

[Pornography on the net: www.sex@home.com](http://www.sex@home.com)

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#### PUBLISHER'S DESK

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Selling sex on the Internet is big, big business. Logging on is neither good nor bad, but an obstacle in many ways.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Live and learn, live and learn. we learn something every day, and it is not always what we want to learn. Sometimes it is good for us to know, and other times not so good. It is difficult for us to speak of certain subjects. They are too sensitive, taboo, delicate and private, and so we avoid them. But it is also necessary to understand and cope with certain things, and if father and grandmother are not speaking about them, then others must. Pornography is one. Not that it is bad, in the sinful sense. Hinduism is too tolerant of sexuality to make such pronouncements. We can say it is neither good nor bad, but can say it does place big obstacles in relationships, including unexplainable misunderstandings leading to arguments. And it certainly can and does interfere with serious spiritual effort and progress. Those on the path of sadhana are admonished to "give it up," just "give it up." The porno path is of itself a downhill path to be avoided. It is ever enticing but never fulfilling. I recently was told that pornography is addictive. I always understood that alcohol, tobacco and certain drugs are addictive. But to find out that pornography is addictive, that

was a new one for me.

Looking at the results in a porno addict's life, we can see that sex on the Internet is all consuming. They say it is more fun, more stimulating, more exciting and more satisfying than the wife waiting in the other room. Well, that may be true, giving a little for untruth on both sides. But the real problem is with sons and daughters who become addicted to this kind of stimulation long before their time. Most parents in the modern Hindu community work and get two paychecks every payday. They have little or no time at all to give to their children. This duty is often left to a baby sitter for the young, and the older children baby-sit when they are able. What goes on behind those closed doors, when the shades are down and the computer is on, nobody knows and nobody is telling. "Don't ask, don't tell" seems to be the basis in most homes. Pornography is a secret thing, but all that is seen is carried forward in the mind as visual images and then recreated in dreams long after the computer has been turned off. Being an "in thing," it is often the joke at men's gatherings.

During this past year, I have been delving into the lives of those among my congregation who are addicted to blue movies, Internet sex sites and all the modern means of stimulation. To say the least, interesting discoveries were made. The most hurtful of them all is a sexually matured man, accustomed to pornography, marrying an innocent virgin girl who absolutely cannot perform the way he expects and who is then beaten or burned, divorced or traded in for another. This crisis is often blamed on dowry. Or it's claimed she really wasn't a virgin, so he had to send her back to her family. One would only know the truth from an unabated and totally honest

confession by the young man. There is much to be said for early marriage, before the boy is exposed to the sexual-fantasy world and all its temptations, before he develops habit patterns that absolutely cannot be broken by seven steps around the sacred fire. Parents should question their children's personal life before arranging a marriage.

Psychologically, pornography is closely linked to adultery. Maybe the other woman is not warm flesh and bones, but she is an unforgettable, reoccurring image within his mind, taking up the mental real estate. She appears quite alive in his dreams--more beautiful, more accomplished, more seductive, more enchanting, more alluring than the slightly overweight wife laying by his side who has given birth to three children.

Dad never shares his pornographic books, magazines or worldwide web addresses with his teenager, and neither does Mom. But the children are allowed to become addicted on their own, with free, unchaperoned time at the keyboard. Does this make any sense to you? It certainly doesn't to me. Shall I continue? Look at the picture on this page. It all starts with the first peek. And this kind of peeking is not a city in China. I was told, and I didn't want to hear it, that pornography is all-encompassing on the Internet. It helps boys and girls establish their sexual identity even at a very young age. Men and women, men and men, women with women, trois, quatre, cinq, how to kiss and how to do many other things--it's all there.

Question: Do you know what your children are doing at home together when you are both at work or out receiving an award

for some social outreach beyond your family? Are they surfing porno sites on the Web? Even in the highly ethical families of my international congregation, this is sometimes happening.

In the "old days," pornography was available in the big cities only. Places with sex shops and prostitutes were called red light districts. During the first World War, soldiers were made to feel at home with posters of pin-up girls. These were girls in bathing suits, well covered up by today's standards but healthily endowed. In America before the turn of the century, the skirts did not show the ankles. Then they did. A big uproar! Moralists said showing ankles made women more sexually attractive to the men. Then up and up went the skirts, to way above the knees. Have you ever looked at knees? Some say they are the ugliest part of the human body.

I could go on and on. My job as satguru of so many is to break up addictions. It's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it. The idea of porno addiction was very new to me, and we needed a prayashchitta, penance. So, we asked Sri Sri Sri Pramukhswami's senior sadhus the remedy to be used. His Swami Narayanan Fellowship is one of the strictest orders in the world, if not the strictest. They said to look at a girl and follow her movement for five seconds as she walks would require a fast for 24 hours. This is a self-imposed penance among their 600 sadhus. They know, as our wise scriptures say, that sex manifests in eight levels, one leading to the other: fantasy, glorification, flirtation, lustful glances, secret love talk, amorous longing, rendezvous and intercourse. If the brothers see someone not eating breakfast, lunch and dinner for one or two days, everyone knows he is trying to get control of the dragon, striving to channel the force into tireless

creativity.

Advice: when your husband seems "out of it," not at home even when he is there, sits in his shrine room, won't eat his dinner, breakfast or lunch for several days, while consuming fruit, yogurt and a more sattvic diet, do not live under the illusion that he is going to become a sadhu. He may just be trying to break the cycle of his addiction to pornographic viewing, thinking and dreaming. Know that he really loves you and never, ever question him about his self-imposed sadhana. Rather, choose the best of fruits (and don't mix citrus fruits with alkaline fruits and yogurt; see my new book, Lemurian Scrolls, for a great recipe). And when you find all those unspeakable pictures in the garbage can along with a couple of x-rated videos and CDs, don't throw your findings up in his face, even if you are perturbed and angry with him. This might be his excuse to again pursue his addiction and perverse enjoyment, possibly without you in his life.

Pornography is not only on the Internet. In hotels, we are told, four- and five-star, there are channels on cable TV that guests buy to watch hard- and soft-core pornography. Is this fun for the whole family? No, it is not. The cable channels on regular TV also bring all this into every home. It even flows through the telephone. Watch the bills. They might be telling a story of buying fantasy sex.

It may be argued that ancient Hindus invented pornography, considering some of the compromising images carved in temples. But this is out in the open. The whole family can stand and see--the six-year old, the ten-year old, Mom and

Dad. Recently the Spice Girls, a famous band from the UK known for their sassy, sexy ways, planned to perform in front of the Khajuraho Temple. Hindu activists responded that this was unthinkable because "eroticism without spirituality is nothing but pornography."

On the positive side, they say, pornography is disease free. There is no danger of venereal disease. We might agree, but must say that the consequences mentally are even more devastating, bringing "dis-ease" that no doctor can cure, for which there are no quick remedies, no drugs. On the other hand, proclaims the Tirukural, "Those who are free from arrogance, anger and lust will prosper in great dignity." So, a word to the wise is sufficient, but a thousand to the fool is not quite enough.