kasminn vapānaḥ pratiṣṭhita iti\| vyāna iti\| kasmin nu vyānaḥ pratiṣṭhita iti\| udāna iti\| kasmin nūdānaḥ iti\| samāna iti\| sa eṣa neti nety ātmā\| agṛhyo na hi gṛhyate\| aśīryā na hi śīryate\| asaṅgo na hi sajyate\| asito na vyathate\| na riṣyati\| etāny aṣṭāvāyatanāny aṣṭau lokā aṣṭau devā aṣṭau puruṣāḥ\| sa yas tān puruṣānnniruhya pratyuhyātyakrāmat taṃ tv aupaniṣadaṃ puruṣaṃ pṛcchami\| taṃ cen me na vivakṣyasi mūrdhā te vipatiṣyatīti\| taṃha na mene śākalyaḥ\| tasya ha mūrdhā vipapāta\| api hāsya parimoṣiṇo'sthīnyapajahrur anyanmanyamānāḥ\|* ""On what are you and your self (atman) founded?" "On the out-breath." "On what is the out-breath founded?" "On the in-breath." "On what is the in-breath founded?" "On the inter-breath." "On what is the inter-breath founded?" "On the up-breath." "On what is the up-breath founded?" "On the link-breath. About this self (atman), one can only say 'not—, not—.' He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped. He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound; yet he neither trembles in fear nor suffers injury. Now, those are the eight abodes, the eight worlds, the eight gods, and the eight persons. I ask you about that person providing the hidden connection (*upanisad*)—the one who carries off these other persons, brings them back, and rises above them? If you will not tell me that, your head will shatter apart." Sakalya did not know him, and his head did, indeed, shatter apart. Robbers, moreover, stole his bones, mistaking them for something else" (*BṛU*, Olivelle 1998: 98–101).

[251] *TaiU 2.4.1*: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha\| ānandaṃ brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kadācan\|iti\| taṣyaiṣa eva śārīra ātmā\| yaḥ pūrvasya\| tasmād vā etas smānmanomayāt\| anyo'ntara ātmā vijñānamayaḥ\| tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ\| sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva\| tasya puruṣavidhatāmanvayaṃpuruṣavidhaḥ\| tasya śraddhaiva śiraḥ\| ṛtaṃ dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ\| satyam uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ\| yoga ātmā sahā pṛcchaṃ pratiṣṭhā\| tas apy eṣa śloko bhavatī\|* "Before they reach it, words turn back, together with the mind; One who knows that bliss of brahman, he is never afraid. Of that, this here is the embodied self (atman); this belongs to the former. Different from and lying within this self consisting of mind is the self (atman) consisting of perception, which suffuses this other self completely. Now, he has the appearance of a man; so, corresponding to his manlike appearance, the self consisting of

	that authoritative statements that *brahman* cannot be the object of speech.
mahātmanā gosvāminā tulasīdāsenāpi rāmacaritamānasākhye nibandhe tadevānūditam – "*mana sameta jahaṃ jāi na bānī*" iti|	In the *Rāmcaritamānasa*, also the high-minded Gosvāmī Tulsīdāsa says "*whom neither speech nor thought can comprehend*" (340.4).[252]
tathātve tvadīyasya nirākārasya saguṇasyevāvāgviṣayatvād anupāsyatvāpattiḥ	That being so, this formless one of yours [is] like a saguṇa because it is the object of words (vāc); [that is] because [the nirākāra] cannot undergo the condition of being worshipped.
nanu tarhi – "*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva*" (bha. Gī. 15.15), "*sarve vedā yat padam āmananti*" (kaṭho. 2.15), "*taṃ tv aupaniṣadaṃ puruṣaṃ pṛcchāmi*" (bṛ. u. 3.9.26) ityādibhir vācoviṣayatva brahmaṇaḥ pratipādyate|	"*And I am [that which is] to be known by all the Vedas*" (BhG 15.15).[253] "*The word that all the Vedas disclose*" (KaU 1.2.15).[254] "*I ask you about that person providing the hidden connection*" (BṛU 3.9.26).[255] Is it not that by these and other [authoritative statements] brahman is the object of words (vāc)?[256]
uparyuktarītyā sarvathā vāco 'viṣayatvena vedānām api vāgrūpatvāt kathaṃ tadviṣayatvoktiḥ saṅgacchate, iti cen na, lokādhyāropāpohārthatvāt śāstrasyoktaśaṅkānavakāśāt|	In the way said above, if [brahman] is in no way object of words, but the Vedas have the form of words, how comes together a sentence having that (*brahman*) as an object? If this is argued, it is not correct. This is because the purpose [of the *Vedas*] is to remove the wrong attribution of the phenomenal world. [For this reason,] the [above] said doubt (that the Vedas speak of

perception assumes a manlike appearance. Of this self, the head is simply faith; the right side is the truth; the left side is the real; the torso (atman) is the performance; and the bottom on which it rests is the celebration. On this, too, we have the following verse" (*TaiU*, Olivelle 1998: 302–303).

[252] *Rāmcaritamānasa*, *dohā* 340, *caupāī* 4: *mana sameta jehi jāna na bānī\| taraki na sakahiṃ sakala anumānī\|\| mahimā nigamu neti kahi kahaī\| jo tihuṃ kāla ekarasa rahaī\|\|* "[…] whom neither speech nor thought can comprehend, nor any argument infer; whose greateness the Vedas declare to be "Not thus," and whom time present, past or future does not effect?" (Prasad 2009: 195). This verse is found in the Bālakāṇḍa as Rāma and Sītā, after their wedding, are departing from Mithila. Janaka salutes Rāma and praises him, referring to him as the one "whom neither speech nor thought can comprehend."

[253] *BhG 15.15*: *sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi saṃniviṣṭo\| mattaḥ smṛtir jñanaṃ apohanaṃ ca\| vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedāntakṛd vedavid eva cāhaṃ\|\|* "And I am lodged in the heart of all [beings]. From me [come] memory, knowledge, and reasoning, and I am [that which is] to be known by all Vedas. I am [also] tha maker of Vedas'-end and the Veda-knower" (*BhG*, Feuerstein 2011: 276–277).

[254] *KaU 1.2.15*: *sarve vedā yat padam āmananti tapāṃsi sarvāṇi ca yad vadanti\| yad icchanto brahmacaryaṃ caranti tatte padaṃ saṃgraheṇa bravīmi\|\| āoṃ ity etat\|\|* "The word that all the Vedas disclose; The word that all austerities proclaim; Seeking which people live student lives; That word now I will tell you in brief—It is OM!" (*KaU*, Olivelle 1998: 384–385).

[255] See footnote n. 250.

[256] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī hypotesizes a *pūrvapakṣa* to his proceeding.

	brahman, thus brahman is an object of words) is inapplicable to the śāstras.
tathāhi – "*neti neti*", (Vṛ. u. 2.3.6) "*asthūlam anaṇu*" (Vṛ. u. 3.8.8) "*atad vyāvṛttyā yaṃ cakitam abhidhatte śrutir api*" (śivamahimnastotre, ślo. 2), "*niṣedhaśeṣo jayatād aśeṣaḥ*" (śrīmadbhāgavate 8.3) ityādivacanair atadvyāvṛttyaiva svaprakāśasya brahmaṇaḥ prakāśānapekṣatvena prakāśopapatteḥ|	For instance, "*not—not—*" (BṛU 2.3.6).[257] "*it is neither coarse nor fine"* (BṛU 3.8.8).[258] "*Even the śruti speaks trembling about the removal of atad* [what is not that, or brahman]" (Śivamahimnastotra 2). "*He is the substratum of what is left after negating these all and yet constitutes them all*" (BhP 8.3.24).[259] These and other statements ['illustrate' brahman] only through the removal of 'atad,' what is not. As brahman [is] self-illuminent, the origin of [its illumination] is not dependent on [another] illumination.
mūrtipūjāniṣedhagandho 'pī ha vacaneṣu nāsti|	Indeed, in the authoritative statements, there is not even the smell of a prohibition to mūrtipūjā.
vāṇī yena viditā tadbrahmety api na saṅgatam, vāṇīvijñānasya pratyagātmaniṣṭhatvāt| kiṃ pratyagātmano brahmatvam abhyupeyate yuṣmābhiḥ? tathābhyupagame siddhāntahaniḥ|	That "*brahman* is that through which speech is known" is also a disconnected [argument] because the knowledge of the language is located in the individual soul. Do you say that the individual soul is of the state of brahman? [If you are] in

[257] *BṛU 2.3.6*: *tasya haitasya puruṣasya rūpaṃ yathā māhārajanaṃ vāso yathā pāṇḍāvikaṃ yathendragopo yathāgnyarciyathā puṇḍarīkaṃ yathā sakṛdvidyuttaṃ\|sakṛdvidyutteva ha vā asya śrīr bhavati ya evaṃ veda\| athāta ādeśo neti neti\| na hy etasmād iti nety anyat param asti\| atha nāmadheyaṃ satyasya satyaṃ iti\|prāṇā vai satyaṃ\| tesāṃ eṣa satyaṃ\|* "Now, the visible appearance of this person is like a golden cloth, or white wool, or a red bug, or a flame, or a white lotus, or a sudden flash of lightning. And when a man knows this, his splendor unfolds like a sudden flash of lightning. Here, then, is the rule of substitution: "not—, not—," for there is nothing beyond this "not." And this is the name—"the real behind the real," for the real consists of the vital functions, and he is the real behind the vital functions" (Olivelle 1998: 66–67).

[258] *BṛU 3.8.8*: *sa hovāca\| etad vai tad akṣaraṃ gārgi brāhmaṇā abhivadanty asthūlam anaṇv ahrasvam adīrgham alohitam asneham acchāyam atamo' avāyvanākāśam asaṅgam arasam agandham acakśuṣkam aśrotram avāgamano' atejaskam aprāṇam amukham amātram anantaram abāhyam, na tad aśnāti kiṃ ca na, na tad aśnāti kaś ca na\|* "He replied: "That, Gargi, is the imperishable, and Brahmins refer to it like this—it is neither coarse nor fine; it is neither short nor long; it has neither blood nor fat; it is without shadow or darkness; it is without air or space; it is without contact; it has no taste or smell; it is without sight or hearing; it is without speech or mind; it is without energy, breath, or mouth; it is beyond measure; it has nothing within it or outside of it; it does not eat anything; and no one eats it" (Olivelle 1998: 90–91).

[259] *BhP 8.3.24*: *sa vai na devāsuramartyatiryaṅ na strī na ṣaṇḍho na pumān na jantuḥ\| nāyaṃ guṇaḥ karma na san na cāsan niṣedhaśeṣo jayatād śeṣaḥ\|\|* "Verily he is neither god nor demon; neither a human being nor a sub-human creature (a bird, a beast, etc.); he is neither a female nor a male nor an important person or an a-sexual being; he is neither an attribute nor an action; he is neither effect nor cause; he he is the substratum of what is left after negating these all and yet constitutes them all (by his Māyā)" (*BhP*, Tagare 1955: 1011).

	agreement with that, [then there is] the failure of [your] doctrine.[260]
vidvāṃso yannirākāram ity ādikaṃ tatkapolakalpitam, śrutyakṣarāsambandhāt|	"But the wise one worships that *brahman* that is formless etc.". That is a figment of imagination, because it has no connection with the words of the *śruti*.

9.5 The Statements from the Manusmṛti

After stating that *pratimā* means measure, Svāmī Dayānanda quotes a few passages from the *Manusmṛti* containing the words *pratimā*, *deva* and *devatā*. He does that in the form of a *pūrvapakṣa* as if somebody asked for clarification on the cited verses that are 'traditionally' understood as sentences relating to icons (*pratimā*), gods (*deva, devatā*, *daivata*), and temples (*devatāyatanam*). Svāmī Dayānanda thus reasserts that *pratimā* means measure, and not icon, and argues that words such as *devatāyatanam* and *devatāgāra*, lit., 'temples,' or 'houses of the gods,' signify 'houses of the wise ones.' This is because, according to him, in the *Vedas*, '*deva*' and '*devatā*' signify 'wise people' and not 'gods.' With these assertions, Svāmī Dayānanda brings to conclusion his subchapter on "The falsity in *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]."

Svāmī Karapātrī has already debated Svāmī Dayānanda's inconsistency regarding the word *pratimā*. Thus, he moves to Svāmī Dayānanda's assertion that the words *deva* and *devatā* mean 'wise men' and refutes this interpretation. Svāmī Karapātrī's position is that *deva* and *devatā* signify indeed 'gods' and not 'wise men.' In order to prove his point, he takes up one the verses of the *Manusmṛti* cited by Svāmī Dayānanda, '*pradakṣiṇāni kurvīta devabrāhmaṇasannidhau*,' which means, 'in the presence of 'gods/wise men' and *brāhmaṇs* one should circumambulate [them] (*pradakṣiṇa*).' In this context, Svāmī Karapātrī notices that the compound '*devabrāhmaṇasannidhau*' is dual and, therefore, a *dvandva-samāsa*, which implies that there is coordinating conjunction between the words '*deva*' and '*brāhmaṇa*' The possibility of a '*karmadhāraya*' connection between the words '*deva*' and '*brāhmaṇa*,' implying an adjectivization of the word '*deva*' in reference to '*brāhmaṇa*' is against the grammar because of the use of the dual form. Thus, if the *Manusmṛti* refers to *devas* and *brāhmaṇs* as two different classes of beings, it means that the class of beings referred to by the term '*deva*' is different than the class of beings referred to by the word '*brāhmaṇa*.' However, Svāmī Karapātrī points out that Svāmī Dayānanda defines the *brāhmaṇs* as the 'wise ones,' meaning not those born of other *brāhmaṇs*, but those who possess 'the *brāhmaṇ* qualities' and are thus 'wise.' From this, it follows that Svāmī Dayānanda is either mistaken in claiming that gods are wise men or in asserting that the *brāhmaṇs* are the wise ones (otherwise, the use of dual in the compound could not be explained). In either case, Svāmī Karapātrī exposes Svāmī Dayānanda's position as self-contradictory.

[260] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī refers to the notion that according to Svāmī Dayānanda the Supreme Self and the individual soul are two distinct entities.

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 650]

pra.- kiñca bhoḥ!| manusmṛtau – '*pratimānāṃ ca bhedaka*'; '*daivatāny abhigacchetu*'; '*devatā'bhyarcanaṃ caiva'; 'devatānāṃ ca kutsanam*'; '*devatāyatanāni ca*'; 'devatānāṃ chāyollaṅghananiṣedhaḥ'; '*pradakṣiṇāni kurvīta* devabrāhmaṇasannidhau'; '*devatāgārabhedakān*' uktānām eteṣāṃ vacanānāṃ kā gatir iti?	Question: but then, dear sir! Then what is the reason for these statements in the Manusmṛti?[261] "*[…]* <u>*anyone who destroys a statue*</u>" (MS 9.285).[262] "*[…]* <u>*he should visit gods*</u>" (MS 4.153).[263] *"[…]* <u>*worship the gods*</u>" (MS 2.176).[264] *"[…]* <u>*disparaging the gods*</u>" (MS 4.163).[265] *"[…]* <u>*as also temples of gods*</u>" (MS 8.248).[266] "<u>the prohibition to trespass the shadow of the deities</u>"[267] "[…]gods and brāhmaṇs *[…]—he should circumambulate these clockwise*" (MS 4.39).[268] "*[…]* <u>*those who break into a temple*</u>" (MS 9.280).[269]
u. – atra 'pratimā' śabdena raktikāmāṣaseṭakādīni tolanasādhanāni gṛhyante|	Answer: here, by the word 'pratimā' are meant the weighting measures like the

[261] Although in the following statements, Svāmī Dayānanda would read 'measure' for '*pratimā*,' and 'the wise ones' for '*deva*' and '*devatā*,' I follow here the 'standard' reading of respectively 'icons' and 'gods,' as done also by Olivelle in the translation of these passages.

[262] *MS 9.285*: *saṅkramadhvajayaṣṭīnāṃ* <u>*pratimānāṃ ca bhedakaḥ*</u> | *pratikuryāc ca tat sarvaṃ pañca dadyāt śatāni ca||* "<u>Anyone who destroys</u> a bridge, a flag, a pole, or <u>a statue</u> should repair the entire damage and pay a fine of 500" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 204).

[263] *MS 4.153*: *daivatāny abhigacchet tu dhārmikāṃś ca dvijottamān* | *īśvaraṃ caiva rakṣārthaṃ gurūn eva ca parvasu||* "<u>He should visit gods</u> and righteous Brahmins; the ruler for the sake of protection; and elders on the days of the moon's change" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 132).

[264] *MS 2.176*: *nityaṃ snātvā śuciḥ kuryād devarṣipitṛtarpaṇaṃ| <u>devatābhyarcanam caiva</u> samidādhānam eva ca||* "Every day, after purifying himself by bathing, he should offer quenching libations to gods, seers, and ancestors; <u>worship the gods</u>; and put firewood into the sacred fire" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 104).

[265] *MS 4.163*: *nāstikyaṃ vedanindāṃ ca <u>devatānāṃ ca kutsanam</u>* | *dveṣaṃ dambhaṃ ca mānaṃ ca krodhaṃ taikṣhṇyaṃ ca varjayet||* "He should eschew infidelity, denigrating the Vedas, <u>disparaging the gods</u>, hatred, arrogance, pride, anger, and harshness" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 132).

[266] *MS 8.248*: *taḍāgānyudapānāni vāpyaḥ prasravaṇāni ca* | *sīmāsandhiṣu kāryāṇi <u>devatāyatanāni ca</u>||* "Reservoirs, wells, ponds, and waterways should be constructed at the intersection of boundaries, <u>as also temples of gods</u>" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 180).

[267] This is not a direct citation from the *Manusmṛti*, but it is Svāmī Dayānanda's summary of *MS 4.130*: *devatānāṃ guro rājñaṅ snātakācāryayos tathā| nākrāmet kāmataś chāyāṃ babhruṇo dīkṣitasya ca||* "<u>He must never tread deliberately on the shadow of these: god,</u> elder, king, bath-graduate, teacher, reddish-brown cow, and a man consecrated for a sacrifice" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 131).

[268] In this case, Svāmī Dayānanda cites only one part of the verse and then add the compound '*devabrāhmaṇasannidhau*.' This compound is then object of Svāmī Karapātrī's critique. The statement stems from *MS 4.39*: *mṛdaṃ gāṃ <u>daivataṃ</u> vipraṃ ghṛtaṃ madhu catuṣpathaṃ| <u>pradakṣiṇāni kurvīta</u> pañcātāṃś ca vanaspatīn||* "A mound of earth, a cow, a god, a Brahmin, ghee, honey, and a crossroads—<u>he should circumambulate these clockwise</u>, as also notable trees" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 126).

[269] *MS 9.280*: *koṣṭhāgārāyudhāgāra<u>devatāgārabhedakān</u>* | *hastyaśvarathahartṝṃś ca hanyād evāvicārayan||* "He should kill without hesitation those who <u>break into</u> the treasury, the armory, or <u>a temple</u>, and those who steal elephants, horses, or chariots" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 204).

	raktikā,[270] the māṣa,[271] the seṭaka[272] and so on.
tad yathā - *tulāmānaṃ pratīmānaṃ sarvaṃ ca syāt sulakṣitam* ||manu. a. 8|ślokaḥ 403, ityanayā manūktarītyaiva pratimāpratīmānaśabdayor ekārthatvāt tolanasādhanāni gṛhyanta iti bodhyaṃ| ata eva pratimānām adhikanyūnakāriṇaṃ daṇḍo deya ity uktaḥ|	"*All balances, measures, and weights should be stamped with the proper mark*" (MS 8.403).[273] According to this statement of Manu, it is to be known that the words 'pratimā' and 'pratīmāna' are synonyms and mean weighting measures. Thus, here it is said that there should be a punishment for making bigger or smaller 'weighting measures (viz., cheating on the measures).
vidvāṃso devāste yatrādhīyate'dhyāpayanti nivasanti ca tāni sthānāni 'daivatāni' ityucyante|	The 'wise ones' means the 'devas;' those places where they learn, teach, and live are called 'daivatāni.'
devā eva devatās teṣām imāni sthānāni 'daivatāni devatāyatanāni ca' santīti bodhyaṃ|	'Deva' is the same as 'devatā.' It is understood that 'daivatāni' and 'devatāyatanāni' are their dwelling places.
viduṣām evābharcanaṃ satkaraṇaṃ karttavyaṃ iti|	Reverence and the respectful behaviour towards the wise ones only should be done.
naivaiteṣāṃ kenacid api nindā chāyollaṅghanaṃ sthānavināśaśca karttavyaḥ|	Their injury, passing over their shadow, and the destruction of their dwelling places should never be done by anyone.
kintu sarvair teṣāṃ sāmīpyagamanaṃ, nyāyaprāpaṇaṃ, dakṣiṇapārśve sthāpanaṃ, sveṣāṃ vāmapārśve sthitiśca kāryyeti|	But everyone should go in their proximity, accept their justice, keeping them on the right side, and positioning yourselves selves on the left side.
evam eva yatra yatrāny atrāpi pratimādevadevatāyatanādiśabdāḥ santi, tatra tatraivam arthā vijñeyāḥ|	Then, everywhere where there are words like 'pratimā,' 'deva,' 'devatāyatana,' etc., these are to be known by these meanings only.
granthabhūyastvabhiyā nātra te lekhituṃ śakyā iti|	For the fear of increasing [the volume] of the treatise, it is not possible to write [all] those [instances].

