

Swami Violates *Dharma*

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Seeker: Dear Ramji, the scandal around Swami Suddhananda has been bothering me. As you know, he was my teacher and I still love him, but I cannot go to see him anymore. I don't understand how this can happen. He was such a good teacher. Can you perhaps explain it to me?

Ramji: The Suddhananda story is a case of self-realization but not self-actualization. His ego co-opted the knowledge and remained in control of the sex *vasana*. I call it "enlightenment sickness." Had he fully assimilated the knowledge "I am awareness," the knowledge would have rooted out the *vasana* eventually. When all the binding *vasanas* are rooted out, you are self-actualized. When the knowledge is firm you can't violate *dharma*. You are *dharma*. His *vasana* was more powerful than his knowledge. He has some work to do.

This is *Isvara's* way of telling him that he has work to do. He is very conflicted because if he wants to indulge that *vasana* then he needs to take off the orange robe. But he can't take it off, because it is his power. He needs it to lure the women and get money. What woman is going to shag an aging Indian that has no glory or does not hold out the prospect of enlightenment? From what I understand, these women, however, were not sex- or power-crazed like many of the Western women who go to India to bag a *swami* or a *yogi*. They were the vulnerable types, so this is a particularly egregious violation of *dharma*.

The right thing for him to do is to start again, take off the orange clothes because it is a total violation of *sanyassi dharma* and teach as a householder, making it clear that he has *vasanas*. It is the deceit and the abuse of power that is the issue, not sex.

I met him several times and had some nice chats. But from the beginning I felt that there was something about him that was not right, that he was hiding something. I gave him the benefit of the doubt and recommended him. I am sorry I did, but what to do except give an explanation for those students of his that are suffering from it?

~ Love, Ramji