[270] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, this is a term for the seeds or grains of the Abrus Precatorius, commonly known as gunja seeds. It is a traditional Indian unit for measuring mass based on the nominal weight of the seeds. According to Wikipedia, each *raktikā* corresponds to 0.1215 grams.
[271] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, this is a name for the seeds of the Phaseolus Radiatus, commonly known as the mung beans. This is a metric system used in India to measure gold. According to Wikipedia, 1 *māṣa* corresponds to 0.972 grams.
[272] According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, the *seṭa* is a particular weight or measure.
[273] *MS 8.403*: *tulāmānaṃ pratīmānaṃ sarvaṃ ca syāt sulakṣitam| ṣaṭsu ṣaṭsu ca māseṣu punareva parīkṣayet||* "All balances, measures, and weights should be stamped with the proper mark and should be re-inspected every six months" (*MS*, Olivelle 1998: 188).

etāvataiva mūrtipūjanakaṇṭhītilakadhāraṇādiniṣedhā bodhyāḥ|	Only by this much the prohibition to mūrtipūjā, and carrying of kaṇṭhī (devotional necklace) and tilak are understood.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1619–1620]

ata eva – "*pratimānām ca bhedakaḥ*", "*daivatāny abhigacchate*", "*devatābhyarcanaṃ caiva*", "*devatānāṃ ca kutsanaṃ*", "*devatāyatanāni ca*", "devatyanyaṃ chāyollaṅghananiṣedhaḥ", "*pradakṣiṇāni kurvīta* devabrāhmaṇasannidhau", "*devatāgārabhedakān*" ityādimanuvacanānusāraṃ devatānāṃ mandirāṇi devatānāṃ pūjanaṃ ca siddhyante|	Hence, "*[…] anyone who destroys a statue*" (MS 9.285). "*[…] he should visit gods*" (MS 4.153). *"[…] worship the gods*" (MS 2.176). *"[…] disparaging the gods*" (MS 4.163). *"[…] as also temples of gods*" (MS 8.248). "the prohibition to trespass the shadow of the deities" "[…]gods and brahmans *[…]—he should circumambulate these clockwise*" (MS 4.39). "*[…] those who break into a temple*" (MS 9.280)."[274] According to these and other statements of Manu, the temples of the deities and the pūjā to the deities are established [as legitimate].
devatānāṃ pratimābhedanena devatāgārabhedanena ca daṇḍanīyatā smaryate| yat tu vidvāṃso hi devā ityanena viduṣām eva devatvayuktam, tattuccham, vacanasahasrair manuṣyabhinnānāṃ devatātvasādhanāt|	The punishment for breaking the icons and the houses of the deities is recalled. But it is vain [to say that] by [this statement] "the wise ones are indeed the gods" the state of divinity is only applied to the wise ones. That is because it is demonstrated by a thousand statements that the divine state is separated from the human state.
devabrāhmaṇasannidhāv ity atra devapadaprayoge tatsannidhau brāhmaṇapadaprayogavaiyarthyaṃ ca|	[If you were right], here in '*devabrāhmaṇasannidhau*,' after using the word 'deva' [it would be] useless to use the word 'brāhmaṇa' in its proximity.
tvadrītyā viduṣām eva brāhmaṇatvāt, mūrkhāṇāṃ śudratvāt|	That is because, according to your proceeding, the brāhmaṇa state is that of the wise ones only, and the śudra state is that of the fool ones.

9.6 Instances of Ārya Samāja's Mūrtipūjā

Svāmī Dayānanda's section on "The falsity in *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]" concludes with the discourse regarding the statements from the *Manusmṛti* I just presented. Following this, Svāmi Karapātrī opens a digression commenting on a few instances

[274] For references to the cited verses, see footnotes n. 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, and 269.

found in the *Saṃskāravidhi*, where he argues that Svāmī Dayānanda accidentally prescribed *mūrtipūjā*:

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1620]

saṃskāravidhau 194 pṛṣṭhe tathā sāmājikānāṃ sandhyāyām api prācī digagnir adhipatir ity ādibhir manaseśvaraparikramaṇaṃ vihitam|	At page 194 of the Saṃskāravidhi and also in the sandhyā of the Samājīs with this mantra, "the Eastern direction and its superintendent Agni," etc. a mental circumambulation of Īśvara is prescribed."
mūrtimantarā mānasam api tatkathaṃ sambhavati? ulūkhalamusalābhyāṃ naivedyādinivedanaṃ kiṃ mūrtipūjanaṃ bhavati na vā? āryābhi[va]naye – "*vāyav ā yāhi darśateme soma asaskṛtāḥ| teṣāṃ pāhi śrudhī havam*‖" (ṛ. saṃ. 1.2.1) iti mantreṇa pareśāya somavallyādirasaḥ samarpyate|	How is mental [circumambulation] (*mānasa*) possible without an icon? Is it not that the offering of eatables to the mortar (*ulūkhala*) and the wooden pestle (*musala*) is an icon worship? In the Āryābhi(va)naya, with the mantra "*Beautiful Vāyu, come, for thee these Soma drops have been prepared: Drink of them, hearken to our call*" (ṚV 1.2.1), the juice of the *soma* plant and other [things] are offered to the highest Lord (*pareśa*).[275]
"*ghṛte sītā madhunā samajyatāṃ viśvair devair anumatā marudbhiḥ| ūrjasvatī payasā pinvamānāsmān site payasābhyāvavṛtsva*‖" "sab annādi padārtho kī icchā karane vale, vidvān manuṣyoṃ kī ājñā se prāpta huā jala vā dugdha se parākrama sambandhī sīcā vā sevana kiyā huā paṭelā ghī tathā śahad vā śakkara ādi se saṃyukta karo| paṭelā ham logoṃ ko ghī ādī padārthoṃ se	"*Approved by Visvedevas and by Maruts, balmed be the furrow with sweet-flavoured fatness. Succulent, teeming with thy milky treasure, turn hitherward to us with milk, O Furrow*" (YV 12.70 Griffith 1899: 109) "The one who desires objects like all grains etc., with water or milk gained by the permit of learned men, should anoint the wooden *patela* which is treated with valor, with ghee, honey or sugar. The *paṭela* will unite us with things like ghee. For this reason, put water on it again and again."[276]

[275] In the *Āryābhivinaya* (1972 [1876]: 14), Svāmī Dayānanda reports the *mantra ṚV 1.2.1* as the seventh *mantra* of his work and writes: "Oh Almighty God, Lord of infinite power and grandest majesty, You are accessible to us through Your own condescending grace. We have, by our very limited resources, prepared the excellent herbs (like *soma* and others) for offering to You. Whatever good things we have in our possession (they all in fact have been prepared in the best possible manner), we offer them all to You. Oh God, do accept them and utilise them for Your divine purpose! When a son offers even an ordinary thing to his father, the latter feels immensely gratified. In the same manner, oh Great Father of all, keeping in view the humble existence of ours, You too give due considerations to our prayers and entreaties and be pleased with us, Your lowly supplicants!"

[276] This is from the *Yajurvedabhāṣya* (12.79, *YVBhSD*, Dayānanda n.a. [1904]: 419). Here Svāmī Dayānanda glosses the *mantra YV 12.79* in the manner mentioned above. In the *Yajurvedabhāṣya* however, the explanation of the *mantra* is given with reference to the corresponding words from the *mantras*. I report here this version for clarity: "(*viśvaiḥ*) *sab* (*devaiḥ*) *annādi padārthon kī icchā karne vale vidvān* (*marudbhiḥ*) *manuṣyon kī* (*anumatā*) *ājñā se prāpta huā* (*payasā*) *jal vā dugdh se* (*ūrjasvatīḥ*) *parākram saṃbandhī* (*pinvamānā*) *sīcā vā sevana kiyā huā* (*sītā*) *paṭelā* (*gṛtena*) *ghī tathā* (*madhunā*) *sahat vā śakkara ādi se* (*samajyatāṃ*) *saṃyukta karen vah* (*sīte*) *paṭelā* (*asmān*) *ham logoṃ ko ghī ādī padārthoṃ se saṃyukta karegā is hetu se* (*payasā*) *jal se* (*abhyāvavṛtsva*) *bār 2 varttāo*\| (*YV* 12.70, *YVSDBh*, Dayānanda n.a. [1904]: 419).

yukta karegā is hetu se jal se bār bār bartāvo"	
atra kāṣṭhapaṭelā (yena kāṣṭhena viṣamā kṣetrabhūmiḥ samīkriyate tatkāṣṭhaṃ paṭelā vā heṃgā vā kathyate) pūjanaṃ mūrtipūjanam eva|	Here, the worship of the wooden paṭela (the wood with which the uneven cultivated land is levelled is called paṭela or hengā) is also an icon worship.
sikkhamatakhaṇḍanaprasaṅge dayānandena satyārthaprakāśe spaṣṭam uktam – "kasyacid api jaḍasya samarthanaṃ śironamanamañjalibandhanaṃ mūrtipūjanam eva|	In the section on the refutation of the doctrine of the Sikhs, in the Satyārthaprakāśa, Dayānanda clearly says that: bowing the head and folding hands (añjali mudrā) in the contemplation of an insentient object is also an icon worship.[277]

9.7 Final Remarks

In this chapter, I presented the first section of the 'In support of *mūrtipūjā*' (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*) from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* together with the original passages from the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* corresponding to the section on 'The falsity of *mūrtipūjā* and remembering the names [of the gods]' (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*). I have organized this first part of the debate into five main thematic areas to present the discussion in an organic manner: (i) the presence or absence of injunctions to *mūrtipūjā*, (ii) the presence or absence of prohibitions to *mūrtipūjā*, (iii) the meaning of the word *pratimā*, (iv) the worship of the (*nirguṇa*)-*nirākāra brahman*, (v) the statements from the *Manusmṛti*, and (vi) instances of Ārya Samāja's *mūrtipūjā*.

I defined these thematic areas based on Svāmī Dayānanda's exposition in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and showed how Svāmī Karapātrī responds to them. The key focus of this initial section, which is also confirmed in the following chapter, is textual exegesis and how authoritative statements are used and interpreted by Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī in order to corroborate either a prohibition or an injunction to *mūrtipūjā*. Following the *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍa* styles, Svāmī Karapātrī does not engage in a truth-seeking debate with Svāmī Dayānanda's writings; rather, he merely aims to disprove them. This is especially evident as he adopts Svāmī Dayānanda's conception of *mūrtipūjā* as the worship of the non-conscious to counteract the position of his adversary and claim that he himself enjoins such acts. In this section, Svāmī Karapātrī comments on Svāmī Dayānanda's positions and interpretation of the authoritative statements. He leaves, however, unaddressed Svāmī Dayānanda's interpretation of *YV 40.8*. It is unlikely that he had nothing to comment on this, as I suppose he would have understood this *mantra* as referring to *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*,

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An analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis of *YV 12.79* is also found in Kālūrām Śāstrī's *Āryasamāj men Mūrtipūjā* under the section '*paṭelā pūjan*'(Śāstrī 1925: 13).

[277] In the 11th chapter of the *Satyārthaprakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda writes in reference to the Sikhs: "though they perform no idol-worship, yet they worship their Granth (Holy Writ) more idolatrously. Is it not idolatry? Idolatry is bowing to worshipping any material object" (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 363).

which, in Svāmī Karapātrī's view, would not bring any prohibition to icon worship (see subchapters 8.3 and 9.4). However, there is no explanation as to why he left this unaddressed, except perhaps that his remarks regarding *KU 1.4* might have been assumed to apply equally to *YV 40.8*; nonetheless, the absence of any explicit reference remains notable. I presented Svāmī Dayānanda as he claims that in the *Vedas*, there are no injunctions to *mūrtipūjā* but prohibitions against it. Svāmī Dayānanda further notes that the word '*pratimā*' means 'measure' and not 'icon' and that authoritative statements from the *Manusmṛti* containing the words '*deva*' and '*devatā*,' or '*devatāyatana*' and '*devatāgāra*,' do not mean 'gods,' or 'the temples,' but 'wise men' and 'houses of the wise men.'[278] In response, Svāmī Karapātrī affirms that there are Vedic statements bringing about the injunction to *mūrtipūjā* and no prohibitions to it (based on the contradictory meanings Svāmī Dayānanda refers to the term *pratimā*). Additionally, 'gods' and 'wise men' are defined as two distinctive classes of beings. Svāmī Karapātrī also addresses Svāmī Dayānanda's injunction to worship a God that is beyond the phenomenal world, as described in *KU1.4*. There, he argues that the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman* (the *brahman* without qualities or form) cannot be the object of worship, as it cannot enter into any relation, not that of being worshipped nor that of being referred to by language. Additionally, Svāmī Karapātrī opens a section wherein he illustrates a few examples from Svāmī Dayānanda's writings, where he inadvertently enjoined the reverence and worship of the non-conscious. Especially in this last section, Svāmī Karapātrī uses arguments that have already been already brought forward by Kālūrām Śāstrī in his *Āryasamāj men Mūrtipūjā* (1925).

In conclusion, Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's work brings him to the following three conclusions: Svāmī Dayānanda's statements are faulty because (i) they clearly contradict the *Vedas*, their auxiliary texts, and their 'traditional' interpretations, as with the statement that there are no injunctions to *mūrtipūjā* in the *Vedas*. (ii) They are self-contradictory, as in the interpretation of the word '*pratimā*,' first used as a synonym of *mūrti* and then said to signify 'measure' only. Lastly, (iii) they resemble the reasoning of a child or a fool, as when Svāmī Dayānanda reads *KU 1.4* as an enjoinment to the worship of the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahman*, which is, in Svāmī Karapātrī's word, '*kapola-kalpita*,' or a figment of imagination. Ultimately, however, Svāmī Karapātrī's three conclusions regarding Svāmī Dayānanda's statement could be summarized by the first one, in that Svāmī Dayānanda's positions are the consequence of his 'not understanding' the purport of the *śāstras*.

[278] This is because, as already mentioned, according to Svāmī Dayānanda, the words *deva* and *devatās* in the *Vedas* signify 'wise people' and not 'gods.' From Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective, there are in fact no gods in the plural, but only one formless Īśvara.

10. The Nine Mantras for Planet Worship and Textual Traditions

In this chapter, I explore the second part of "In support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*), wherein Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda's section on "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvaṃ*), found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. This section primarily deals with the *pūjā* dedicated to the nine planets and the usage of nine *mantras* to propitiate them.[279] These *mantras* are each used to pacify or propitiate planetary influences from (1) Sūrya, or the Sun; (2) Candra, Soma, or the Moon; (3) Maṅgala, or Mars; (4) Budha, or Mercury; (5) Bṛhaspata, or Jupiter; (6) Śukra, or Venus; (7) Śani, Śainaścara, or Saturn; (8) Rāhu, or the Seizer; and (9) Ketu, or the tail of Rāhu.

Before examining the arguments of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, I provide a concise overview of these nine planets. The Sanskrit term for planet is *graha*, which stems from the verbal root *grah*, meaning 'to seize' or 'to take.' Thus, *graha*, which literally means 'seizer' or 'taker,' likely refers to the planets' ability to influence human beings. According to Gansen (2018), '*graha*' may originally have referred only to Rāhu as 'the Seizer' of the Sun, yet, in common understanding, *graha* is used to "refer, primarily, to any heavenly body apparently traversing the sky against the background of the fixed constellations." As noted by Gansen (2018), early astrological texts mainly focus on five planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, labelled as 'star planets' (*tārāgraha*). These are accompanied by Sun and Moon, referred to as 'illuminating planets' (*prakāśakagraha*). Over time, Rāhu and Ketu, the two 'dark' or 'shadowy' planets (*tamograha*, *chāyāgraha*), were also incorporated into this classification. Rāhu was associated with any lunar node that participates in an eclipse. The term '*ketu*,' originally used for celestial events like comets and meteors, eventually evolved into a collective name for these phenomena classified as the 'ninth *graha*,' Ketu. It is only in the 8th-9th century that the names Rāhu and Ketu seem to take on the meanings they have today, being identified with the north and south nodes of the moon, and respectively referred to as Rāhu's mouth and tail (see Gansten 2018).

The nine planets play a significant role in Hindu traditions, with their impact on birth charts being a concern for many.[280] The *pūjā* for the planets is usually performed to reduce their

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[279] These *mantras* are: (1) *YV 33.43*: *ā kṛṣṇena rajasā vartamāno niveśayann amṛtaṃ maryaṃ ca| hiraṇyayena savitā rathenā devo yāti bhuvanāni paśyan||* (2) *YV 9.40*: *imaṃ devāḥ asapatnaṃ suvadhvaṃ mahate kṣatrāya mahate jyaiṣṭayāya mahate jānarājyāyendrasyendriyāya| imam muṣya putram muṣyai putram asyai viśa eṣa vo 'mī rājā somo 'smākaṃ brāhmaṇānāṃ rājā||* (3) *YV 3.12*: *agnirmūrdhā divaḥ kakutpatiḥ pṛthivyā ayaṃ| apāṃ retāṃsi jinvati||* (4) *YV 15.54*: *udbudhyasvāgne pratijāgṛhi tvamiṣṭāpūrte saṃsṛjethām ayaṃ ca| asmin tsadhasthe adhyuttarasmin viśvedevā yajamānaśca sīdata||* (5) *YV 26.3*: *bṛhaspate ati yadaryo arhād dyumad vibhāti kratumaj janeṣu| yaddīdayacchavasa ṛtaprajāta tadasmāsu draviṇaṃ dhehi citraṃ| upayāmagṛhīto'si bṛhaspataye tvaiṣa te yonir bṛhaspataye tvā||* (6) *YV 19.75*: *annāt parisruto rasaṃ brahmaṇā vyapibat kṣatraṃ payaḥ somaṃ prajāpatiḥ| ṛtena satyaṃ indriyaṃ vipānaṃ śukraṃ andhasa indrasyendriyaṃ idaṃ payo'mṛtaṃ madhu||* (7) *YV 36.12*: *śan no devīr abhiṣṭaya āpo bhavantu pītaye| śaṃ yorabhisravantu naḥ||* (8) *YV 27.39*: *kayā naścitra ābhuvadūtī sadāvṛdhaḥ sakhā| kayā śaciṣṭhayā'vṛtā||* (9) *YV 29.37*: *ketuṃ kṛṇvanna ketave peśo maryā apeśase| samuṣadbhir ajāyathāḥ||*.

[280] In India, many people consult their astrologers—often, Hindu families have a trusted astrologer—to get their astrological charts read before making significant life decisions. These charts are particularly crucial in the

negative effects and enhance positive influences on people. In Svāmī Dayānanda's view, this *pūjā* should be eradicated from Hindu practices, as it fosters a fatalistic mindset and leads people to believe their fortune is determined by their birth charts rather than their personal efforts. Accordingly, the nine *mantras* 'traditionally' used to propitiate the planets have no such utility in Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective. First and foremost, because propitiating non-conscious beings like planets is, in his view, a logical and philosophical flaw. Secondly, he claims that these nine mantras have been incorrectly associated with *grahapūjā* solely because some of the words in the *mantras* resemble the names of the planets. Svāmī Dayānanda contends that these nine serve other purposes instead, such as the worship of *paramātma*, like in *mantra* (7), or the description of gravitational forces, as with *mantra* (1).

In contrast with that, Svāmī Karapātrī argues that the nine *mantras* are indeed aimed at pacifying the planets. He primarily critiques Svāmī Dayānanda's perspective from two angles. He finds Svāmī Dayānanda's assertion that these *mantras* are directed at the planets solely because of words' and names' resemblances, to be problematic. This is not only because he disagrees with this view, but also because he claims this is the same strategy that Svāmī Dayānanda often resorts to in the exegesis of Vedic *mantras*. Following this, Svāmī Karapātrī presents an extensive list of authoritative textual evidences that not only prescribe the worship of planets but also testifies to the use of the aforementioned *mantras* in such worship. This list spans from Vedic instances to texts such as the *Nirukta*, the *Śrauta-* and *Gṛhyasūtras,* and the *Purāṇas*. Through this approach, instead of simply advocating for the orthodoxy of planet worship, Svāmī Karapātrī speaks about the mutual permeability of the *śāstras*, emphasizing the continuity of textual traditions, which is at the base of his concept of the 'continuity' of Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2.3). The problematization of planet worship, as the worship of the non-conscious, is only briefly addressed in the discourse. Instead, the discussion on the application of the nine *mantras* provides Svāmī Karapātrī with a platform to criticize Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis and reflect on the meanings of the *mantras*, their exegesis, and the interdependence of Hindu textual traditions.

Svāmī Karapātrī begins his analysis with an extensive reflection on Svāmī Dayānanda's stance regarding planet worship. After presenting the original sequence of the arguments as they are found in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, I indicate how I rearranged them here in this chapter for greater clarity. Svāmī Karapātrī begins by reporting Svāmī Dayānanda's stances on planet worship and the usage of the nine *mantras*, as found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. After criticizing Svāmī Dayānanda's positions, Svāmī Karapātrī ventures into a digression on the meanings of the *mantras*, emphasizing that their significance is not merely based on the words of which they are composed but also on their application (see subchapter 10.1). Subsequently, he lists several textual authorities attesting to the use of these *mantras* in the planet worship. Next, he introduces an extensive section in which he provides a 'traditional' exegesis of the nine *mantras*, heavily drawing material from Yāska with Durgācārya's commentary, Pāṇini, and for the most part paraphrasing the commentaries of his predecessors Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara. Thereafter, he comes back to listing authoritative

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context of arranged marriages, where a couple's compatibility is mainly assessed based on the planetary influences on both individuals' birth charts.

statements on the usage of the nine *mantras* for planet worship, and, lastly, he recounts Svāmī Dayānanda's explanations of the nine *mantras* as found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, briefly commenting on each of them.

To present a more organic and easy-to-follow argument, I reorganized the material into three main thematic areas that form the following three subchapters:[281] (i) 'the meanings of the *mantras*:' here, I present Svāmī Dayānanda's position on planet worship, as it is found in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* and the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and reported in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Then, I present Svāmī Karapātrī's reaction to it and his digression on the meanings of the *mantras*, viz., how to determine their meanings. Before presenting the translation from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, I briefly contextualize the topic through two interviews with Svāmī Svarūpānanda, who was a long-term fellow student and friend of Svāmī Karapātrī (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction). Next, in the section (iii) 'authoritative statements on planet worship,' I explore Svāmī Karapātrī's list of textual testimonies in support of the 'orthodoxy' of this practice. Furthermore, I have added a few paragraphs in this section, which Svāmī Karapātrī initially positions following his exegesis of the nine *mantras* (specifically between his exegesis and the one by Svāmī Dayānanda). Lastly, I explore (iii) 'Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis of Śani.' In the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, all nine *mantras* are presented and analyzed through Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's readings. To keep this concise, I decided to present the analysis and discussion of only one of these, specifically Śani.[282] This is a choice further justified by the fact that Svāmī Karapātrī's analytical approach to the nine *mantras* is rather uniform. Although there are variations due to the different exegetical material, the methodological approach remains consistent. Therefore, I chose not to repeat the same argumentative procedure but to report only an exemplary case. Śani (*YV* 36.12) represents a good example of how Svāmī Karapātrī employed and 're-used' authoritative textual traditions; in this case, particularly the *Nirukta* with Durgācārya's commentary, and Mahīdhara's commentary of the *Yajur Veda*.

Similarly to the previous chapter, I report my translations in a table with the Sanskrit original on the left and my translation on the right. I begin each section by explaining the key concepts arising in the text and formatting the text to make its various sections visible: I employ *italics* to indicate the quotation of authoritative sources both in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Next, I underline all instances where Svāmī Karapātrī directly quotes Svāmī Dayānanda in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Svāmī Dayānanda's citations of authoritative statements are found in Svāmī Karapātrī's text in *underlined italics*. In the context of the glosses of the *mantras*, I report the word glossed enclosed in double quotation marks and in "*italics*." To prevent confusion, I refrain from using italics for Sanskrit or Hindi terms in the translation table. Unlike the previous chapter, here, for the most part, Svāmī Karapātrī introduces lengthy digressions to support his points and

[281] At times, in the text, the discourses (i) and (ii), intersect with each other.
[282] To be precise, Svāmī Karapātrī does not analyze the *mantra* "*ā kṛṣṇena*" (*YV* 33.43), which is traditionally attributed to Sūrya (Sun), under the section "In support of *mūrtipūjā*," but in "The subject-matter of gravitation and attraction" (*ākarṣaṇānukarṣaṇaviṣayaḥ*, *VP*, Karapātrī 2013[1979] Vol.2: 1600–1608). Similarly, Svāmī Dayānanda addresses this *mantra* in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*'s section on "Gravitation and Attraction," since he regards *YV* 33.43 as a description of the forces of gravity and attraction between the sun and the earth.

elaborates extensively on a few statements made by Svāmī Dayānanda. For this reason, I directly present Svāmī Dayānanda's positions as reported by Svāmī Karapātrī, ensuring to specify in the footnotes where clarifications are necessary. For instance, when Svāmī Karapātrī presents Svāmī Dayānanda's positions as found in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, which is written in Hindi, he is paraphrasing his opponent's position in Sanskrit. In this case, I provide the original Hindi in the footnotes. In subchapter 10.3, I report Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis of *YV* 36.12 as it is found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* in a separate table. Next, I report Svāmī Karapātrī's quotation of Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis of *YV 36.12*, which differs slightly, and then Svāmī Karapātrī's following remarks.

10.1 The Meanings of the Mantras

In the text reported below, Svāmī Karapātrī begins his critique by outlining Svāmī Dayānanda's views, as noted in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, that only those with a 'childish intellect' can perform planet *pūjā*, as they lack the understanding of the meaning of the nine *mantras*. Next, he quotes from the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* Svāmī Dayānanda's intended purpose for these *mantras*. Svāmī Karapātrī further argues that, according to Svāmī Dayānanda, the reason why these *mantras* are mistaken as directed at the planets is that some of the words contained therein sound similar to the names of the planets. Although I could not trace this statement in Svāmī Dayānanda's writings—which leads me to think that this might have been Svāmī Karapātrī's supposition—Svāmī Karapātrī reacts to it in two main ways: (i) he emphasizes that Svāmī Dayānanda too often explains the *mantras* based on the similarities between Vedic and modern words. To prove his point, he refers to the example of the term '*tarutāram*' from *ṚV* 1.119.10, which, likely because of a resemblance to the modern Hindi word '*tāra*,' Svāmī Dayānanda interprets as 'telegraph' (see p. 68) thereby creating an anachronism (see footnote n. 290). For Svāmī Karapātrī, Svāmī Dayānanda's remark is self-contradictory, as he criticizes an exegetical criterion he himself employs in Vedic exegesis. However, whether Svāmī Dayānanda in fact ever made such a remark remains to be substantiated. Secondly, (ii) Svāmī Karapātrī provides a lengthy digression on the meanings of the *mantras*, arguing that Vedic *mantras* do not have a singular 'literal' meaning and are therefore distinct from everyday language; instead, their meanings depend on their 'application.'[283]

Svāmī Svarūpānanda, Svāmī Karapātrī's long-term companion (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction), explained that this discourse—that Svāmī Dayānanda interprets the *Vedas* according to the meaning of the words composing the *mantras*—is central to the dispute presented in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. He observed that the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is primarily

[283] This is in line with Indological research - Padoux (1989: 302) for example notices that *mantras* are not cases of 'normal' speech; they have a "use rather than a meaning—a use in context." They cannot be understood outside of their ritual context (both in the Vedic and later ritual frame of reference): "[…] mantras have no meaning in the usual sense of the world, which is not to say that they do not make sense for those who use them, but they do have efficiency. They bring about an effect or, to be more precise, they are deemed, within their own cultural context, to bring one about" (Padoux 1989: 302).

concerned with the "Vedic *mantras* and their meaning (*artha*) and for which purpose is which *mantra*."[284] Defining a *mantra*'s meaning solely through the translation of its words contradicts the views of Svāmī Karapātrī and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. Thus, in his (and Svāmī Karapātrī's) view, the meanings of the *mantras* do not come from their words but from their 'application' as established in the *Brāhmāṇas*, *Śrauta-* and *Gṛhyasūtras*, along with other authoritative texts. Below, I translate a portion of an interview with Svāmī Svarūpānanda Sarasvātī, who clarifies the concept of 'application.'

> There are only 4 *Saṃhitās* of the *Vedas*, and their meanings (*arth*), according to Dayānanda, correspond to what is described. Nowadays, the Ārya Samājīs give a scientific meaning to the *mantras*. In contrast, for the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the *mantras* are a limb (*aṅg*) of the *yajñ*: while throwing the offerings (*āhuti*) in the sacrificial fire, one must utter the *mantras*. The meaning of the *mantras* lies in their application (*viniyog*). The application of the *mantras* means which *mantras* I pronounce while performing a particular action in the *yajñ*, such as the *aśvamedh* and so on. The application of a *mantra* is its meaning. The meaning of the *mantra* has nothing to do with its literal meaning (*śābdik arth*). Dayānanda, on the other hand, attributes a literal meaning to the *mantras* […] (Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 04.11.2019).

The importance that Svāmī Svarūpānanda, Svāmī Karapātrī, the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, and the Sanātanīs in general place on the 'application' of the Vedic *mantras* arises from the role they assign to the *yajña*. Thus, the importance of the 'application' of the Vedic *mantras* must be understood within the ritual context. This is because the *mantras* are expected to produce '*apūrva*,' the invisible result deriving from their usage in the ritual, which brings—almost forces—the gods to fulfill the desires of the patron of the ritual. In contrast, the 'application' of the Vedic *mantras* has no importance for Svāmī Dayānanda, who argues that the pronunciation of *mantras* serves solely mnemonic purposes and that the *yajña* serves to purify the air (see subchapter 8.2.1). Below, I translate another segment of an interview with Svāmī Svarūpānanda:

> The meaning, or *arth*, of the *Vedas* does not mean literal meaning (*śabdārth*) but purpose (*prayojan*):[285] what is the purpose of that specific *mantra*. In the sacrifices (*yajñ*) prescribed by the literature on the rituals (*karmakāṇḍa*), a specific *mantra* corresponds to a certain oblation to a certain deity, [i.e.], during the oblation to a certain deity, there is a certain *mantra* that one must recite […] The meaning (*arth*) [of the *mantras*] is in relation to all that. This is the position of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and the Sanātana Dharmīs. In contrast, Dayānanda maintains that deities do not exist and that the invocation of a deity in the ritual (*āvāhan*) is done for the purification of the air. But then, why do you recite *mantras* if the invocation of a deity in the ritual (*āvāhan*) is done only for the purification of the air? The reply is that the *mantras* are

[284] I singled out this comment by Svāmī Svarūpānanda from the second interview, which is reported below (Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 20.02.2019).
[285] In the previous discourse, Svāmī Svarūpānanda used the term '*viniyog*' for 'application,' while here he uses the term '*prayojan*,' 'purpose.' Yet, in this context, these two terms can be taken as synonyms in the sense that they refer to practical application/use/purpose of the *mantras* in the ritual.

recited for exercise (*abhyās*). The Sanātana Dharmīs say that if I throw the offerings (*āhuti*) during the recitation of a specific *mantra* then there will be a specific sacrifice (or desire, *iṣṭ*) along with its result (*phal*). However, if the pronunciation of the *mantra* is impure (*aśuddh*), then its effect is also contrary [to that described by the *Veda*]. The wrong intonation and enunciation of the *mantra* make the *mantra* ineffective and produce a contrary effect and the destruction of *yajamāna*" (Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram, Jhoteshwar, 20.02.2019).

Here, the importance of the 'application' of the *mantras* is so paramount that Svāmī Karapātrī concludes that the commentary of Svāmī Dayānanda should not be respected by scholars on the grounds that it renders the meaning of the *mantras* as disconnected from their 'application.'

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol.2: 1620–1622]

yad uktam – "sūryādigrahapīḍāśāntaye bālabuddhibhiḥ "*ā kṛṣṇena rajasā*" ityādimantrā gṛhyante| ayaṃ eṣāṃ bhrama eva, kutas tatra teṣāṃ arthānām agrahaṇāt| tad yathā – ākarṣaṇānukarṣaṇaprakaraṇe 'asya mantrasyārtha uktaḥ" iti, tad api tuccham, tvaduktasyārthasya tatraiva khaṇḍitatvāt|	Those having a childish intellect take this and other mantras such as "*ā kṛṣṇena rajasā*" for pacifying the eclipse (pīḍā) of Sūrya and other planets. This is only their illusion. From where then [comes this interpretation]? From [the fact that] they do not understand the meaning of these [words]. The meaning of this mantra (*ā kṛṣṇena rajasā*) is told in the section on "gravity and gravitational attraction."[286] All that [you have] said is vain, because the meaning you have told is refuted there.[287]
yad uktam – "*imaṃ devāḥ*" iti candrasya, *agnir mūrdh*eti maṅgalasya, *udbuddhyasvāgne* iti budhasya, *bṛhaspata* iti bṛhaspateḥ, *śukramandhasa* iti śukrasya, *śanno devīr* iti śaneḥ, *kayānaścitra* iti rāhoḥ, *ketuṃ kṛṇvann* iti ketor mantrā ucyante| na caitair mantrais teṣāṃ grahāṇāṃ sambandhaḥ|	It is also said that the mantra "*imaṃ devāḥ*" is told for Candra (the Moon), "*agnir mūrdhā*" for Maṅgala (Mars), "*udbuddhyasvāgne*" for Budha (Mercury), "*bṛhaspata*" for Bṛhaspati (Jupiter), "*śukramandhasa*" for Śukra (Venus), "*śanno devī*" for Śani (Saturn), "*kayānaścitra*" for Rāhu (the Seizer), and "*ketuṃ kṛṇvanna*" for Ketu (the tail of Rāhu). [However,] there is no relation between the planets and the mantras.[288]

[286] This section corresponds to the first lines of "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets", found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 352–253). The citation is not 100% exact, although there are no substantial changes altering the meaning: *evaṃ eva sūryyādigrahapīḍāśāntaye bālabuddhibhir 'ā kṛṣṇena rajasā.' Ityādimantrā gṛhyante | ayaṃ eṣāṃ bhrama evāstīti| kutas tatra teṣāṃ arthānām agrahaṇāt | tadyathā—tatra 'ākṛṣṇena rajasā.' iti mantrasyārtha ākarṣaṇānukarṣaṇaprakaraṇa uktaḥ||.*

[287] Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes the *mantra* "*ā kṛṣṇena*" (*YV 33.43*) under the section "The subject-matter of gravitation and attraction" (*ākarṣaṇānukarṣaṇaviṣayaḥ*, *VP*, Karapātrī 2016[1979] Vol.2: 1600–1608, see footnote n. 282).

[288] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī is paraphrasing Svāmī Dayānanda's statements on astrology as they are found in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. Following is the original in Hindi: "*(1) sūryya aur bhūmi kā ākarṣaṇ, (2) dūsrā rājaguṇ vidhāyak; (3) tīsrā agni; (4) aur cauthā yajamān; (5) pāñcavāṃ vidvān; (6) chaṭhā vīryya anna; (7) sātavāṃ jal, prāṇ aur parameśvar; (8) āṭhavāṃ mitr; (9) navavāṃ jñānagrahaṇkāvidhāyak mantr hai| grahon ke vācak nhin|*

śannodevīr ity ādau śabdasādṛśyamātrād eva śanyādigrahaparatvaṃ mantrāṇāṃ kalpitam" iti, tan na, dayānandaṃ praty eva tathokteḥ suvacatvāt|	In [the mantras] such as "*śanno devīḥ*", only because of a resemblance in the words, it is assumed that the mantras are directed at the planets such as Śani." [289] This is not like that, and the same can be said also for Dayānanda.
tenaiva "*tarutāram*" (ṛ. saṃ. 1.119.10) ity atra tāram iti padaṃ dṛṣṭvā tārākhyaṃ yantram ity arthaḥ kalpitaḥ|	Thus, having seen the word 'tāra' in '*tarutāram*' (ṚV 1.119.10), he assumes that ['tarutāram'] means telegraph (lit., the machine called 'tāra'). [290]
grahāṇāṃ pūjanaṃ tu mahaṛṣibhir uktam – "grahanakṣatracaritair vā janapadā upadhaṃsyante" (carakasūtrasthāne 6.20)|	However, in the Caraka Sūtrasthāna 6.20, [291] the great seer (Caraka) tells about the worship of the planets: "*People are afflicted by the motion of planets and lunar mansions*."
"*yasya vakrānuvakragā grahā garhitasthānagatāḥ pīḍayanti janmarkṣaṃ vā sa vinaśyati*" (sū. 32.4) evam upavedabhūtāyāḥ suśṛutasaṃhitāyā vacanair grahapīḍāḥ sūcitā| teṣāṃ śāntyarthaṃ pūjādikam api vihitam|	The baleful planetary influences are illustrated by the statements of the Suśruta Saṃhitā (32.4) [292] that is an Upaveda: "*The planets having a retrograde motion and an oblique course gone in a detestable place oppress the birth asterism of the one who perishes.*" Pūjā and other things are prescribed for the pacification of these (planets and other lunar mansions).
"*śanno grahāś cāndramasāḥ śamādityaś ca rāhuṇā| śanno mṛtyur dhūmaketuḥ*" (atharva. 19.9.10), "*śanno divi carā grahāḥ*" (atharva.	The pacifications of the planets are mentioned in these and other mantras: "*Kind be the Powers who seize the Moon, with Rāhu be Ādityas kind! Favour us Death and Comet, and Rudras with penetrating might*!" (AV 19.9.10, Griffith 1917:

arth na jānne se bhramajāl men paḍe hain" (*SP*, Dayānanda 2008 [1883]: 276). Svāmī Dayānanda explains that the *mantra* '*ā kṛṣṇena rajasā*' instead of being for the Sun, teaches the attraction of the sun to the earth. The *mantra* "*imaṃ devāḥ*" is not for the Moon, but it describes the 'active principle' in nature; "*agnirmurdhā*" is not for Mars, but it describes fire; "*udbuddhyasvāgne*" is not for Mercury, but it narrates the duties of the householder; "*bṛhaspata*" is not fir Jupiter, but it mentions the qualities of a learned man; "*śukramandhasa*" is not for Venus, but it describes the semen and food; "*śanno devī*" is not for Saturn, but it describes water, respiration and God; "*kayānaścitra*" is not for Rāhu, but it describes the qualities of a friend; and "*ketuṃ kṛṇvanna*" is not for Ketu (the tail of Rāhu), but it describes the method of acquiring knowledge (*SP*, Prasad 1908: 344).

[289] As already mentioned, I could not find this statement in Svāmī Dayānanda's writings, which leads me to the conclusion that this is probably Svāmī Karapātrī's assumption. One possible reason for this statement is that immediately after explaining the purpose of these nine *mantras*, in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda states: these [*mantras*] are not intended for the planets. Without understanding their meaning, one falls in the waters of illusion: *grahon ke vācak nhin\| arth na jānne se bhramajāl men paḍe hain.* Yet, if this is the case, Svāmī Karapātrī made a conceptual stretch here (see *SP*, Dayānanda 2008 [1883]: 276).

[290] In Hindi, '*tāra*' means 'thread,' and it can be use to denote a 'telegraph.' Svāmī Dayānanda derives this meaning from *ṚV 1.119.10*. I have already reported Svāmī Dayānanda's explanation of this *mantra* as it is found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmika*, along with Griffith's translation of the same on p. 57 and footnote n. 63.

[291] The *Caraka Sūtrasthāna* is the first book, or *stāna*, of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, one of the most relevant texts on Ayurveda: I could not locate the reference given in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*.

[292] Like the *Caraka Samhitā*, the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* is also a relevant work of Āyurveda (for the reference of the citation, see *SuSa 32.4*, Kāvyatīrth 1945: 121).

19.9.7) ity ādimantreṣv api grahaśāntaya uktā eva|	269) "*Favour us Mitra, Varuna, Vivasvān, and the Finisher, Portents on earth and in the air, and planets wandering in heaven!*" (AV 19.9.7, Griffith 1917: 269).
vedāṅgajyotiṣaproktā grahapūjāpi tadaṅgibhūtād vedād evāgatā|	The grahapūjā, mentioned in the auxiliary Vedic texts of the jyotiṣa, comes down from the Vedas, which have the jyotiṣa as one of their limbs.
yathā – "*sudevo asi varuṇa yasya te saptasindhavaḥ*" (ṛ. saṃ. 8.69.72) atra saptanadya ity asyārthasya spaṣṭatve 'pi yathā mahābhāṣyakāro vyākaraṇaparatvam asya mantrasya vakti|	For instance: "*Thou, Varuṇa, to whom belong Seven Rivers, art a glorious God*" (RV 8.58.12, Griffith 1897: 214).[293] Here, even in the evidence of the meaning of this mantra as "*the Seven Rivers*", the Mahābhāṣyakāra [gives] an explanation of this mantra in reference to grammar.
"*dvādaśa pradhayaś cakram ekam*" (ṛ. saṃ. 1.164.42) iti mantraḥ saṃvatsarakālaparaḥ| "*ṣaṣṭiś ca ha vai trīṇī ca śatāni saṃvatsarasyāhorātrāḥ*" (ni. 4.27) iti yāskenāpi saṃvatsara evārthaḥ kṛtaḥ| tathāpi dayānandena sarvam etad aparigaṇayya vāyuyānaparatvam asya mantrasyoktam| tatra kathaṃ nāpattiḥ kriyate|	The mantra "*Twelve are the fellies, and the wheel is single*" (ṚV 1.164.42, Griffith 1920: 227)[294] is in reference to one full year. Even Yāska has interpreted the meaning of [this mantra] with 'a full year': "*Verily, there are three hundred and sixty days and nights in a year*" (Ni. 4.27, Sarup 1967: 71). Nevertheless, this is all not considered by Dayānanda, who says that the mantra is in reference to a plane (vāyuyāna). In this situation, how could one not disagree with that?[295]
"yaṃ vai sūryaṃ svarbhānus tamasāvidhyad āsuraḥ" (ṛ. saṃ. 5.40.9) iti mantre tv asuravaṃśīyena rāhuṇā sūryagrahaṇaṃ spaṣṭam uktam| rāhur grahaviśeṣa iṣṭa eva| dayānandenāpy uṇādikoṣe (1.3) *rāhur grahaviśeṣa* ity aṅgīkṛtam eva|	In this mantra "[…] *the Sun again, him whom Svarbhānu of the brood of Asuras had pierced with gloom*" (ṚV 5.40.9, Griffith 1920: 502)[296] it is clearly said that the eclipse of Sūrya is made by Rāhu, of the lineage of the asuras. Indeed, Rāhu is regarded as a kind of planet. In the Uṇādikoṣa (1.3), Dayānanda agrees that "*Rāhu is a kind of planet*" (UṇK, Dayānanda 1974: 8)

[293] The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* gives the wrong reference number for this *mantra*, instead of being *ṚV 8.69.72*, it is *ṚV 8.58.12*: *sudevo asi varuṇa yasya te saptasindhavaḥ\| anukṣaranti kākudam sūrmyam suṣiram iva\|\|* "Thou, Varuna, to whom belong Seven Rivers, art a glorious God. The waters flow into thy throat as 'twere a pipe with ample mouth" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1897: 214).

[294] *ṚV 1.164.42*: *dvādaśa pradhayaś cakram ekam trīṇi nabhyāni ka u tac ciketa\| tasmin sākaṃ triśatā na śaṅkavo 'rpitāḥ ṣaṣṭir na calācalāsaḥ\|\|* "Twelve are the fellies, and the wheel is single; three are the naves. What man hath understood it? Therein are set together spokes three hundred and sixty, which in nowise can be loosened" (*ṚV*, Griffith 1920: 227).

[295] Here Svāmī Karapātrī is being sarcastic.

[296] *ṚV 5.40.9*: *yaṃ vai sūryaṃ svarbhānus tamasāvidhyad āsuraḥ\| atrayas tam anv avindan na hy anye aśaknuvan\|\|* "The Atris found the Sun again, him whom Svarbhanu of the brood of Asuras had pierced with gloom. This none besides had power to do" (Griffith 1920: 502).

tena satyārthaprakāśe 'pi prathamasamullāse nava grahā aṅgīkṛṭāḥ| kintu tannāmnāṃ paramātmārthakatvam uktam| eva vyutpattivaśāt tu āryasamājapadasyāpi paramātmaparatvaṃ yojayituṃ śakyata eva|	Thus, in the first chapter of the Satyārtha Prakāśa, the nine planets are acknowledged. However, it said that those names (of the planets) have the meaning of paramātma. But, according to such an etymology, [one] could also bring up a relation between [the word] paramātma and the word Ārya Samāja.[297]
uṇādikoṣe 1.74 ity atra *ketur grahaḥ patākā vā, dhūmaketur utpāta* iti dayānandenāpi likhitaṃ|	In the Uṇādikoṣa (1.74),[298] Dayānanda writes that "*Ketu may be a planet, a banner, a comet, or a calamity*" (UṇK, Dayānanda 1974: 28).
śrautasūtragṛhyasūtrokta-viniyogānusāreṇāpi mantrārtho jñātuṃ yogyaḥ, arthānusāreṇaiva viniyogakalpanāt|	It is appropriate to know the meaning of the mantras according to their use as described in the Śrautasūtras and the Gṛhyasūtras, because the application is based on the purpose of the mantra.
kvacic ca viniyogeṣu mantrāṇāṃ mukhyo 'rthaḥ sarvathā na ghaṭate|	In some places, the main meaning of the mantras does not completely correspond to their applications.
ata evaikasya mantrasyānekātra viniyogā dṛśyante| *tatraivaṃ sati prativiniyogam asyānyenārthena bhavitavyam| ta ete vaktur abhiprāyavaśād anyatvam api bhajante mantrāḥ| na hy eteṣu arthasyeyattāva[d]dhāraṇam asti| mahārthā hy ete duṣparijñānāś ca|* *yathāśvārohavaiśiṣṭyād aśvaḥ sādhu sādhutaraṃ ca vahati, evam eva vaktṛvaiśiṣṭyāt sādhūn sādhūtarāṃś cārthān sravanti śabdāḥ|* *tasmād eteṣu yāvanto 'rthā upapadyeran adhidaivādhyātmādhiyajñāśrayāḥ sarva eva te yojyā* iti "*nātrāparādho'sti*" (ni. 2.8) ity atra durgācāryaḥ|	Therefore, multiple applications of one only mantra are seen at different places. *If it is like that, each application should be according to a different meanings [of a mantra]. According to the purpose of the speaker, the mantras convey different [meanings] (lit., otherness of meaning). There is no way to conceive the vastness (lit., this much-ness) of meaning in these [mantras]. Indeed, since these [mantras] have many meanings, they are difficult to be known in a comprehensive manner.* *Depending on the ability of the horseman, a good horse carries even better, [in the same way] only because of the skillfulness of the speaker, even better meanings come out from the words.*[299] *Thus, whatever a meaning would follow based on the deity (adhidaiva), on the Self (adhyātma) and the ritual (adhiyajña), all these should applied,* Durgācarya here [says that] "*in this respect, there*

[297] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī makes fun of Svāmī Dayānanda's exegetical methods.
[298] The *Uṇādikoṣa* is a text by Svāmī Dayānanda on derivational etymology.
[299] In other words, depending on the knowledge of the speaker of the *mantras*, of he has the adequate knowledge, he can employ one *mantra* according to its many possible applications.

	is no fault" (NiDBh 2.8, Bhadkamkar 1985: 191).[300]
viniyogaviparītārthakaraṇād eva dayānandabhāṣyamanādaraṇīyaṃ viduṣām|	Only because of rendering a meaning [of the mantras] disjointed from [their] application, the commentary of Dayānanda should not be respected by the scholars.

10.2 Authoritative Statements on Planet Worship

After arguing against the translation of Vedic *mantras* and the determination of their meanings, disjointed from their application, Svāmī Karapātrī posits that the aforementioned nine *mantras* should be used for planet worship, as stated in the authoritative texts. This discourse is closely linked and, to some extent, a result of the previous one, in that the meaning, and, therefore, the 'application' of the *mantras* is sanctioned in the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Śrauta-* and *Gṛhyasūtras*, and the *Vedāṅga* literature in general. This implies a codependent relationship between the *Vedas* and the rest of the authoritative literature. First and foremost, Svāmī Karapātrī repeatedly emphasizes that the *Vedas* are the combination of *mantras* and *Brāhmaṇas*. Additionally, he reinforces the concept of unity within the Hindu canon by relating the story of the seer Yajñavalkya, whom he presents as both the compiler of the *Śukla Yajurveda* and the author of the *Yajñavalkyasṃṛti*. Given the considerable time gap between the composition of the *Śukla Yajurveda* and the *Yajñavalkyasṃṛti*, Svāmī Karapātrī opens a digression on the lifespan of the seers and argues that, according to the texts, the age of the seers can be counted in ages (*yugas*). According to this perspective, the very compiler of the *Śukla Yajurveda* could hardly have mistaken the application of the Vedic *mantras* in the redaction of the *Yajñavalkyasṃṛti*, where the nine *mantras* are presented for planetary worship. Next, Svāmī Karapātrī compares the composite Hindu authoritative literature to a physical body, which, like the *Vedas*, needs its limbs, namely, the *Vedāṅgas* (lit., the limbs of the *Vedas*), to subsist. It follows that, based on this interdependence of Hindu textual traditions, Svāmī Karapātrī rules out the possibility of interpretative mistakes in the later literature and the misuse of Vedic material, which, on the contrary, Svāmī Dayānanda strongly implies. This interdependence and continuity of Hindu textual traditions are at the basis of the idea of continuity inherent to Sanātana Dharma (see subchapter 5.2.3).

Additionally, the discourse on the 'continuity' of Hindu textual traditions revolves around the dispute regarding the extent of the Hindu canon. As I discussed in subchapters 3.2.4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, Svāmī Dayānanda, like many early European scholars, saw a hiatus between the society described in the *Vedas* and 'modern Hinduism,' whose 'degeneration' is testified in the later textual traditions. This discussion closely relates to the topic of icon worship, a practice endorsed in later texts but reportedly absent in the *Vedas*. Thus, the 'orthodoxy' of *mūrtipūjā* is examined here based on the sources that support it rather than on philosophical speculations. In other words, rather than defending icon worship and the worship of the

[300] This portion is entirely drawn from Durgācārya's commentary to the *Nirukta*, yet, here, no reference is given.

planets, Svāmī Karapātrī defends the authority of the texts that sanction such practices.[301] Therefore, in this section, after emphasizing a fundamental connection between the *Vedas* and the later textual traditions, Svāmī Karapātrī provides a long list of texts attesting to the practice of planet worship through the application of the nine *mantras* mentioned above: the *Yajñavalkyasmṛti*, the *Nyaya Sūtra Bhāṣya* by Vātsyāyana, the *Bṛhasparaśarasmṛti*, the *Bodhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, the *Jaimini Gṛhyasūtra*, the *Vaikhanagṛhyasūtra*, the *Gopaṭhabrahmāṇa*, the *Siddhāntaśiromani*, the *Mahābhāṣya Paspaśāhnika*, the *Mīmāṃsa Sūtras*, the *Manusmṛti*, and even the *Matsya-*, the *Bhaviṣya-*, the *Vāyu-*, and the *Śiva Pūrāṇas* (even if the *Pūrāṇas* are for Svāmī Dayānanda the written testimonies of the degeneration of Vedic culture). Even though, for the most part, the editors of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* took care to provide the references for each quotation, I found that the references were incorrect in several cases. While in some instances I could trace the exact original passages, in others I could not locate the correct reference (see footnotes to the translation).

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016[1979] Vol. 2: 1622–1624]

gṛhyasūtreṣu smṛtiṣu śanaiścarādigraheṣu viniyogadarśanād eva śanno devīr ityādimantrāṇāṃ śanaiścarādigrahaparatvam āsthīyate āstikaiḥ|	Since in the Gṛhyasūtras and the Smṛti it is seen the application [of the mantras] for planets like Śanaiścara, etc. the āstikas believe that these mantra as "*śanno devīḥ*," etc. are directed towards Śanaiścara and other planets.
yājñavalkyasmṛtau ācārādhyāye grahaśāntiprakaraṇe krameṇa mantrāṇāṃ viniyogā uktāḥ| (1) ā kṛṣṇena, (2) imaṃ devāḥ, (3) agnirmūrdhā divaḥ kukut| (4) udbuddhyasveti ca ṛco yathāsaṃkhyaṃ prakīrtitāḥ || (300), (5) bṛhaspate ati yadaryaḥ, (6) tathaivānnāt parisrutaḥ| (7) śanno devīḥ, (8) tathā kāṇḍāt, (9) ketuṃ kṛṇvannimāstathā|| (301) iti sūryacandrabhaumabudhabṛhaspatiśukraśanirāhuketunavagrahāṇāṃ mantrā uktāḥ| yena samādhidvārā śuklayajurvedasya mantrasaṃhitā brāhmaṇāni ca pratyakṣīkṛtāni tena	In the section on the pacification of the planets in the ācārādhyāya of the Yājñavalkyasmṛti, the applications of the mantras are said in order: These are said to be the mantras for the nine planets, Sūrya (Sun), Candra (Moon), Bhauma (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Bṛhaspati (Jupiter), Śukra (Venus), Śani (Saturn), Rāhu (the Seizer), Ketu (the tail of Rāhu): (1) *ā kṛṣṇena*, (2) *imaṃ devāḥ*, (3) *agnirmūrdhā divaḥ kakut*| (4) *udbuddhyasveti ca ṛṛco yathāsaṃkhyaṃ prakīrtitāḥ*|| (5) *bṛhaspate ati yadaryaḥ*, (6) *tathaivānnāt parisrutaḥ*| (7) *śanno devīḥ*, (8) *tathā kāṇḍāt*, (9) *ketuṃ kṛṇvannimāstathā*|| (301) Is it that the meanings of the mantras were not known by that Yajñavalkya who, in profound meditation, directly perceived the Mantrasaṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas of the Śukla Yajurveda?

[301] In these regards, I should mention that Svāmī Dayānanda's discourse on *mūrtipūjā* falls under the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*'s chapter on "The Authoritativeness and Non-authoritativeness of the Books" (*granthaprāmāṇyāprāmāṇyaviṣayaḥ*, *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 267–298).

yājñavalkyena kiṃ mantrāṇāṃarthā na jñāyante?	
vātsyāyanena maharṣiṇā mantrabrāhmaṇānāṃ smṛtīnāṃ ca samānapravaktṛkatvam uktam – "*draṣṭṛpravaktṛsāmānyāc ca dharmaśāstrasyāprāmāṇyānupapattiḥ| ya eva mantrabrāhmaṇasya draṣṭāraḥ pravaktāraś ca te khalv itihāsapurāṇasya dharmaśāstrasya ca*" (go.sū 4.1.62 ity atra bhāṣyam) iti|	The great seer Vātsyāyana says that the capacity of speaking of Mantras and Brāhmaṇas is the same of the capacity of speaking of the Smṛtis: "*since the one who sees and the one who speaks are the same, there is an inconclusive argumentation in the [presumed] lack of authority of the śāstras on dharma. The ones who see the mantras and the brāhmaṇs are indeed those who speak the itihāsas, the purāṇas and the dharmaśāstras*" (Nbh, Śāstri 4.1.62, 1976: 313).
kecid ṛṣīṇāṃ āyuṣi saṃśerate| taiḥ "śataṃ te ayutaṃ hāyanān dve yuge trīṇi catvāri kṛṇmaḥ" (atharva. 8.2.21) iti mantreṇa siddhāni[302] puruṣāṇāṃ caturyugaparimitāny āyūṣi jñātavyāni|	Some doubt about the age of the seers. Thus, according to this mantra, one should know that the age of the perfected men (siddhapuruṣa) spans through four eras: "*A hundred, yes, ten thousand years we give thee, ages two, three, four*" (AV 8.2.21, Griffith 1916: 390).
tādṛśaṃ eva dīrgham āyur yājñavalkyasya| "*mayādityādavāptāni yajūṃṣi mithilādhipa*" (ma. mā. śā. p. 318.2), "*tataḥ śatapathaṃ kṛtsnam … cakre sapariśeṣa ca*" (ma. mā. śā. p. 318.16) iti mahābhāratavacanāt| śatapathīyacaturdaśakāṇḍenāpi janakayājñavalkyasambandho jñāyate| yājñavalkyasmṛtāv api – "*mithilāsthaḥ sa yogīndraḥ kṣaṇaṃ dhyātvā'bravīnmunīn*" (1.2)| tatraiva – "*jñeyaṃ cāraṇyakamahaṃ yadādityādavāptavān*" (yājñavalkyasmṛti 3.110) etena śatapathadraṣṭāḥ yājñavalkya eva	In such a manner, the age of Yajñavalkya too is very long. This is stated in the Mahābhārata: "*Oh king of Mithilā! from Āditya I have obtained the Yajurveda*" (Mbh 12.318.2). "*Thus, he made the entire Śatapatha … and also the appendices*" (Mbh 12.318.16). The 14 kaṇḍas of the Śatapatha inform of a connection between Janaka (Janaka is the king of Mithila) and Yajñavalkya. Also in the Yajñavalkyasmṛti 1.2: "*That best of the Yogis seated in Mithila, thought for a short time, and then said to the sages: […]*"[303] And also: "*It is also to be known that I am the one who obtained the Āraṇyaka from Ādityā*" (YaSm 3.110).[304] It is thus ascertained that the Yajñavalkya who sees the Śatapatha is also the author of the Yajñavalkyasmṛti. Thus, the application of the [above] told mantras in the worship of the planets is meaningful.

[302] This is likely a typographical error; instead of '*siddhāni*,' the author likely wanted to write '*siddhānāṃ*' (genitive plural) which functions as and adjective for '*puruṣāṇāṃ*.'

[303] *YaSṃ 1.2*: *mithilāsthaḥ sa yogīndraḥ kṣaṇaṃ dhyātvā 'bravīn munīn| yasmin deśe mṛgaḥ kṛṣṇas tasmin dharmān nibodhat||* "The best of the Yogis," 'yogīndra,' is Yajñavalkya (see YaSṃ, Vidyavarnava 1918: 5). Following is the full verse, (YaSṃ, Pāndey 1994: 2).

[304] Following is the full verse, *YaSṃ 3.110*: *jñeyaṃ cāraṇyakamahaṃ yad ādityādavāptavān| yogaśāstraṃ ca matproktaṃ jñeyaṃ yogam abhīpsatā||* (YaSṃ, Pāndey 1994: 463).

yājñavalkyasmṛtipraṇeteti niścīyate| tathā coktamantrāṇāṃ grahapūjane viniyoga aupayika eva|	
evam eva – "*ā kṛṣṇeneti tīvrāṃśor imaṃ deva niśākaram| agnir mūrdheti bhūsūnoḥ udbudhyasva budhasya ca|| bṛhaspate ati guroḥ annātparisruto bhṛgoḥ| śanno devīḥ śanairgantuḥ kāṇḍātkāṇḍātparasya ca| ketuṃ kṛṇvannagnisūnoḥ iti mantrāḥ prakīrtitāḥ||*" (bṛhatparāśarasmṛti 9.66)| "*vedamantrairvinā kaścid vidhirnāsti dvijanmanām*" (bṛ. parāśarasmṛ. 9.67)|	In the Bṛhatparāśarasmṛtiḥ 9.66, the [following] mantras are mentioned: "*ā kṛṣṇena*" for Tīvrāṃśu (the Sun?), "*imaṃ devā*" is Niśākara (the night maker, the Moon), "*agnirmūrdhā*" for Bhusunu (the Sun of the Earth, Mars), "*udbudhyasva*" for Budha (Mercury), "*bṛhaspate ati*" for Guru (Jupiter), "*annātparisrutaḥ*" for Bṛgu (Venus), "*śanno devīḥ*" for Śanairgantā (the one moving slowly, Saturn), "*kāṇḍāt*" for Kāṇḍātpara, "*ketuṃ kṛṇvan*" for Agnisunu. "*There is no injunction without Vedic mantra for the twice-born*" (BṛPSṃ 9.67).[305]
gṛhyasūtreṣu bodhāyanagṛhyasūtre'pi – ā sanyena ity ādityāya, agnir mūrdhānam ity aṅgārakāya, pavaśaśukrāya iti śukrāya, āpyāyasveti somāya, udbudhyasveti budhāya, bṛhaspate ati yadaryo arhāditi bṛhaspataye, śanno devīrabhīṣṭaya iti śanaiścarāya, kayā naścitra ābhuvaditi rāhave, ketuṃ kṛṇvann iti ketave" (1.6.22. Bodhayana Gṛhyasūtra)|	Among the Gṛhyasūtras, in the Bodhāyana Gṛhyasūtra also (1.6.22) the following mantras are mentioned: "*āsanyena*" for Āditya (the Sun), "*agnir murdhānam*" for Aṅgāraka (Mars), "*pavaśaśukrāya*" for Śukra (Venus), "*āpyāyasva*" for Soma (the Moon), "*udbudhyasva*" for Budha (Mercury), "*bṛhaspate ati arhād*" for Bṛhaspati, "*śanno devīr abhīṣṭaya*" for Śanaiścara (Saturn), "*kayā naścitra āhuvad*" for Rāhu, "*ketuṃ kṛṇvan*" for Ketu.[306]
kim ayaṃ bodhāyano 'pi vedārthān na jānāti? agniveśmagṛhyasūtre 'pi dvitīyādhyāye pañcamapraśne īdṛśā eva grahāṇāṃ mantra uktāḥ|	Is it that also Bodhāyana does not know the meaning of the Veda? In the fifth part of the second adhyāya of the Āgniveśmagṛhasūtra, such mantras are told in reference to the planets.
jaiminigṛhyasūtre – *ā satyenetyādityam, agnir mūrdhānaṃ diva ity aṅgārakāya*|	In the Jaiminigṛhysūtra (2.9) "*With the verse beginning: "Agni is the head" to Mars*" (Caland 1984: 61).
vaikhānasagṛhyasūtre 'pi – atha grahaśāntiṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ, gṛhāyattā lokayātrāḥ,	Also in the fourth question of the thirteenth khaṇḍa of the Vaikhānagṛhyasūtra [it is said]: "*now we are going to explain in detail the pacification of the planets*

[305] I could not trace this reference.
[306] I could not trace this reference.

yathākrameṇa āsatyena sāmo dhenuṃ agnir mūrdhā udbudhyasva bṛhaspate śukra te anyat śanno devī kayā naścitra ketuṃ kṛṇvan (caturthe praśne trayodaśe khaṇḍe)|	*[and] the worldly affairs affected by the planets; in order: āsatyena, sāmo dhenuṃ, agnirmūrdhā, udbudhyasva, bṛhaspate, śukra te anyat, śanno devī, kayā naścitra, ketuṃ kṛṇvan*."[307]
eva gṛhyasūtrakārāṇāṃ graheṣu mantrāṇāṃ viniyoge saty api tadaprāmāṇyakathanaṃ mūrkhajanapratāraṇam eva|	When these mantras are used in relation to the planets even by the authors of the Gṛhyasūtras, saying that this has no authority is deceiving for the stupid people.
matsyapurāṇe'pi – "ā kṛṣṇeneti sūryāya homaḥ kāryo dvijanmanā|" (193.33), "āpyāyasveti somāya mantreṇa juhuyāt punaḥ| agnir mūrdhā divo mantra iti bhaumāya kīrtayet||" (193.34), "agne vivasvaduṣasa iti somasutāya vai| bṛhaspate paridīyā ratheneti gurormataḥ||" (193.35), "śukraṃ te anyaditi ca śukrasyāpi nigadyate| śanaiścarāyeti punaḥ śanno devīti homayet||" (193.36), "kayānaścitra ābhuvad iti rahor udāhṛtaḥ| ketuṃ kṛṇvann api brūyāt ketūnām api śāntaye||" (193.37)|	Also, in the Matsyapurāṇa (93.33–37): "*[with the mantra] "ā kṛṣṇena" the homa oblation to Sūrya should be done by a twice-born. [One] should sacrifice to Soma with the mantra "āpyāyasva". [With] the mantra "agnir mūrdhā divo" [one] should praise Bhauma. [The mantra] "agne vivasvaduṣasa" [is] for the son of Soma (Budha). "bṛhaspate paridīyā rathena" is taken for Guru (Jupiter) and "śukraṃ te anyad" is recited for Śukra (Venus). One should perform the homa oblations to "Śanaiścara" [repeating the mantra] "śanno devi." "kayānaścitra ābhuvad" is said for Rāhu. [One] should say [the mantra] "ketuṃ kṛṇvan" for the pacification of Ketu.*"[308]
evam eva bhaviṣyapurāṇe 'pi – "ā kṛṣṇeneti madhyamaparvadvitīyabhāge	In the same way, in the second section of the Madhyama parva of the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa:[309] "*ā kṛṣṇena*,"[310] "*ima devā*,"[311] "*agnimīli*,"[312] with the

[307] I could not trace this reference.

[308] These passages are found in chapter 93 of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, titled "The Performance of Śānti and Puṣṭi (Oblation to the Nine Planets)" (*MatP*, Joshi 2007). In this case, I chose to keep my translation because it is seems to me to be more literal and explanatory than Joshi's translation (*MatP*, 2007).

[309] The following *mantras* are found in the second part of the *Madhyama parva* of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, chapter 19, and not 20, as wrongly referenced in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*.

[310] *BhavP 2.2.19.60*: *yavavidrumasaṃkāśaṃ siṃdūrāruṇasaprabham\| ākṛṣṇeneti maṃtreṇa sthāpayetkalaśopari\|\|* "His body is plasteres with red paste, has the prabhāmaṇḍala of lustre of red vermilion. He should be invoked with the mantra "*ākṛṣṇeti*"" (Lal Nagar 2021: 171).

[311] *BhavP 2.2.19.65*: *imaṃ devā iti mantreṇa sthāpayetpūrvadigdale\|sitavastraiś ca puṣpaiś ca śuklamālyānulepanaiḥ\|\|* "Then reciting the mantra "imaṃ devā," he should be established in the eastern direction. He should be offered with white garments, white rosary, white paste" (Lal Nagar 2021: 171). In his translation, Lal Nagar reports the mantra as "imaṃ deveti;" yet here I changed it into "*imaṃ devā*," getting rid of '*iti*.'

[312] *BhavP 2.2.19.70*: *agnimīḷeti mantreṇa sthāpayedagnidigdale \| pūjayedraktapuṣpaiś ca raktamālyānulepanaiḥ\|\|* "Reciting the mantra "*agneti mili*," the god should be established in the sout-east direction. He should then be

20|60, imaṃ devā iti 20.65, agnimīleti mantreṇa 20.70, udbudhyasveti mantreṇa 20.74, bṛhaspataya iti mantreṇa 20.78, jayannannāt parisrutaḥ 10|84, śanno devīti mantreṇa 20.89, ketuṃ kṛṇvann iti 20.92, eteṣāṃ pramāṇānām aprāmānyakathanaṃ dayānandasya dhārṣṭyaṃ eva|	mantra "*udbudhyasva,*"[313] with the mantra "*bṛhaspataya,*"[314] "*jayannannāt parisrutaḥ*,"[315] with the mantra "*śanno devi*,"[316] "*ketu kṛṇvan.*"[317] Dayānanda has the obstinacy to say that these authoritative statements have no authority.
keṣāñcin mantrāṇāṃ pratyakṣavṛttyā 'tathārthatvepi viniyogānusāreṇārtho bhavati, yathā – "*aindryā gārhapatyam upatiṣṭhata*" iti viniyogānusāreṇendraparāyā apy aindryā ṛco gārhapatyo 'gnir artho bhavaty eva| sūryādevatāparasyāpi mantrasya viniyogavaśān mānuṣīvadhūparatvaṃ bhavati|	Even if at first sight[318] there appears to be a different meaning of the mantras, still the meaning is according to their application. For instance, "*aindriyā gārhapatyam upatiṣṭhata*" according to the application, the meaning of the sacred verse dedicated to Indra, even if it is directed to Indra, is for the purpose of the householder's fire (gārhapatya). On the account of its application, even if the mantra is directed to the god Sūrya, it is directed to the human bride.

worshiped offering red flowers, red garlands, red paste" (Lal Nagar 2021: 172). Also here Lal Nagar reports the mantra as "*agnimīḷeti*;" I therefore reported it as "*agnimili"* getting rid of '*iti.*'

[313] *BhavP 2.2.19.74*: *nānābharaṇasaṃpūrṇaṃ mṛgendravaravāhanaṃ | udbudhyasveti mantreṇa yā myāṃ tu sthāpayed budham||* "His body is decorated with various types of ornaments. He is having an excellent lion as vehicle. Such a planet Budha should be lodged in the southern direction reciting the mantra *"udbudhyasya*"" (Lal Nagar 2021: 172). Also here I reported the *mantra* without the '*iti*' particle at the end. Moreover, I omitted the sentence "son of Rohiṇī" referred to Budha, as it is not present in the original verse.

[314] *BhavP 2.2.19.7.78*: *bṛhaspataya iti mantreṇa nair ṛtyāṃ diśi saṃsthitaṃ |pītacandanagandhaiś ca pītavastrādibhūṣaṇaiḥ||* "with the mantra "*bṛhaspataya*" […] he should be meditated upon and established in the south-west direction and should be offered the yellow sandal paste, perfume, yellow costumes and ornaments" (Lal Nagar 2021: 172). Here the translation of this verse is intertwined with the translation of the previous verse. Also in this case I reported the mantra without the '*iti*' particle at the end.

[315] *BhavP 2.2.19.7.84*: *evaṃ dhyātvā bhṛguśreṣṭhaṃ japannannāt parisrutam | manasā bhaktiyuktena sthāpayetpaścime dale||* "[…] being praised by the best of the race of Bhṛgu […] uttering the mantra "*annātpariśrutam.*" Concentrating one's mind, he should be establidhed in the western direction" (Lal Nagar 2021: 173). Also here the translation of this verse is intertwined with the translation of the previous verse. Moreover, while in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the referenced mantra is "*jayannannāt parisrutaḥ*," here it is "*annātpariśrutam.*"

[316] *BhavP 2.2.19.7.89*: *śannodevīti mantreṇa vāyavyāṃ diśi vinyaset | kṛṣṇacandanavastraiś ca kṛṣṇamālyānulepanaiḥ||* "reciting the *mantra* "*śanno devī*" […] he should be established in the north-western direction in an appropriate manner. He should be offered black sandal paste, black costumes, black garland, black paste" (Lal Nagar 2021: 172). Also here the translation of this verse is intertwined with the translation of the previous verse. Again, I reported the mantra without the '*iti*' particle at the end.

[317] *BhavP 2.2.19.7.91*: *dvibhujaṃ bhīmakāyaṃ ca dhūmrākṣaṃ dhūmravāsasam | ketuṃ kṛṇvanniti mantreṇa aiśā nyāṃ sthāpayeddiśi||* "He has a gigantic body, has smoky eyes, clad in costume of smoke colour, who should always be consecrated in the north-east, reciting the mantra "*ketuṃ kṛṇvan*"" (Lal Nagar 2021: 173). Here, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* wrongly referenced this verse to 19.92 instead of 19.91. Again, I reported the *mantra* without the '*iti*' particle at the end.

[318] Here, also in the sense of 'literal' meaning, as the first meaning that arises.

ata eva nirukta (2.8) vyākhyāne durgācāryaḥ - "*tad evaṃ mantreṣu śabdagativibhutvād ubhayam apy upapadyata eva| tadyathā – dadhikrāvṇo* ity eṣu mantro *'gnyupasthāne 'gnihotre dadhibhakṣaṇe, aśvamedhe* 'śvasannidhau patnīsaṃniveśe|	For this reason, in the explanation of the Nirukta (NiDBh 2.8), Durgācārya [says]: "*since the words in the mantras have a pervasive range (polysemy), both [interpretations] are possible. For instance, "dadhikrāvṇo*:"[319] this mantra [can be used] *at the time of placing the fire, during the agnihotra* […] *when eating yogurt*, [or it can be used] when the wife sits near the horse *in the aśvamedha*.[320]
tatraivaṃ sati prativiniyogam asyānyenānyenārthena bhavitavyam| tasmād viniyogānusāreṇa grahaparatvaṃ api mantrāṇām asty eva|[321]	Here, in such a state of things, different meanings happen according to the application of that [mantra]. Therefore, according to their application, the mantras are directed to the planets.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] vol. 2: 1631–1633]

yat tūktam – "gṛhyasūtrādigranthāḥ pañcasahasravarṣebhyor 'rvācīnās tairaiva vedamantrāṇāṃ grahapūjāsu viniyogaḥ kṛtaḥ, na tāvatāpi grahaparatvena vedamantravyākhyānaṃ yuktam", iti, tat tuccham, tadrītyā vedānām api mahābhāratāt kiñcit pūrvakālikatvenārvācīnatvāviśeṣā kintu pāścāttyānāṃ matam idaṃ na paurastyānām|	But as said by you that "The treatises like the Gṛhyasūtras are only five-thousand years old, and it is only by these that there is the application of Vedic mantras in the pūjā to the planets, [therefore] the explanation of the mantras directed to the planets only by the Gṛhyasūtras and similar treatises is not proper."[322] This is all vain, because according to this going, the peculiarity is that the Vedas approximately belong to a time a little earlier than that of the Mahābhārata. But this is a thinking proper of the Westerners, not of the Easterners.
vātsyāyanādirītyā tu ya eva mantrabrāhmaṇasya draṣṭāraḥ pravaktārasta eva	According to Vātsyāyana, etc., the ones who show (dṛś) and speak the mantras and the Brāhmaṇas are those who remember (smṛ) the Dharmaśastras, the

[319] *NiDBh 2.8*: here, Svāmī Karapātrī is loosely quoting from Durgācārya's commentary to *Ni 2.8*: *tad evaṃ mantreṣu śabdagativibhutvād ubhayam apy upapadyata eva\| tadyathā\| dadhikrāvṇo akāṣam ity eṣa mantro 'gnyupasthāne agnihotre: ayam eva cāgniṣṭome "dadhikrāvṇo akāriṣim ity āgnīdhrīye dadhidrapsānprāśya" iti dadhibhakṣaṇe\| tathā cāśvamedhe "dadhikrāvṇo akāriṣam ity utthitāyāṃ sarvā japanti" ity aśvasannidhāvenaṃ patnyo japanti mahiṣyaṃ utthitāyāṃ\|\|* (*NiDBh*, Bhadkamakar 1985: 191).

[320] In this last sentence, Svāmī Karapātrī sums up the observations of Durgācārya on the *mantra "dadhikrāvṇo*" (see *NiDBh*, Bhadkamakar 1985: 191).

[321] In the *Vedārta Pārijāta*, next there is the 'traditional' explanation of the nine *mantras* by Svāmī Karapātrī. Instead, as I already mentioned, I now present another section which continues this list of authoritative literature confirming the 'traditional' application of the nine mantras. This section is originally located in the Vedārtha Pārijāta, after Svāmī Karapātrī's and before Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis.

[322] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī seems to hint at the fact that Svāmī Dayānanda considers that the *Gṛhyasūtras* and similar treatises are composed at a much later date than the *Vedas*, and it is therefore plausible that the authors of these books mistook the meaning of the Vedic *mantras* and their application. Although this is indeed Svāmī Dayānanda's thought, I was unable to trace the quotation.

dharmaśāstrasyetihāsapurāṇānāṃ na smartāraḥ na hy aṅgāni antarā aṅgī sambhavati|	Itihāsas and the Purāṇas; there cannot be the one who has a body without the limbs.
śrautagṛhyādisūtrāṇām arvācīnatve saṃskāreṣv api kathaṃ mantrāṇāṃ viniyogaḥ siddhyati| na hi nāmakaraṇopanayanasandhyādiṣu mantrāṇāṃ viniyogās tvadabhimateṣu vedeṣu santi| vedaved eva vedāṅgāny apy anādīny eva|	Since the Śrauta- and the Gṛhyasūtra, etc. are recent, then how does the application of the mantras in the saṃskaras follow? There are no applications of the mantras in the nāmakaraṇa, upanayana, sandhyā, etc. in the Vedas as they are acceptable to you.[323] Like the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas are also eternal.
"nakṣatrakalpo vaitānastṛtīyaḥ saṃhitāvidhiḥ| tulya āṅgirasaḥ kalpaḥ śāntikalpastu pañcamaḥ||" (vā. pu. 61.54) nakṣatrakalpe nakṣatrāṇāṃ śāntaya uktāḥ| vaitānasūtre darśapūrṇamāsau, agnyādhānavidhānāni| tṛtīye saṃhitāvidhau kauśikasūtre śatruccāṭanabhūtapretapiśāca-bālagrahādinivāraṇavidhānāni, duḥsvapnanivāraṇapāpa-nakṣatrotpattiśāntir apaśakunaśāntir ābhicārikakarmanivāraṇādividhaya uktāḥ| āṅgirasakalpe ābhicārikakarmaṇāṃ svātantryeṇa nirūpaṇam| śāntikalpe vināyaka(gaṇapati)grahādipūjā grahayajñādaya uktāḥ|	In the Vāyu Pūrāṇa 61.54, "*The Saṃhitā was further divided into two. Nakṣatrakalpa, Vaitāna, (the third) Saṃhitāvidhi the fourth Āṅgirasakalpa and the fifth Śāntikalpa—these are the five alternative Saṃhitās of Atharvaveda*" (VāP, Sharma 2008: 416).[324] In the Nakṣatrakalpa are told the [rules for the] pacification of the lunar mansions. In the Vaitānasūtra, there are the *darśapūrṇamā*s and the rules for the *agnyādhāna* (the ceremony of preparing the three sacred fires). In the third one, the Saṃhitāvidhi, also called Kauśikasūtra, are said the methods for ruining the adversaries and caste aside bhūtas, pretas, piśacas and bālagrahas (seizers of children), the rules for the pacification of the rise of inauspicious constellations and the hindering of nightmares, the pacification of bad omens, the hindering of magic spells. In the Āṅgirasakalpa, an independent description of the magic spells is found. In the Śāntikalpa are described the pūjā to Vināyaka (Gaṇapati) and to the planets, the sacrifices to the plantes, etc.
atharvasambandhy eva nakṣatragrahotpātalakṣaṇagrantho 'sti| atharvavede – "sahavamagne	The treatises dealing with the calamities [caused by] lunar mansions and planets are connected to

[323] In other words, Svāmī Dayānanda recognizes only the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*, which does not provide guidance on the application of the *mantras* or the performance of rituals. Consequently, Svāmī Karapātrī highlights an issue: relying exclusively on the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas* would leave no authority to justify the use of Vedic *mantras* in rituals as the life-*saṃskāras*. With this cosideration, Svāmī Karapātrī likely problematizes the *saṃskāra* life-rituals prescribed by Svāmī Dayānanda in his *Saṃskāravidhi*.
[324] This verse establishes that these *kalpas* derive from the *Atharva Veda*. This is clearly a relevant passage for Svāmī Karapātrī's position regarding the continuity of textual tradition from the *Vedas* till the *Purāṇas*.

kṛttikā rohiṇī cāstu bhadraṃ mṛgaśiraḥ śām ārdrā| punarvasu sūnṛtā cāru puṣyo bhānuraśleṣā ayanaṃ madhā||" (19.7.2) "puṇyaṃ pūrvāphalgunyau cātra hasta citrā śivā svāti sukho me astu rādhe viśākhe muhavānurādhā jyeṣṭhā sunakṣatramariṣṭamūlamannaṃ pūrvārāsatāṃ me āṣāḍhā ūrjaṃ devī uttarā āvahantu, abhijit me rāsatāṃ puṇyameva śravaṇaḥ śraviṣṭhā kurvatāṃ supuṣṭim| āmehat śatabhiṣa varīya ā me dayā proṣṭhapadā suśarma ārevatī aśvayujau bhagaṃ me ā me rayiṃ maraṇya āvahantu" (atharva. 19.7.5) ity ātharvaṇaśruter grahanakṣatrādipūjā vaidiky eva|	the Atharva Veda.[325] In the Atharva Veda: "*Kṛittikas, Rohiṇi be swift to hear me! Let Mṛigaṣiras bless me, help me Ardra! Punarvasu and Sunṛita, fair Pushya, the Sun, Aṣleshas, Magha lead me onward!*" "*My bliss be Svati and benignant Chitra, my right First Phalgunis and present Hasta. Radhas, Viṣakhas, gracious Anuradha, J̌yeshṭha and happy-starred uninjured Mula.*" "*Food shall be earlier Ashaḍhas grant me; let those that follow bring me strength and vigour; With virtuous merit Abhijit endow me! Ṣravaṇa and Ṣravishṭhas make me prosper.*" "*Ṣatabhishak afford me ample freedom, and both the Proshṭhapadas guard me safely. Revati and the Aṣvayujas bring me luck, and the Bharaṇis abundant riches!*" (AV 19.7.2–5, Griffith 1917: 266). Since these statements belong to the Atharva, the pūjā to the planets, the lunar mansions, etc. is [of] Vedic [origin].
"*yajño mantrabrāhmaṇasya* (vedasya) *viṣayaḥ*" (nyāyadarśane 4.1.62 ity atra bhāṣye), "*catvāro vedāstair yajñas tāyate*" (gopathabrā. 1.4.24), "*vedāstāvad yajñakarmapravṛttāḥ*" (siddhāntaśiromaṇigaṇitādhyāye, madhyamādhikāre, kālamānādhyāye 9), "*dudoha yajñasiddhyartham ṛgyajuḥsāmalakṣaṇam*" (m. 1.23), "*vede mantrā avaśyaṃ yajñagatena puruṣeṇa vipariṇamayitavyāḥ| yājñe karmaṇi sa prokto niyamaṃ*"	In the commentary to the Nyāyadarśana (Nbh 4.1.62), "*the ritual is the subject of mantras and Brāhmaṇas.*"[326] In the Gopathabrāḥmaṇā 1.4.24: "*through the four Vedas the sacrifice (yajña) propagates.*"[327] In the section on mathematics of the Siddhāntaśiromani, in the central adhikāra, Kālamānādhyāya 9:[328] "*Indeed, the Vedas propagate with the ritual action.*" In the Manusmṛti (1.23): "*[From fire, wind, and sun, he] squeezed out [the eternal triple Veda characterized by] the Ṛg verses, the Yajus formulas and the Sāman chants, for the purpose of carrying out the ritual*" (MS, Olivelle 2005: 88, 387).[329] *Veda for the purpose of the rituals' perfection.*" In the Mahābhāṣya Paspaśāhnika: "*The*

[325] In other words, Svāmī Karapātrī argues that all the texts he has quoted thus far now refer to planet worship in the same way that the *Atharva Veda* does. This implies a continuity of purpose between the *Vedas* and the rest of the authoritative literature.

[326] This is from Vatsyāyana's commentary to the *Nyāyasūtras*: (*Nbh 4.1.62*, 1976: 313): *yajño mantrabrāhmaṇasya, lokavṛttam itihāsapurāṇasya, lokavyavahāravyavasthānaṃ dharmaśāstrasya viṣayaḥ\|* Here Svāmī Karapātrī is quoting the first two and the last word of a sentence; yet the meaning he wants to convey does not change. Here is the meaning of the full sentence: the *yajña* is the subject of *mantras* and *brāhmaṇas*; the conduct of people is the subject of *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*; the state of the wordly matters is the subject of the *Dharmaśāstra*.

[327] The exact quote would be: *[…] catvāro vai vedā vedair yajñas tāyate […]* (*GoBr. 1.4.24*, Mitra and Vidhyabhushana 1872: 71) which literally means: Four are indeed the *Vedas*; by the *Vedas* the *yajña* propagate.

[328] Here, I could not trace the quotation in the original.

[329] *MS 1.23*: *agnivāyur vibhyaś ca trayaṃ brahma sanātanam\| dudoha yajñasiddhyarthaṃ ṛgyajuḥsāmalakṣaṇaṃ\|\|* (*MS*, Olivelle 2005: 387).

(mahābhāṣye paspaśāhnike), "*vedamantraivinā kaścid vidhirnāsti dvijanmanām*" (vṛhatparāśarasmṛtau 9.67)|	*mantras in the Vedas are necessarily transformed by the person who enters the ritual. This is the rule said in reference to the sacrificial action.*"[330] In the Bṛhatparāśarasmṛti 9.67:[331] "*For the twice-born, there is no injunction without a Vedic mantra.*"
grahapūjāyā abhāvād eva satīvivāho nānukūlaphaladaḥ saṃvṛttaḥ| *dakṣakanyā yad āhaṃ vai pitrā dattā yadā tava| yathoktavidhinā tatra vivāho na kṛtastvayā| na grahāḥ pūjitās tena dakṣeṇa janakena me| grahāṇāṃ viṣayas tena sacchidro 'yaṃ mahānabhūt*||" (śivamahāpurāṇe 29.12–13), nakṣatrāṇi ca sarvāṇi grahāś ca saha daivataiḥ pāntu tvām|	For the lack of a pūjā to the planets, the marriage of Satī did not bring a favourable result. In the Śivamahāpurāṇa (2.3.29.12–13): "*Earlier, I had been the daughter of Dakṣa, when I was given over to you by my father, then did you not marry me appropriately? Since my father Dakṣa did not adore the planets, therefore such type of hindrance was created in the married life*" (ŚiP, Lal Nagar 2007: 551).[332] They shall protect you together with all the lunar mansions and the planets and the gods.
"*grāhyā grahāḥ saṃsṛjyante striyā yan mriyate patiḥ*" (atharva. 12.2.39) grahāṇāṃ grāhyā (viśeṣagrahadaśā)yogena strīṇāṃ vaidhavyam uktam| tac chāntyarthaṃ "*śan no divicarā grahāḥ*" (atharva.19.9.7) iti śāntaya uktāḥ| "ye cāsya dāruṇāḥ kecid grahāḥ sūryādayo divi| te cāsya saumyā jāyante śivāḥ śivatarāḥ sadā||"	"*When a dame's husband dies the house is tangled fast in Grāhi's net*" (AV 12.2.39. Griffith 1917: 108): It is said the widowhood of women is on the account of "grahāṇāṃ grāhyā" which means because of the specific position of the planets. The pacification [formulas] are said for pacifying them as "*Favour us Mitra, Varuna, Vivasvān, and the Finisher, Portents on earth and in the air, and planets wandering in heaven!*" (AV 19.9.7, Griffith 1917: 269).[333] Whatever planets like the Sun etc. in the sky are unfavorable to this person, they become auspicious, favorable, and forever benevolent.
sarvathāpi nakṣatragrahādayo vaidikāḥ pūjyāś ca| tadyajane mantrāś ca gṛhyasūtrādiviniyuktā iti viniyogānusāribhis tadarthaiś ca bhāvyaṃ|	By all means, the lunar mansions and the planets are to be worshipped as prescribed in the Vedas. The mantras for the worship of those (planets and lunar mansions) are appointed in the Gṛhyasūtra, etc., one should use [their] meanings also according to their application.

[330] Here, I could not locate this reference.
[331] Here, I could not locate this reference.
[332] These verses occur within a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. Pārvatī recalls that during her incarnation as Satī, her father, Dakṣa, did not properly perform the wedding rituals. Since he did not worship of the planets, the marriage of Śiva and Satī was marked by difficulties, ultimately resulting in Satī's self-immolation due to her father's insult to Śiva for not inviting him to a *yajña*.
[333] Here by referencing the first two and last two words, Svāmī Karapātrī intends to reference the entire *mantra*: *AV 19.9.7*: *śan no mitraḥ śaṃ varuṇaḥ śaṃ vivasvāṃ cham antakaḥ | utpātāḥ pārthivāntarikṣāḥ śaṃ no divicarā grahāḥ*\|\|.

mantrāṇām anekārthatvaṃ ca samarthitam eva nirukte ṭīkāyāṃ durgācāryādibhiḥ|	The fact that mantras have many meanings is taken into consideration in the commentaries to the Nirukta by Durgācārya and others.[334]
"*aindryā gārhapatyam upatiṣṭhate*" iti śrutibalād aindrī ṛgapi gārhapatyāgniparatvena vyākhyāyate mīmāṃsakaiḥ|	Based on this śruti, "*One worships the gārhapatya fire* [with a mantra] *addressed to Indra*" (ŚaBhMīSū 3.2.2.3), the Mīmāṃsakas explain that this verse dedicated to Indra is for agni, as garhapatya (the sacrificial fire).[335]
kiṃ bahunā, yatra sarvathāpi viniyogānusārī nārthaḥ sambhavati, tatrāpi daṇḍasphyādidravyavidhayāpi mantrāṇām upayogaḥ|	What to say more, where the meaning according to the application is completely impossible, there also, there is use of the mantras according to the injunction regarding the substance, such as daṇḍa, sphya, etc.
yathā "*daṇḍī praiṣānanvāha*" ityādibalād daṇḍasphyādīnāṃ dravyāṇām arthapratipādakatvābhāve 'pi dravyatvavidhayā viniyogo'dṛṣṭārtham eva, tatraiva mantrāṇām apy arthasmārakatvābhāve' pi dravyatvena rūpeṇādṛṣṭārthatayā viniyogabalād upayogaḥ, mīmāṃsakaiḥ śabdasya dravyatvābhyupagamāt|	As in the injunction of "*the person who is carrying the staff utters the order*," [and other statements], on the basis of this [statement], even in the absence of a purposefulness of substances such as daṇḍa, sphya, etc., but there is an application on the basis of the injunction related to the substances for the purpose of adṛṣṭa.[336] In the same way, also in the absence of the remembrance of the meaning of the mantras, there is still a usage [of mantras] on the basis of the application for the purpose of *adṛṣṭa* due to the materials. Thus, the Mīmāṃsakas agree upon the substantiality of speech.[337]

[334] This discourse revolves around the meaning of the *mantras*, which I adress in subchapter 10.1, Yet, to maintain to logical flow of the discourse I decided to keep this section here.

[335] *ŚaBhMīSū 3.2.2.3*: "The 'Aindri Mantra should not be used according to its primary signification—because there is the distinct declaration:" "In connection with the 'Agni', we read—'*Nivēshanaḥ saṅgamanō vasūnām—ityaindryā garhapatyamupatiṣṭhatē*' ['With the *Aindrī mantra—Nivēshanaḥ saṅgamanō vasūnām*—one worships the *Gārhapatya* Fire']" (*ŚaBhMīSū 3.2.2.3*, Jha 1933: 387). Here, Svāmī Karapātrī shows how *mantras* which apparently have clear meaning might also be used in contexts different than the evident ones.

[336] In the statement "the person who is carrying the staff utters the order," the fact that the person who speaks is carrying a staff does not seem to have any purpose in relation to the act of speaking. In this case, the Mīmāṃsakas hold that 'carrying a staff' must have an invisible purpose, *adṛṣṭa*, which brings about, or is concomitant in bringing about, the desired action or result. Otherwise, we would fall into the *absurdum* that portions of Vedic statements have no purpose.

[337] In other words, as with "*daṇḍī praiṣānanvāha*," certain materials, like the staff, can sometimes appear to have no meaning in relation to the described or enjoined action; similarly, it may seem that specific *mantras* used in particular ritual contexts have no connection to the actions they accompany. In such cases, the *mantras*, like the staff, must, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, have some invisible purpose, *aḍṛṣṭa*, for which their pronunciation remains necessary. Thus, the *mantras* are a substance like the staff: even if they do not have a visible purpose, that does not mean they do not have any. In sum, the *mantras* might have evident meanings (the ones delivered by the words composing them) which connect them to ritual actions, they might have more meanings which connect them with different actions, like with "*aindryā gārhapatyam upatiṣṭhate*," or they can have meanings that are not visible, like the purpose of carrying a staff for the person who is speaking.

10.3 Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis of YV 36.12

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karpātrī explains the meanings of all nine *mantras*, discusses Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis, and briefly comments on it. Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis is rooted in the authoritative textual traditions. This aligns with his vision regarding the interdependence of textual traditions and the view that Vedic exegesis must be grounded on the *Vedāṅgas* and the broader śāstric corpus. He provides extensive citations from the Vedic commentaries of Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara, as well as from the *Nirukta* with Durgācārya's commentary, the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*, Pāṇini, and more. While some sources are referenced, others are omitted. Due to the consistent analytical style of Svāmī Karapātrī regarding each *mantra* and the length of his analyses, I present just one example from his work: his discussion on the seventh *mantra* (7), which is traditionally used in the *pūjā* for Śani.[338] This is an extensive and detailed example of how Svāmī Karapātrī works with the textual material, especially how he 're-uses' old authoritative textual traditions in the context of a modern critique (see Freschi and Maas 2017: 11–14). For instance, when Svāmī Karapātrī provides the 'traditional' explanation of *YV 36.12*, he paraphrases and quotes Mahīdhara's commentary almost *verbatim*. Since water is the 'evident' object of praise of the *mantra*, Svāmī Karapātrī inserts Śani as an apposition of water to Mahīdhara's exegesis. This equivalence between water (*ap*) and Śani is presented only after Svāmī Karapātrī has explained the connection and interchangeability between the two, as stated in the *Nirukta*. In sum, due to their similarities (see translation below), one can conclude that Śani can be referred to by the term water (*ap*), and for this reason, the authors of the *Dharmaśāstras* use a *mantra* directed to water (*YV 36.12*) in the worship of Śani. On the contrary, Svāmī Dayānanda takes the waters (*ap*) of *YV 36.12* to be an apposition for *paramātma*; Svāmī Karapātrī, however, criticizes this position on the account of the fact that it is not based on textual authority.

Differently to the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, I present here first Svāmī Dayānanda's explanation of this *mantra*, and then Svāmī Karapātrī's. I thus change the order of exposition because ultimately, Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis is indeed the reason for Svāmī Karapātrī's engagement with *YV 36.12*, and therefore it makes more sense first to report the cause (Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis), and then the consequence (Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis). Like in the previous chapter, I first present Svāmī Dayānda's exegesis of *YV 36.12* as it is found in the original in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, and then Svāmī Karapātrī's analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis (comprehensive of quotations from Svāmī Dayānanda). This is because, for the most part, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, when Svāmī Karapātrī reports Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis, he omits the reference between the Vedic words Svāmī Dayānanda is

[338] Śani corresponds to Saturn; it is the slowest-moving of the planets and is also known as Manda (lit., dull or slow), Śanaiścara, or Sauri ('Son of the Sun') (Gansten 2018). Śani is seen as a planet of misfortune, clad in black colour and depicted having a terrifying appearance. He can ride a vulture and is usually shown in a limping posture. Some texts describe him with four arms, holding a spear, bow, arrow, and making a benedictory gesture, while others depict a trident or a staff. In astrology, Saturn is deemed cold and malefic, and its influence is feared in a person's natal chart (see Gansten 2018).

glossing and the corresponding explanation, along with a few other details that are evident from the comparison.

In the following pages, I report Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis of *YV 36.12* (7), that is: *śan no devīr abhiṣṭaya āpo bhavantu pītaye| śaṃ yorabhisravantu naḥ|*, and in the order: i) Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis as found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, ii) Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis as found in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, with Svāmī Karapātrī's critique, and ii) Svāmī Karapātrī's exegesis:

[*ṚVBB*, Dayānanda 2015 [1876–1877]: 356]

bhāṣyaṃ—'āplṛ vyāptau' asmād dhātor apchabdaḥ sidhyati, sa niyatastrīliṅgo bahuvacanāntaś ca|	Explanation: "the word 'ap' results from the root 'āp.'" From this root, the word 'ap' is derived, it is always feminine and plural.
'divu krīḍādyarthaḥ', (devīḥ) devya āpaḥ, sarvaprakāśakaḥ sarvānandapradaḥ, sarvavyāpaka īśvaraḥ (abhiṣṭaye) iṣṭānandaprāptaye, (pītaye) pūrṇānandabhogena tṛptaye, (naḥ) asmabhyaṃ, (śaṃ) kalyāṇakārikā bhavantu, sa īśvaro naḥ kalyāṇaṃ bhāvayatu prayacchatu|	"Devīḥ," which comes from the root 'divu,' which has the meaning of play, etc., means heavenly waters, which are the self-illuminating, bestower of every bliss, and all-pervasive Īśvara; "abhiṣṭaye" for the attainment of the desired bliss; "pītaye" for the satisfaction through the enjoyment of full bliss; "naḥ," to us two, "śaṃ" be creator of prosperity, that Īśvara may he provide us, that is, fetch us, prosperity.
tā āpo devyaḥ saḥ eveśvaro no'smākam upari (śaṃyoḥ) sarvataḥ sukhasya vṛṣṭiṃ karotu|	May the divine waters, which indeed is Īśvara, "*śaṃyoḥ*" make a rain of happiness everywhere on "*naḥ*," us.
atra pramāṇaṃ— *yatra lokāṃś ca kośāṃ cāpo brahma janā viduḥ| asmac ca yatra saccāntaḥ skambhaṃ taṃ brūhi katamaḥ svideva saḥ*|| atharva. kāṃ.10| a. 4|va. 22| man. 10|	Here is the proof: "*Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha in whom men recognize the Waters, Brahma, In whom they know the worlds and their enclosures, in whom are non-existence and existence?*" (AV 10.7.10 Griffith 1917: 27)
anena vedamantrapramāṇenāpchabdena paramātmano grahaṇaṃ kriyate|	As it is proved in this Vedic mantra, the word 'ap' signifies paramātma.
tad yathā—(*āpo brahma janā viduḥ*) vidvāṃsa āpo brahmaṇo nāmāstīti jānanti|	In this way: "*āpo brahma janā viduḥ*" means the wise ones know that 'āpaḥ' is a name of brahman.
(*yatra lokāṃś ca kośāṃś ca*) yasmin parameśvare sarvān bhūgolān nidhīṃś ca, (*asacca yatra sacca*) yasmimś cānityaṃ kāryya jagad etasya [nityaṃ] kāraṇaṃ ca sthitaṃ jānanti|	[The wise ones] know that "*yatra lokāṃś ca kośāṃś ca*" in this parameśvara [are] situated all the earthly spheres and treasures, "*asacca yatra sacca*" and in this [parameśvara] [are situated] the transient effect of the [untransient] cause of this word.

(*skambhaṃ taṃ brūhi katamaḥ svideva saḥ*) sa jagaddhātā sarveṣāṃ padārthānāṃ madhye katamo 'sti, vidvaṃs tvaṃ brūhīti pṛcchyate|	"*skambhaṃ taṃ brūhi katamaḥ svideva saḥ*" means, who is the one who supports the world and is at the center of all things? It is asked that you, wise one, speak.
(antaḥ) sa jagadīśvaraḥ sarveṣāṃ jīvādipadārthānām ābhyantare 'ntaryyāmirūpeṇāvasthito 'stīti bhavanto jānantu||	You should know "*antaḥ*" means that Lord of the world who has its abode in the form of the indwelling-witness, inside every entity, like the living beings.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1636]

śan no devīr ity atrāpi – "devya āpaḥ sarvavyāpaka īśvaraḥ *abhiṣṭaye* iṣṭānandaprāptaye *pītaye* pūrṇānandabhogena tṛptaye *naḥ śaṃ* kalyāṇakārikā bhavantu| tā āpo devyaḥ sa eveśvaro no'smākamupari *śaṃyoḥ* sarvataḥ sukhasya vṛṣṭiṃ karotu|	And then, "*śan no devīr*:" Heavenly waters, which are the all-pervasive Īśvata, "*abhiṣṭaye*" for the attainment of the desired bliss; "pītaye" for the satisfaction through the enjoyment of full bliss to us ("*naḥ*") "śaṃ" may be creator of prosperity. May the divine waters, which indeed is Īśvara, "*śaṃyoḥ*" make a rain of happiness everywhere on "*naḥ*," us.
atrāpaḥ–śabdena paramātmano grahaṇe pramāṇamuktam— "*yatra lokāṃś ca kośāṃś cāpo brahma janā viduḥ| asacca yatra saccāntaḥ skambhaṃ taṃ brūhi katamaḥ svideva saḥ*||" (atharva. 10.7.10)	The proof for understanding paramātma from the word *"āpaḥ*" is said in here: "*Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha in whom men recognize the Waters, Brahma, In whom they know the worlds and their enclosures, in whom are non-existence and existence?*" (AV 10.7.10 Griffith 1917: 27)
tadartho 'py evam uktaḥ— vidvāṃsa āpo brahmaṇo nāmāstīti jānanti|	It is said that this is the only meaning: the wise ones know that 'āpaḥ' is a name of brahman.
yasmin parameśvare sarvān bhūgolān nidhīṃś ca yasmiṅś cānityaṃ kāryaṃ jagad etat nityaṃ kāraṇaṃ ca sthitaṃ jānanti, sa jagaddhātā sarveṣāṃ padārthānāṃ madhye katamo 'sti vidvaṃs tvaṃ brūhi iti pṛcchyate| (antaḥ) sa jagadīśvaraḥ sarveṣāṃ jīvādipadārthānām abhyantare	[The wise ones] know that in this parameśvara [are] situated all the earthly spheres and treasures, and in this [parameśvara] [are situated] the transient effect of the untransient cause of this word.[339] Who is the one who supports the world and is at the center of all things? It is asked that you, wise one, speak. You should know "*antaḥ*" means that Lord of the world who has its abode in the form of the indwelling-witness, inside every entity, like the living beings.

[339] In the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, instead of '*jagad etat*,' is '*jagadetasya*,' which makes more sense in the context of the sentence; here it is probably a typo; I therefore maintained the original reading, '*jagadetasya*.'

'ntaryāmirūpeṇāvasthito 'stīti bhavanto jānantu" (pṛ. 351)	
iti, tad api mandam, prasiddhārthatyāge kāraṇābhāvāt, "*abdevatyā gāyatrīti*" uvvaṭādivacanavirodhāc ca| pītaya ity asya pānāyetyarthaparityāge navīnatṛptyarthakalpane mānābhāvāc ca| śaṃyoḥ sarvataḥ sukhasya vṛṣṭiṃ karotu, ity api nirmūlam, vṛṣṭibodhakapadābhāvāt| "*śamanaṃ rogāṇāṃ yāvanaṃ ca bhayānām*" (nirukta 4.21) iti niruktavirodhāc ca|	All that it is said about [the mantra] "*śan no devīr*" is stupid, because there is no reason to abandon the established meaning; because this is also against the statements of Uvvaṭa, etc., "*abdevatyā gayatri*," "*Gayātrī is for the water deity*". Also because there is no authority for abandoning the meaning of 'pānāya', drinking, for "*pītaya*" and imagine a new meaning, 'tṛpti.' ""*śaṃ yoḥ*" make a rain of happiness everywhere" is also without any foundation, because here there is no word signifying 'rain.' And because this is against Nirukta 4.21,[340] "*pacification of diseases and removal of fears.*"
yatra lokāṃś cety asya tv ayaṃ arthaḥ - yatra lokān kośān apaś ca janā jānanti, yatrāsatkāraṇaṃ satkāryaṃ ca bhavati taṃ skambhaṃ brūhīti praśnaḥ|	On the contrary, this is the meaning of the mantra *"yatra lokāṃś ca,"*[341] it is a question: tell about that fulcrum wherein the men know the words, the sheaths and the water and where is the false cause and the real effect.

[*VP*, Karapātrī 2016 [1979] Vol. 2: 1627–1629]

nanu "*śan no devīrabhiṣṭaya*" (ṛ. 10.9.4; paippal saṃ. 1.1.1) iti mantrasya āpo devateti kuto grahaviśeṣaparatvam iti cen na, dayānanenāsya paramātmaparatvena vyākhyānāt|	Surely, the deity of the mantra "*śan no devīr abhiṣṭaya*" (RV 10.9.4,[342] PaiSaṃ 1.1.1[343]) is the water deity. How come that it is directed to a specific planet? If it being the case, then we say no, because Dayānanda has explained this mantra to be directed toward paramātma.
śrautagṛhyasūtrāṇi vedārthajñānakuñciketi sāmājikair api kaiścid upeyate|	The Śrauta- and the Gṛhyasūtra are the keys to the knowledge of the meanings of the Vedas. This is even acknowledged by some Samājīs.
grahāś ca pañcatattvātmakā bhavanti| śanis tv aptattvapradhānaḥ| jalasya śaneś ca sūryād utpattiśravaṇāt| tena tayor abheda eva|	The planets are made of five elements. Śani's predominant element is water. Since it is heard [in the śruti] that water and Śani originate from Sūrya, therefore, there is no difference between them.

[340] This is in reference to the explanation of the word '*śaṃyu*' (see *Ni*, Sarup 1967: 85).
[341] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī is offering a reading of *AV 10.7.10*, which Svāmī Dayānanda brought as proof of the fact that the 'heavinly waters' are a name for *paramātma*.
[342] This is the same as *YV 36.12*.
[343] From the *Paippalada Saṃhitā* of the *Atharva Veda*; this is the same as *YV 36.12* and *ṚV 10.9.4* (*PaiSaṃ*, Vihārī Upādhyāya 2010: 1).

apprādhānyād eva śanaiścarasya mandagatitvād mandeti nāmnā vyavahāraḥ| śītasparśavatya āpaḥ|	Because of the predominance of water and because of Śanaiścara's slow motion, Śanaiścara is also called with the name 'Manda.' Water is cold by touch.
ata eva "*śītoṣṇābhyā kāriṇi*" (pā. sū. 5.3.73) iti sūtre "*śītakaḥ alasaḥ*" ity uktam| "*agner āpaḥ*" iti śrutāv agner apām utpattir uktā| sūryāgneś ca śanaiścarasyotpattiḥ|	In the Pāṇini Sūtra (5.2.72)[344] "*śītoṣṇābhyāṃ kāriṇi*," it is said that "*śītaka*," cold, [means also] "*alasa*," inactive. In the śruti, it is said that water originates from fire: "*from fire, the waters.*"[345] In the same way, the origin of Śanaiścara [is] from fire (agni) in the form of Sūrya.
"*ekasyātmano 'anye devāḥ pratyaṅgāni bhavanti*" (ni. 7.4)|	"*Other gods are the individual limbs of a single soul*" (Ni 7.4, Sarup 1967: 115).
grahaprādurbhāvādhyāye kūrmo bhāskaraputrasyeti padye śaneḥ kacchaparūpatvam uktaṃ|	In the adhyāya [dealing with] the appearance of the planets,[346] [it is said] that the turtle is the son of Bhāskara (the Sun). in this verse, it is also said that Śani has the form of a turtle.
yathā – ke jale maṭho yasya sa kamaṭhaḥ, jale sthitvā pṛthivī rakṣati, tathaiva śanir api jalaṃ dvārīkṛtya pṛthivyāḥ prāṇino rakṣati|	As the turtle (kamaṭha) - who is the one whose hut (maṭha) is in the water (ka) – places its [maṭha] in the waters and thus protects the earth, in the same way, also Śani, through the medium the waters as a medium, protects the living beings of the earth.
"*yathā pṛthivyāṃ manuṣyāḥ paśavo devā iti sthānaikatvaṃ sambhogaikatvaṃ dṛśyate, yathā pṛthivyā parjanyena ca vāyvādityābhyāṃ ca sambhogo'agninā cetarasya lokasya*" (Ni.7.5)	"*[…] As, for instance, the community of men and gods with regard to earth. Community of enjoyment is seen in the following, i.e. the enjoyment of earth by the cloud, together with air and the sun, and of the other world together with Agni*" (Ni 7.5, Sarup 1967: 116)
ity atra durgācāryaḥ–tatra tasmin pṛthakatve sati saṃsthānaikatvaṃ sambhogaikatvaṃ copapattita īkṣitavyaṃ| tatra dṛṣṭāntaḥ–"yathā	On this matter,[349] Duragācārya says: even in this state of separation [of the beings], it is evident that they share the oneness of dwelling place and oneness of function. Here, for instance: "as in

[344] Here it is given a wrong reference for this *Pāṇini Sūtra*, which instead of being *5.3.73* is *5.2.72*. Examples: "śītaṃ karoti=śītakaḥ 'one who functions slowly, and with lack of competence,' uṣṇaṃ karoti= uṣṇakaḥ 'one who functions fast, and with skill.'" Here, "*śīta* and *uṣṇa* are not used here in their primary sense of 'cold' and 'hot' (*sparśaviśeṣa*). They are used here, instead, in their secondary (*gauṇa*) sense of *māndya 'slowness'* and *śaighrya* 'fastness' as qualifiers to an action (*kriyāviśeṣaṇa*). thus, one who does things quickly and efficiently is called *uṣṇakaḥ* 'efficient', or *śīghrakārī*" (see Sharma 1999 Vol.5: 557–558).

[345] This is likely from *TaiU 2.1.1*: *tasmād vā etasmādātmana ākāśaḥ saṃbhūtaḥ\| ākāśād vāyuḥ\| vāyor agniḥ\| agner āpaḥ\| adbhyaḥ pṛthivī\| pṛthivyā oṣadhayaḥ\| oṣadhībyo'nnaṃ\| annāt puruṣaḥ* […] "From this very self (*ātman*) did space come into being; from space, air; from air, fire; from fire, the waters; from the waters, the earth; from the earth, plants; from plants, food; and from food, man […]" (*TaiU*, Olivelle 1998: 300–301).

[346] Here, Svāmī Karapātrī probably cites from some Jyotiṣa treatise, I could not trace the reference.

[349] More precisely, Durgācārya's explanation follows the sentence from the *Nirukta* preceeding the one reported in the previous table cell, which is, *tatra saṃsthānaikatvaṃ sambhigaikatvam ca upekṣitavyaṃ*, "With regard to it, the community of jurisdiction and enjoyment should be noted" (*Ni 7.5*, Sarup 1976: 116).

pṛthivyā manuṣyāḥ paśava" ityādi sahasthānatayā ekatvaṃ saṃsthānaikatvaṃ pṛthivīty ukte yāvatāṃ sahabhāvena samānaṃ sthānaṃ te sarve tad grahaṇena gṛhyante| sambhogahetukam ekatvam| sambhogo nāmetaretaropakāritvam, samānakāryatety arthaḥ| sā punarbhinnasthānānām api bhavati, kim aṅga punaḥ samānasthānānām| "yathā pṛthivyāḥ parjanyena vāyvādityābhyāṃ ca sambhogaḥ," pṛthivī oṣadhyutpattyai[347] svakarmārambhe[348] parjanyavāyvādityakṛtam upakāram apekṣate|	earth, men animals etc."[350] are united as a single community (ekatva saṃsthānaikatava) because they are living together, as many as there are all together (sahabhāva) in the same place, they are all referred to by that term [earth].[351] The unity is caused by 'sambhoga.'[352] Sambhoga has the meaning of aiding each other, as similarity of action. Those[353] who repeatedly are in different places, how much can they be of the same places at another time? The same is with the sambhoga of earth with rain, wind and sun: the earth requires the assistance of rain, wind and sun to start its job of plants' production.
tenaivāpa ity anena jalavāsī kamaṭhaḥ śaniścaraśca bodhyete|	For these reasons, both the turtle living in the waters and Śanaiścara are meant by the term water (ap).
mandacalanādisamānakāryatvāc cāpāṃ grahaṇena śanigrahaṇam āyāti| kacchapo 'pi mandagatiḥ| tata eva śanir api mandagatitvāt kūrma uktaḥ|	Because they have a similar action, such as a slow movement, it is possible to grasp the meaning of Śani by the word 'water' (ap). Even the turtle has a slow motion. In fact, on the basis of its slow motion, Śani is called Kūrma.
jyautiṣagrantheṣu "*tridhā vṛṣṭiḥ śanaiścare*" ityuktyā śaner vṛṣṭikartṛtvam api| sūryaputratvāt tadyuktam eva, jalābhāve vṛṣṭyasambhavāt| sūryadevasya jaladevo 'pi sahayogaṃ dadāti| tena samānakāryatvād āpa ity anena śanairgrahaṇaṃ yuktam eva|	"*Three types of rain in relation to Śanaiścara:*" according to this statement from the Jyotiṣa treatises, it is said that Śani is the one makes it rain. This is appropriate because he is Sūrya's and because it is impossible to have rain in the absence of water. Also, the god of the waters helps the god Sun. Because of that, it is proved that, on the basis of a similarity of action, the word 'water' (āp) signifies also Śani.

[347] Or 'oṣadhyutpattyau.'
[348] Or, 'svakāryārambhe.'
[350] *yathā pṛthivyā manuṣyāḥ paśava* is from *Nirukta* (7.5), while the next lines are from Durgācārya's commentary.
[351] In Durgācārya's commentary after this and before the next sentence there is the following statement: *evaṃ uttarayor api sthānayoḥ\| evaṃprakāram ekatvaṃ sambhogaikatvaṃ copekṣitavyaṃ\|* (see *NiDBh*, Bhadkamkar 1985: 752).
[352] In Durgācārya's commentary after this word comes '*sambhogaikatvaṃ*' which is here omitted (see *NiDBh*, Bhadkamkar 1985: 752).
[353] In the original, it is '*tac ca*' instead of '*sā*' (see *NiDBh*, Bhadkamkar 1985: 753).

tad uktaṃ mantrarāmāyaṇe - "*ekaikasmin yathādarśe prāsādā muhurāntaraiḥ| dṛśyante sahito deveṣv evaṃ lokaḥ surāntaraiḥ|| tasmād syur devatāḥ sarvā pratyekaṃ viśvayonayaḥ| anyo 'nyayonayaś caiva yathā yāskamunīr itam|*" sarvāsāṃ devatānāṃ viśvayonitvād ekaikadevatāstutir api rāmastutiṃ prakaṭayati, tathaiva śanidevo'pi jaladevād vyajyate| tasmāj jalastutir api śanistutir eva|	In the Mantra Rāmāyaṇa, it is said that "*As in each mirror the palaces are sees again and again in between, in this manner, in the gods, the world is seen with the gods therein. In this way the seer Yāska has remembered*" (Dvivedī ed. n.a.: 11).[354] Since all the deities are the wombs of the world, the praise of only one God results in the praise of Rāma. Exactly so, the god Śani is expressed by the god of waters. Thus, the praise of water corresponds to the praise of Śani.
tata eva dharmaśāstrakārair jalastāvakamantraḥ śanipūjāyāṃ, viniyuktaḥ, "*māhābhāgyād devatāyā eka ātmā bahudhā stūyate*" (ni. 7.4) iti niruktavacanāt| jalapradhānatvāj jalastutyā tatpradhānasya śaneḥ stutiḥ|	For this reason, the authors of the Dharmaśāstra use the mantra praising water in the worship of Śani. This is in accordance with a statement from the Nirukta (7.4): "*on the account of [their] supereminence (māhābhāgya), a deity's soul is praised in many ways*." Since water is the predominant element in [Śani], the praise of Śani, whose predominant [quality] is water, [follows] from the praise of water.
jyautiṣarītyā viśaṃ śanir iti śaneḥ śaṃ prārthyate" mantraśanyoḥ samānakumbharāśitvāc ca| jyautiṣadṛṣṭyāpi kumbharāśeḥ śaniḥ svāmī bhavati| tenaiva śaneḥ śam iti bījamantraḥ - śaṃ śanaiścarāya namaḥ|	According to the going of Jyotiṣa, with "*viśaṃ śanir*," "*śaṃ*," happiness is asked from Śani, since the sign Aquarius is related to both the mantra and Śani. According to the Jyotiṣa śāstra's point of view, Śani is the lord of the sign Aquarius. Thus, Śani's bīja mantra is "*śaṃ*:" "*śaṃ śanaiścarāya namaḥ*."
yadi pāṣāṇo 'pi pratiṣṭhāvaśād devapratimā niṣpadyate, tadā kalpakāraviniyogavaśād mantre'pi śanigrahapratiṣṭhā bhavati| tena śanisambandhaḥ sampadyate|	If through its consecration, a stone becomes an image (pratimā) of god, then, on the basis of the application [enjoined] by the authors of the Kalpasūtra, in the mantra also, there is the establishment of the planet Śani. It is thus proven the connection [between the mantra] and Śani.

[354] I could trace this citation in the original. Yet, the metaphor, as well as the general meaning of the verse, remain slightly unclear. Here, Nīlakaṇṭhacaturdhara (the author of the *Mantra Rāmāyaṇa* who lived in the 17th century) probably means that, like when placing a mirror in front of another, one can see the reflections of the first mirror in the second and so on, in the same way, the wombs of the gods reflect in each other manifesting the world. A translation alternative to the one I reported above could be: "Thus, each and every god is the womb of the world, and they are also each other's womb." In this case, however, '*lokaḥ*,' which is in the nominative, takes the function of a genitive.

apśabdasya bahuvacanāntatvena devīr iti bahuvacanam| śanyabhedāt tatrāpi bahuvacanaprayogaḥ| śanipakṣe pūjāyām api bahuvacanaṃ saṃgacchate|	As the ending of the word water is plural,[355] "*devīḥ*" is also plural. As there is no difference [between water and] Śani, Śani is also used in the plural form. From the side of Śani,[356] the plural form is also used in the honorific form.
dayānandena tu satyārthaprakāśe sandhyāyāṃ kaṇṭhagatakaphasya jaladvārāntarnigalane'yaṃ mantro viniyuktaḥ| tatra kiṃ pramāṇam iti tu na vaktuṃ śaknotītyādikaṃ sanātanadharmāloke prapañcitam|	However, in the Satyārthaprakāśa, Dayānanda uses this mantra when swallowing in with water the phlegm that reaches the throat during the sandhyā.[357] Where is the authority here? No one can say that. This [matter] is analysed in the Sanātanadharmaloka.[358]
mantrārthas tu – *devī devyaḥ dīpyamānā āpaḥ* tadrūpāḥ śanidevā *no'smākam abhiṣṭaye 'bhiṣekāyābhīṣṭāya pītaye pānāya* ca tṛptaye *śaṃ sukharūpā bhavantu*| yathā''po *'smākaṃ snāne pāne ca sukhayitryas* tathaiva pūjyāḥ śanidevā api sarvakāryeṣu sukhakarā *bhavantu*| *"āpaḥ" "śaṃ yoḥ" rogāṇāṃ śamanaṃ bhayānāṃ* pavanaṃ pṛthakkaraṇaṃ c*ābhisravantu*, śanidevā *asmākaṃ bhayaroganāśaṃ kurvantu ity arthaḥ*|	Instead, this is the meaning of the mantra:[359] *"devī" means the goddess who is shining*, the god Śani having that "*water*" as his form, *"no" to us* "*abhiṣṭāye*" *for a bath and "pītaye" drinking* for satisfaction. "*bhavantu*" *may become "śaṃ" benevolent.* As water brings us happiness in bathing and drinking, in the same way, the venerable god Śani may bring happiness in all [our] actions. *This is the meaning*: may you, waters, bring about *"śaṃ yoḥ"* the *pacification of the diseases and the extinction*[360] *of the fears*. May also the god Śani destroy our fears and diseases.

[355] In Sanskrit, the word '*ap*' for 'water' is always used in the plural.
[356] In the sense of, if one considers Śani alone, not in connection with water.
[357] I was unable to locate this direct reference in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*. However, in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, under the section on the performance of the *brahma yajña*, for the details on the performance of the "*sandhyopāsana*" is given a cross-reference to "The Five Great Duties of the Aryans" (*pañcamahāyajñaviṣayaḥ*), as they are found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (see *SP*, Prasad 1908: 100). Similarly, in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, under the section on the *brahma yajña*, viz., the first of these five duties, there is a cross reference to the *Pañca Mahāyajña Vidhi*, short for *Sandhyopasanādipañcamahāyajña* (see *ṚVBB*, Ram 2010: 245). In the *Sandhyopasanādipañcamahāyajña* (Dayānanda Sarasvatī 1939: 2), the aforesaid *mantra* starting with "*śan no devīr*" (*YV 36.12*) is prescribed as the *mantra* for the *ācamana* (sipping water from the palm of the hand for purification) during the *sandhyā*. This is likely the original source of Svāmī Karapātrī's citation, and not the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*.
[358] This a ten-volume treatise on Sanātana Dharma written by Dīnānātha Śarmā Śastrī Sārasvata, the principal of the Saṃskrit-Mahāvidyālay, Darībā Kalā in Delhi and published between 1958/59–1968/69 (Vikraṃ Saṃvat 2016–2026) under the title of *Śrīsanātanadharmaloka*.
[359] The following explanation of the *mantra* is in between a citation and paraphrasis from Mahīdhara's commentary on *YV 36.12*: *devīḥ devyo pīpamānā apo no 'smākam abhiṣṭaye abhiṣekāyāmīṣṭāya vā pītaye pānāya ca śaṃ sukharupā bhavantu\| asmākaṃ snāne pāne cāpaḥ sukhayitryao bhavantu\| āpaḥ śaṃ yoḥ rogāṇāṃ śamanaṃ bhayānāṃ yavanaṃ pṛthakkaraṇaṃ ca abhisravantu\| no 'smākaṃ bhayaroganāśaṃ kurvantv ity arthaḥ\|\|* (*YVUMaBh*, Shastri 1987: 583–4). In the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the main difference with Mahīdhara's reading of *YV 36.12* is that Svāmī Karapātrī inserts Śani and its relation with 'water' within the explanation of the *mantra*.
[360] Here, there is a typo: in Mahīdhara instead of '*pavanaṃ*,' it is '*yavanaṃ*,' see the previous footnote. '*Pavana*,' from 'purifier,' while '*yavana*' means keeping away. The meaning does not drastically change in this context. However, it is likely that '*yavana*' is glossed from '*yoḥ*' (*YV 36.12*), based on their similarity.

10.4 Final remarks

In this chapter, I showed how Svāmī Karapātrī responds to Svāmī Dayānanda's stance that the nine *mantras* commonly used in planetary worship, should not be utilized in that manner. In the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda does not engage in speculations regarding planet worship outside of the context of these *mantras*. Instead, it is in the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* that Svāmī Dayānanda argues against the logic of worshipping planets, 'non-conscious beings,' because they are believed to be able to influence people's lives both positively and negatively (see *SP*, Prasad 1908: 345). Thus, Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion to planet worship is primarily based on the notion that such a belief enhances fatalism and diminishes the value of personal endeavor in people's mindsets:

> Persons become rich, poor, kings, and beggars, in consequence of their deeds and works, but not from the influence of stars [...] Therefore the fruits of actions are true and the motion of heavenly bodies is not the cause of human pleasure or pain. There is no visible connection between the stars in the sky and the human beings capable of doing works and living on the earth far away from them (see *SP*, Prasad 1908: 346).

In sum, Svāmī Dayānanda rejects the veneration of stones, images, planets, or any non-conscious entity because such practices divert personal responsibility from the individual to the object of worship, promoting the notion that one's fate is beyond personal control.[361] For Svāmī Dayānanda, this is a personal issue that has repercussions on both social and political levels, leading to a lethargic society. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī's reaction does not enter into these social and political considerations. Svāmī Karapātrī's political activism reflects an absence of fatalism in his thought, yet he embraces the practice of planetary *pūjā* in accordance with authoritative textual traditions. While discussing Svāmī Dayānanda's position, Svāmī Karapātrī presents two main points: (i) the impossibility of understanding the meaning of the *mantras* by simply understanding the words therein contained, as their meaning is based on their application. Secondly, (ii) the application of the Vedic *mantras* is sanctioned in the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Vedāṅgas*, and later textual traditions, such as the *Purāṇas*, which compose an authoritative whole with the *Vedas*.

On the one hand, Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda explain that the meanings of the *mantras* do not correspond to the meaning of the words therein contained (what Svāmī Svarūpānanda referred to as "*śabdik arth*"). Yet, on the other hand, Svāmī Karapātrī, as well as Uvaṭa, Mahīdhara, and Sāyaṇa before him, engage in a commentary to the *Vedas*, which ultimately means that they explain the meaning of the *mantras* by glossing them, which corresponds to their "*śabdik arth*." Consequently, it may appear that the idea that the meanings of the *mantra* are based on their application stands in contradictions to Vedic exegesis. Instead, Svāmī Karapātrī and Svāmī Svarūpānanda maintain that the literal meanings of the words of the *mantras* can indicate their usage. However, *mantras* have meanings that go beyond the words that compose them and which correspond to the many possible applications of a single *mantra*. Consequently, a *mantra*'s intelligible meaning does

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[361] On this, see the fifteen reasons against *mūrtipūjā* in subchapter 8.2.

not encompass its full range of meanings. Thus, the intelligible, or visible and immediate (*pratyakṣa*) meaning, is subjected to the many possible applications of a specific *mantra* as ordained in the authoritative literature. It follows that, in the exegesis of *YV 36.12*, Svāmī Karapātrī, on the one hand, reports Mahidhāra's commentary. On the other hand, after opening a long digression on the connections between water and Śani, based on the principles expressed in the *Nirukta*, he reveals that the explicit meaning of *YV 36.12*—namely, the praise of water—corresponds to the implicit praise of Śani as well. In other words, Svāmī Karapātrī uncovers the hidden connection between water and Śani through the *Nirukta*, thus establishing a relationship between the explicit and one of the 'hidden' meanings of *YV 36.12*.

11. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I engage with some aspects of the deep-seated conflicts within Hindu groups, that of the Samājīs and the Sanātanīs, concerning identity formation and the interpretation and usage of authoritative texts in 19th- and 20th-century India. My research provides new insights into the various processes leading to the creation of religious, social, and political agendas rooted in religious beliefs and authoritative literature in colonial and post-colonial India.

The contextualization and analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's writings reveal two distinct understandings of Hindu identity and approaches to textual traditions. My focus on the complex dynamics influencing the two scholars' diverse perspectives on icon worship challenges prevailing knowledge frameworks that present orthodoxy and conservatism as the foundation of nationalist movements. Instead, through this specific example, my work illustrates the wide range of contrasting viewpoints among those who claim to represent *dharma*.

In my efforts to position Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within the framework of existing scholarship on 19th and 20th century India, I use the work of scholars like Paul Hacker, Wilhelm Halbfass, Kenneth Jones, Hans Krämer, and Vasudha Dalmia, who all engage with the complexities of Hindu responses to the colonial encounter (see chapter 2). These scholars mostly use binary labels such as 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' and 'acculturative' on one side, and 'traditionalist,' 'Sanātana Dharma,' and 'transitional' on the other. When seen from that angle, there appears to be a connection between Svāmī Dayānanda and the general tendencies of 'neo-Hindu,' 'reformist,' or 'acculturative tendencies.' Similarly, Svāmī Karapātrī appeared as a 'traditionalist,' a proponent of 'Sanātana Dharma,' or a 'transitional' scholar. These polarized categories effectively showcased the streams of thought circulating during this period and illustrated a range of responses from Hindu scholars to colonialism and reform movements in India. However, my work shows that applying these labels to individual scholars and their movements turns out to be an oversimplification and an imposition of categories on a variety of realities. Upon thorough examination of the implications associated with each of these labels, I found that none of them were capturing the complexities of either Svāmī Dayānanda or Svāmī Karapātrī. Yet it remains true that in 19th- and 20th-century India, two factions emerged: one was the Ārya Samāja, advocating for social and religious reform, while the other, opposing change, was the 'orthodox' side, which self-identified as Sanātana Dharma, with its members calling themselves Sanātana Dharmīs or Sanātanīs.

This division is evident in census results, public debates, and publications, in which both groups and independent scholars identified themselves as either Samājīs or Sanātanīs. Consequently, I framed the activities of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī within the context of this debate. On one hand, Svāmī Dayānanda, as the founder of the Ārya Samāja, is clearly a Samājī. On the other hand, Svāmī Karapātrī identified both himself and the community of orthodox Hindus he aimed to represent as Sanātana Dharma. These labels also encompassed a diverse range of people and purposes. Even the Ārya Samājīs were and still

are not of one mind and intent, particularly after Svāmī Dayānanda's demise. Yet, the Samājī communities often presented a united front in implementing Svāmī Dayānanda's reformation of the socio-religious establishment, primarily concerning (i) the modification of the Hindu textual canon, (ii) creating a merit-based caste system, and (iii) abolishing *mūrtipūjā* along with its associated 'superstitious' practices and beliefs. In contrast, the Sanātanīs, as independent scholars or organized groups, sought to maintain the status quo and opposed such changes. Thus, even these labels describe a vast range of people and groups; however, the self-ascribed nature of this terminology allows me to use it without concerns of misrepresenting or distorting the nature of the discourse.

After providing this context, I began analyzing Svāmī Dayānanda's profile through a thorough review of the existing literature on his biographies and hagiographies, with a particular focus on his *Autobiography* (see chapter 3). In his narration, Svāmī Dayānanda articulates a growing disillusionment with contemporary practices, developed through a process of rational inquiry, which ultimately led him to embrace the *Vedas* as the sole source of absolute truth. I reflected on the allegorical nuances of some of his life accounts and interpreted his narratives through metaphorical lenses, emphasizing the significance of certain stories, especially the episode of Śivarātri, which he presented as the pivotal moment when he realized the 'inadequacies' of *mūrtipūjā* and contemporary Hindu practices. It became evident that Svāmī Dayānanda's narration mainly served to celebrate his persona, and the originality, or better, the 'vedicity' of his thought. Yet through the analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's engagement with European ideas, European scholars, and the Brahmo Samāja, I could show that his thoughts emerged from the intricate interplay of cultural exchanges that characterized his life, although the *Autobiography* and other hagiographies, as expected, suggest otherwise.

Svāmī Dayānanda's program is interlinked with three central leading Indological postulation in 19th century: (i) the assumption of a divide between 'ancient' and 'modern' India, (ii) the understanding that the *Vedas* serve as the enduring testimony and 'crystallized' revelation of ancient Vedic religion, which bears no connection to modern Hinduism, and (iii) the notion that *mūrtipūjā* is the quintessential superstitious practice, emblematic of 'modern Hinduism,' stemming from a misreading of the *Vedas* and contributing to India's perceived backwardness. Svāmī Dayānanda's program derived from a deliberate interaction and reimagination of these concepts, rather than simple appropriation. In other words, Svāmī Dayānanda did not accept European scholarship uncritically: his disdain for colonialism, aspiration for an independent India, and perceived cultural superiority led him to re-elaborate European assumptions according to two main criteria: (i) making India transcend the criticisms associated with these frameworks, and (ii) emulating the unity and constituency of European models, especially those of the British Empire. The first criterion voiced the importance of distancing India from labels of 'backwardness' to avoid derision. The second highlighted the need to partially emulate the European model to effectively confront and counter their exploitation. Svāmī Dayānanda's position regarding *mūrtipūjā* derives exactly from these two needs.

Although Svāmī Dayānanda's program primarily sought to foster a nation capable of resisting colonial rule, the rise of his reformist ideas faced significant opposition from 'Hindu orthodox' groups, the Sanātanīs (see chapter 5). The first reactions emerged as Svāmī Dayānanda preached across the subcontinent, as the Sanātanīs counteracted his ideas on authoritative literature, the caste system, *mūrtipūjā*, and devotional practices in general. The contrasts led to an extensive and enduring debate, with Svāmī Karapātrī in the 20th century as a significant example.

Svāmī Karapātrī sought to portray Hindu religious traditions as a cohesive whole, particularly emphasizing the inherent transversality of practices and beliefs that were threatened by British colonialism and Indian reformers, including the caste system, the scope of the *śāstras*, the significance of cow protection, and the practice of icon worship. Svāmī Karapātrī adopted British representational modes by founding associations, magazines, and a political party. However, instead of reforming the contemporary socio-religious establishment, he sought to present Hindu plurality as part of a whole. Unlike Svāmī Dayānanda, who effectively established a new religion, Svāmī Karapātrī aimed to safeguard the plurality of the existing ones by presenting them as connected to an overarching single entity to make them more resilient against external pressures. In fact, while Svāmī Karapātrī upheld Hindu debate traditions that addressed various perspectives and doctrines among different *saṃpradāyas* by debating Dvaita philosophers to promote Advaita philosophy, he also acknowledged Dvaita philosophers as part of Sanātana Dharma. Thus, I envisioned Svāmī Karapātrī carrying on the pre-colonial efforts to define the boundaries of a Hindu community (e.g., Madhāvācarya and Madhūsudhana Sarasvatī), but within the context of post-colonial India. Therefore, I argue that Svāmī Karapātrī is a Sanātanī not only in the context of the Samājī-Sanātanī debate but also as a scholar consciously trying to support a Sanātana Dharma identity vs. 'others.'

But then, what is Sanātana Dharma according to Svāmī Karapātrī? While acknowledging that no clear-cut definitions of Sanātana Dharma are to be found, I propose a polythetic definition through three complementary approaches: (i) family resemblances, (ii) in opposition to the other *dharmas*, and (iii) with a focus on the 'constancy of tradition.' Svāmī Karapātrī clearly stated that the caste system and faith in the *śāstras* are the pillars of Sanātana Dharma. Similarly, Svāmī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī, a professed Sanātanī and collaborator of Svāmī Karapātrī, pinpointed the importance of *brāhmaṇs* and cows as the common denominator of the Hindu *saṃpradāyas*. This led me to assume these as Sanātana Dharma's family resemblances. I then showed how in the modern context, Sanātana Dharma is presented in opposition to other *dharmas*. Clearly, for Svāmī Karapātrī, the main peculiarity of Sanātana Dharma is its '*sanatanatā*,' perpetuity, or constancy of tradition, which is presented in contraposition to all the other creeds, which have historical founders instead.

Svāmī Karapātrī was deeply engaged in the debate with the Ārya Samāja, which was a significant aspect of his work; however, it was not his sole focus. His followers regarded him as a contemporary incarnation of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, destined to protect the *dharma* against the 'dangers' of modern India (see chapter 6). I analyzed Svāmī Karapātrī's narratives in the hagiography penned by Vedānti Svāmī and interpreted some of his life events through

allegorical lenses. Here, the onset of Svāmī Karapātrī's journey toward renunciation echoes the tales of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in the contingencies that led him to take the robe. In this regard, I uncovered a contrasting pattern between the story of Svāmī Dayānanda's renunciation and that of Svāmī Karapātrī; the founder of the Ārya Samāja takes renunciation without his parents' permission, thus clearly cutting against the paternal authority and the 'orthodoxy' it represented. On the other hand, Svāmī Karapātrī left home permanently only with his father's permission, demonstrating the intention to preserve paternal authority and the traditions it represents. Additionally, Vedānti Svāmī depicted Svāmī Karapātrī as one who kept his promise to fulfill his duty as a householder before proceeding on the path of renunciation. According to Lorenzen (1976: 96), these two paths are respectively regarded as the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva *dharmas*. Thus, by balancing both roles, Vedānti Svāmī may have aimed to emphasize Svāmī Karapātrī's contribution to the synthesis of various *saṃpradāyas*. However, while Svāmī Dayānanda is the author of his own *Autobiography* (or 'Auto-hagiography'), the author of Svāmī Karapātrī's hagiography is one of his followers. Therefore, even though it is likely that Vedāntī Svāmī wished to spread Svāmī Karapātrī's vision, we do not know to what extent his work would have met with his master's approval.

Against the background of Svāmī Dayānanda's and Svāmī Karapātrī's perspectives on Hindu community and identity, I see the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* as an ideal textual source for studying and deepening the understanding of the Sanātanī response to the Ārya Samāja. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* follows the patterns of either a *jalpa* or *vitaṇḍā* type of debate, indicating that in the text, Svāmī Karapātrī's main objective is to disprove Svāmī Dayānanda's stance, regardless of his own positions. Before the publication of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, the century-long debate between Samājīs and Sanātanīs was already well-established in a substantial body of literature. These publications sometimes presented scholarly discussions, while at other times merely included a plethora of insults and did not add arguments to the debate. Instead, although Svāmī Karapātrī occasionally mocks Svāmī Dayānanda, he does so subtly rather than overtly, and his jokes follow scholarly considerations. In the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, Svāmī Karapātrī provides an extensive and exhaustive treatise on Svāmī Dayānanda's thought as presented in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and other texts, including the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* and various minor works. Additionally, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* was conceived as an introduction to a Vedic commentary that Svāmī Karapātrī wanted to write. Thus, his decision to devote a substantial portion of his work to refuting Svāmī Dayānanda's arguments is significant, as it reveals his intent to refute the Ārya Samājī interpretation of the *Vedas* before reaffirming the 'traditional' meanings. The *Vedārtha Pārijāta* is also a pivotal point in the Sanātanī discussion against the Samājīs, as it includes several arguments previously articulated by Svāmī Karapātrī's predecessors (above all, those of Pandit Kālūrām Śāstrī) and provokes a series of written reactions (see chapter 7). Finally, the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* has contemporary relevance in the discourse of Vedic exegesis and remains a study text for Sanskrit students in several *gurukulas* across India—primarily in the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣāmaṇḍalas and other traditional schools recognizing Svāmī Karapātrī's authority. Although the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* does not attract a large public, it continues to be read and taught in Sanātanī circles. A fifth reprint appeared in 2016, totaling 500 copies.

One main section of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, entitled "In Support of *mūrtipūjā*" (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanaṃ*, *VP*, Karapātrī 2016[1979] Vol. 2: 1616–1639) is highly relevant for the primary thematic focus of this work, namely the conflict surrounding the practice of *mūrtipūjā*. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī closely analyzes Svāmī Dayānanda's statements regarding *mūrtipūjā* as they are found in the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*'s sections on "The falsity of *mūrtipūjā* and the remembering the names [of the gods]" (*mūrtipūjānāṃasmaraṇayor mithyātvaṃ*) and "The falsity of the *pūjā* to the planets" (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvaṃ*) (see chapters 9 and 10).

After analyzing the relevant sections from both the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* and the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, I made two observations: (i) Svāmī Dayānanda's prohibition on icon worship probably does not derive from the *Vedas*. In other words, it is extremely unlikely that Svāmī Dayānanda derived his positions from Vedic exegesis. Secondly, (ii) Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of icon worship—specifically, his beliefs about this practice—is entirely absent in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*.

I therefore decided to analyze the perspectives of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī on *mūrtipūjā*, independently of the exegetical context of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and outside the criticism of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (see chapter 8). In the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, Svāmī Dayānanda presents sixteen arguments against *mūrtipūjā*, together asserting that this practice undermines a person's self-exertion, focused intent, and moral standards. Svāmī Dayānanda's stance against *mūrtipūjā* seems to arise from a desire to prove European judgment wrong and thereby adopt a religious model that aligns with European standards, seeking the dynamism and unity of intent found in a people devoted to a singular formless God. Thus, Svāmī Dayānanda's theological discourse and prohibition on *mūrtipūjā* appear to be less anchored in exegetical and philosophical reasoning and more focused on the aspiration to unify a reactive people capable of challenging British rule. Theological considerations and references to Vedic texts are likely introduced later to add orthodox authority.

My analysis of Svāmī Karapātrī's understanding of *mūrtipūjā* outside the debate context confirms that his perspective is entirely absent from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*. Through the testimonies of Svāmī Svarūpānanda and Svāmī Sadānanda, I could demonstrate that, for Svāmī Karapātrī, *mūrtipūjā* was not the worship of the non-conscious, viz., the matter of which the *mūrtis* are made, but the worship of what the *mūrti* represents, viz., one of the five forms of the *saguṇa nirākāra brahman*. Political, social, and philosophical or theological angles on *mūrtipūjā* are absent from both the *Ṛgvedādibhaṣyabhūmikā* and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, where *mūrtipūjā* is instead discussed solely in relation to the sources enjoining or prohibiting it. Svāmī Karapātrī uses Svāmī Dayānanda's postulation that *mūrtipūjā* corresponds to the worship of the non-conscious to prove that in the *Vedas,* there are examples of devotion towards objects (as those used in the rituals) and that even Svāmī Dayānanda himself inadvertently enjoins the worship of objects. In his analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda's statements, Svāmī Karapātrī comes to three conclusions: (i) his readings contradict the *Vedas* and their auxiliary texts, (ii) display self-contradictions, and/or (iii) stem from flawed reasoning.

In the second section of the chapter on "In Support of *mūrtipūjā*," Svāmī Karapātrī shows that in the *Ṛgvedādibhaṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda contends that it is incorrect to use nine particular Vedic *mantras* for worshipping planets. In the *Ṛgvedādibhaṣyabhūmikā*, Svāmī Dayānanda briefly mentions that planet worship corresponds to the worship of the non-conscious. However, the focus of his discourse is that later textual traditions have incorrectly situated these *mantras* in the context of planet worship—a context he argues should be abandoned altogether. Consequently, he presents his analysis of these *mantras*, suggesting their 'original' meanings. Svāmī Karapātrī counters this 'new' interpretation, reaffirming the explanations of these *mantras* as they are found in the commentaries of Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara.

This is the occasion for Svāmī Karapātrī to undertake an extensive digression about the meanings of the *Vedas*. He argues that the meanings of the *mantras* are not based on the words that compose them, but rather on their applications. Here, application means 'which *mantra* is used in which ritual context to achieve the desired results,' and, according to Svāmī Karapātrī, the application of the *mantras*, specifically their use, is validated by the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Vedāṅgas*, and authoritative literature in general. Instead, Svāmī Dayānanda arbitrarily determines the meanings of the *Vedas* based on his interpretations of the words that compose them, regardless of their applications sanctioned in the authoritative literature. In this section, like in the previous one, Svāmī Karapātrī does not really engage with an apologia of icon and planet worship, but instead focuses on determining the interdependence of Hindu textual traditions. In other words, Svāmī Karapātrī opens a lengthy digression in which he claims the continuity and conformity of textual traditions from the *Vedas* to the *Vedāṅgas*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Ithihāsas*, and so forth. Clearly, Svāmī Karapātrī viewed later śāstric traditions as natural evolutions and, more importantly, adaptations of the *śruti* to suit the times and conditions faced by humanity. He thus emphasized the importance of maintaining the integrity of textual traditions at the basis of Sanātana Dharma and criticized Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis as this risked undermining the transmission of Vedic 'truths' and practices like *mūrtipūjā*, thereby threatening the very 'essence' of Sanātana Dharma.

Both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī claimed that their interpretations were based on authoritative texts. Although they had different opinions on what these texts were, both scholars demonstrated an 'essentialist' framework, asserting that their religious and social viewpoints, which stemmed from the *śāstras*, were 'pure' and correct. However, the 'essentialisms' espoused by Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī are differently nuanced. On one side, Svāmī Dayānanda articulated an 'antique' and lost religion, the Ārya Dharma, grounded in the *Vedas*, a crystallized revelation, encompassing all the realms of human knowledge, religion, philosophy, science, and technology, from the past, present, and future. Svāmī Dayānanda's understanding of Ārya Dharma, although presented as reminiscent of a Vedic Golden Era, actually derived from a mediated reaction to colonial influences, a new hybrid identity, which he presented as a pure and original Vedic tradition. On the other side, Svāmī Karapātrī posited the supremacy of the *śāstras*. I did not find a list of authoritative texts that he recognized: in line with his concept of the continuity of Sanātana Dharma, Svāmī Karapātrī may have viewed a fixed list of titles as meaningless. In other words, in his view, the *śāstras* are not a crystallized corpus but are continuously produced by those possessing the necessary qualifications (in the sense of *adhikāra*) and education imparted by recognized

teachers who write in reference to previous authoritative textual traditions. This positions Svāmī Karapātrī as a continuator of Hindu textual traditions rather than as a creator of a Sanātana Dharma religion. Svāmī Karapātrī served what he regarded as the orthodox Hindu community by advancing the legacies of Madhāvācarya and Madhūsudhana Sarasvatī while simultaneously reflecting the 20th-century perceived necessity to present a cohesive Hindu identity amidst the backdrop of the newly independent state. Svāmī Karapātrī's focus on the importance of the *śāstras* is concomitant and leads to the preservation of *mūrtipūjā* as well. In fact, it is only on the basis of this 'continuity' of textual traditions that Svāmī Karapātrī can argue that later texts did not mistake the usage of Vedic *mantras* and were not wrong in depicting the devotion to the gods and the practice of *mūrtipūjā*. From Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective, a proper understanding of the *śāstras* allowed for the derivation of all aspects of Sanātana Dharma, including the caste system, cow protection, and *mūrtipūjā*.

Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the Samājīs as a greater threat to Sanātana Dharma than Muslims, Christians, and Europeans in general. First of all, Muslims, Christians, and Europeans could be easily identified with the 'other.' Instead, Svāmī Dayānanda, a *brāhmaṇ* initially belonging to the Daśanāmī *saṃpradāya*, represented an internal and therefore more dangerous threat, as he challenged and attempted to change authoritative textual traditions from within. Svāmī Karapātrī regarded Svāmī Dayānanda and, with him, the Ārya Samāja's pursuit of Vedic research as a perilous trend proliferating across the subcontinent. During Svāmī Karapātrī's time, the tensions between Samājīs and Sanātanīs had lessened compared to a few decades earlier, as becomes evident through the decreasing number of printed debates between the two factions. The escalating tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities, along with the emergence of Hindu movements bringing forward political demands and forming united coalitions, likely prompted Samājīs and Sanātanīs to set aside their differences in pursuit of a shared objective, echoing the sentiment that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.'

Yet, Svāmī Karapātrī clearly prioritized the safeguarding of *śāstras* and the preservation of *dharma* over political needs. This is evidenced by his refusal to continue collaborating with the Jana Saṅgha and the Akhila Bhāratīya Hindu Mahāsabhā upon discovering that they were exploiting the *śāstras* by selectively choosing only those parts that supported their views while discarding those that contradicted them. Similarly, Svāmī Karapātrī did not address Svāmī Dayānanda's political and practical reasons against *mūrtipūjā* because, in his view, these were subordinate to the śāstric injunctions. Svāmī Karapātrī regarded the development of his country (*vikās*) as crucial and a natural outcome of *dharma*, yet he maintained that it should never come at the cost of *dharma*. In this sense, Svāmī Karapātrī is a staunch proponent of Sanātana Dharma principles in modern India, reportedly unwilling to make any sort of compromise on *dharma* and *śāstras* as they were handed down to him. Thus, Svāmī Karapātrī wrote the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* a few decades after the most fervent exchanges between Samājīs and Sanātanīs, likely to remind the two groups of their distinct views and aims. Even though Svāmī Karapātrī recognized the potential of the Ārya Samāja as an ally in political and social objectives, he remained focused on his primary aim: preserving the *dharma* sanctioned in the *śāstras*. Thus, if a practice prescribed in the *śāstras* is questioned, and more importantly, if it is contested because the *śāstras* supporting it are challenged, it follows that securing the authority of the texts endorsing that practice is of utmost

importance. Thus, it makes sense that, in the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, when Svāmī Karapātrī addressed the topic of *mūrtipūjā*, he chose to defend the authority of the textual traditions that endorse this practice rather than composing an apologia or discussing the philosophical implications of *mūrtipūjā*. This clarifies why icon worship seems somewhat peripheral to Svāmī Karapātrī's discourse. Additionally, Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion towards *mūrtipūjā* does not seem to have had a very enduring effect on Hindu religious practices. Instead, Svāmī Dayānanda's inclination towards a free examination of the *Vedas*, which does not adhere strictly to the auxiliary texts and the broader Hindu textual traditions, is a growing trend in India that Svāmī Karapātrī viewed with concern.

Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī hold two primary, yet contrasting, viewpoints shaped by distinct priorities and perspectives. On one hand, Svāmī Dayānanda's primary objective is to attain liberation from British rule. Therefore, anything that empowers Hindus to stand against the British Raj takes precedence. Since *mūrtipūjā* is viewed as an obstacle to unity and self-exertion, it is banned. The texts that unequivocally confirm this practice are also prohibited, while the *Vedas*, with their complex yet adaptable language, are selected as the sole source of undebatable authority. Svāmī Dayānanda states that the *Brāhmaṇas* are not part of the *Vedas*, that the traditional commentaries are at fault, and that the rest of the literature is either spurious (like the *Purāṇas*) or authoritative only in those sections where it does not contradict the meanings of the *Vedas* and common sense. But if this is the case, considering the difficult language of the *mantras*, who is to say what the meanings of the *Vedas* are? Svāmī Dayānanda claims to be the one able to retrieve the original meanings of the *Vedas*. In my work, I'm not attempting to judge the correctness of various Vedic interpretations, as binary categorizations of interpretations as 'right' or 'wrong' are not appropriate in this context. However, I suggest that Svāmī Dayānanda's approach goes beyond merely subjective textual analysis. Instead, he systematically imposes predetermined meanings onto the *Vedas*, then leverages these interpretations to give authority to his statements. Essentially, he redirects the source of his thinking to the *Vedas* to gain their associated legitimacy. Svāmī Karapātrī considers this approach unjustifiable because it instrumentalizes the *śāstras* rather than preserving them as ideological foundations. From Svāmī Karapātrī's perspective, Svāmī Dayānanda's discourse is inverted—in defending what he considers "his own," Svāmī Dayānanda fundamentally alters what "his own" actually means, —this being the same critique Svāmī Karapātrī moves against Hindu nationalism.

The primary focus of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* at first seemed to be a debate on icon worship; yet it turned out to be much more than that. The discourse surrounding *mūrtipūjā* exemplifies a negotiation of the use and interpretation of the *śāstras*, their role in contemporary India, and their role in development and political action. Again, the opposing perspectives of the two scholars are quite evident: Svāmī Dayānanda subsumed the *śāstras* into his political design, anticipating the future trajectory of Hindu nationalism, of which he is a forerunner. In contrast, Svāmī Karapātrī remained grounded in the *śāstras*, a choice that prevented him from making compromises and pursuing his political design.

As a final point, I share a few insights from Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda Sarasvatī, disciple and successor of Svāmī Svarūpānanda at the Śaṅkarācarya seat of Jyotirmath and part of

Svāmī Karapātrī's legacy (see subchapter 1.1 in the Introduction). I asked Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda[362] about the current situation of the Samājī-Sanātanī conflict. I started by inquiring about the contemporary significance of the Ārya Samāja's ban on *mūrtipūjā*:

> The Ārya Samājīs have always been obstinate and will continue to be so [regarding their aversion to *mūrtis*]. Despite this, they have not been successful with the people: their ideas have not taken root among them. But the RSS is composed of Ārya Samājīs, so currently, Ārya Samājīs hold power in India. When the ruling power in India talks about Hindus, they actually mean the Ārya Samājīs, and ordinary people accept this because they cannot rebel even if they think differently [...] People are Sanātana Hindus, but in political power, there is the hegemony of the Ārya Samājīs.

I then asked about his relationship with the local Ārya Samāja centers; he responded:

> Many Ārya Samājīs visit me; there is dialogue with them. A little while ago, they invited me to one of their events. I responded that I would attend if there were a *śastrārtha*. They said they only wanted me as a guest, so I sent one of my disciples in my place. I sent Mukundānandajī with my auspicious message, which he read once he arrived there.
>
> Yes, I am in contact with the Ārya Samājīs. For instance, Medhā Devījī was the principal of the Pāṇini Kanyā Mahāvidyālay.[363] Her intention was to erect a temple in honor of Pāṇini. I expressed my consent, and she asked for my help. So, I helped her: I visited the site during the temple construction and gave her money. The doctrine (*siddhānt*) is one thing, personal relations (*vyavahār*) are another. As long as my doctrine (*siddhānt*) is not refuted by another, I stick to mine; personal relations (*vyavahār*) have nothing to do with it. One can maintain good personal relations (*vyavahār*) even with people of different doctrines (*siddhānt*).

I also enquired with Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda about his relationship with the other two primary centers of Svāmī Karapātrī's legacy in Varanasi: the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣā Maṇḍala and the Karapātrī Dham, which are respectively a Vedic learning center and an *āśram* for *saṃnyāsīs*. He replied:

> The Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣā Maṇḍala operates according to its own parameters, while the Ārya Samājīs and the Pāṇini Kanyā Mahāvidyālay follow their own. There is no dispute between the two, and both try to prevent any conflict (they do not get in each other's way). There is cooperation between the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣā Maṇḍala and the Karapatrī Dhām of Benares. Currently, the head of the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣā Maṇḍala is Śaṅkardev Caitanya Brahmacārī. Lakṣmaṇ Caitanyajī succeeded Svāmī Karapatrījī, and after him came Śaṅkardev Caitanyajī, who is the disciple of

[362] I conducted this interview on the 25th of October 2019 in the Śrī Vidyā Maṭha of Varanasi, where Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda resides when he is in the city.
[363] This is an Ārya Samāja school for Vedic learning for girls based in Varanasi (see Hüsken 2022).

> Karapātrījī's disciple. We have a very good relationship with him; the two of us belong to the same family.

From the words of Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda, I gather that even today, there is a perception of difference between the Samājīa and the Sanātanīs. Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda's words reveal that there is a perception of polarity between the political power that is Samājī and the people who are Sanātanī. While this suggests a shift in power relations, indicating that Ārya Samāja holds power now, it also reflects the enduring belief that the majority of the population remains orthodox and, therefore, Sanātanī. Secondly, beyond the perception of power disparity, Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda reveals that the nuances of the conflict between Samajīs and Sanātanīs have faded. This is to the point that one could say there is no longer any conflict as such, but rather a mutual understanding that differences persist at the doctrinal level. In contrast, on a personal level and in day-to-day relationships, it seems that there is an intention (at least in the case of Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda and the Ārya Samāja in Varanasi) to maintain friendly relations as long as one side does not impede the other. Additionally, Svāmī Avimukteśvarānanda testifies that while the relationships with the Samājīs are friendly, the other centers in the city of Varanasi related to the memory of Svāmī Karapātrī form with him one big family.

This work showcases the voices of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī in delineating and shaping perspectives on Hindu identity, along with the complex debates surrounding conservative and supposedly text-based religious, social, and political programs. This is but one further necessary step toward a better understanding of the Samājī-Sanātanī debate. Further studies on this phenomenon will help uncover a greater variety of voices present in 19th- and 20th-century India, as well as in the 21st century, which are collectively labeled as religious conservatism. I leave this endeavor to future works. It would be particularly fruitful to do further research on the 'hot years' of the debate between the Ārya Samāja and the Sanātanīs, through the analysis of the works of Kālūrām Śāstrī and of other publications listed in subchapter 7.1. Another opening research area is the study of Svāmī Karapātrī's critique of Hindu nationalism, especially in relation to the use of the *śāstras*. Lastly, deeper research on Svāmī Karapātrī's magazines *Siddhānta* and *Sanmarga* would allow for a broader understanding of the Sanātanī discourses and perspectives on modern India, and their positioning in social, political, spiritual, and international matters. A positioning that, following the example of Svāmī Karapātrī, seeks to screen everything through the lens of the *śāstras*, is against social and religious reform, and yet opposes the extremism of Hindu nationalism.

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[364] A note on the transliteration of the names of authors and book titles in Hindi and Sanskrit: when all editorial information is presented in Hindi or Sanskrit, I transcribe names and titles according to the guidelines detailed in the Introduction. Specifically, I use the IAST system for both languages, adding the schwa deletion for Hindi. Conversely, when books include an introductory page with author names and titles already rendered in Latin script, I report the spellings as presented, even when this results in inconsistencies. for instance, reporting the same surname as both Shastri and Śastrī. In some cases, titles and names appear partially with diacritics and partially without. Even in this case, I preserve the original transliteration as found in the source.

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Estratto per riassunto della tesi di dottorato

L'estratto (max. 1000 battute) deve essere redatto sia in lingua italiana che in lingua inglese e nella lingua straniera eventualmente indicata dal Collegio dei docenti.

L'estratto va firmato e rilegato come ultimo foglio della tesi.

Studente: Anna Scarabel matricola: 838195

Dottorato: Studi Sull'Asia e Sull'Africa

Ciclo: 35

Titolo della tesi: Vedic Authority and Icon Worship: Svāmī Dayānanda, Svāmī Karapātrī and the Samājī-Sanātanī Debate

Abstract: In my research, I investigate how the notion of orthodoxy within Hindu traditions evolved, faced challenges, and was redefined in colonial and post-colonial India. Central to this inquiry is a significant yet overlooked debate between two influential groups: the Ārya Samājīs and the Sanātana Dharmīs. The Ārya Samāja emerged in the 19th century as a reform movement that contested established norms—including the Hindu textual canon, the caste system, and the practice of *mūrtipūjā*, or icon worship. Conversely, Sanātana Dharma groups upheld traditional beliefs and resisted these changes. My primary focus is the debate over icon worship in the writings of Svāmī Dayānanda (1824–1883), the founder of the Ārya Samāja, and Svāmī Karapātrī (1907–1982), who, nearly a century later, acted as a spokesperson for Sanātana Dharma and opposed Svāmī Dayānanda's views, the ideological foundation of the Ārya Samāja.

Nella mia ricerca indago su come la nozione di ortodossia all'interno delle tradizioni indù si sia evoluta, abbia affrontato sfide e sia stata ridefinita durante il XIX e il XX secolo. Al centro di questa indagine c'è un dibattito significativo ma trascurato tra due gruppi influenti: l'Ārya Samāja e gli appartenenti al 'Sanātana Dharma'. L'Ārya Samāja emerse nel XIX secolo come movimento di riforma che contestava norme consolidate, tra cui il canone testuale indù, il sistema delle caste e la pratica della *mūrtipūjā*, o culto delle icone. Al contrario, gruppi ortodossi identificatisi con l'etichetta di Sanātana Dharma hanno mantenuto le credenze tradizionali e si sono attivamente opposti a questi cambiamenti. Il mio obiettivo principale è il dibattito sul culto delle icone negli scritti di Svāmī Dayānanda (1824-1883), il fondatore dell'Ārya Samāja, e di Svāmī Karapātrī (1907-1982), che, quasi un secolo dopo, agì come portavoce del Sanātana Dharma e si oppose alle opinioni di Svāmī Dayānanda, fondamento ideologico dell'Ārya Samāja.

Firma dello studente

Anna Scarabel