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## **Chapter 40: Conceit or Pride**

Conceit and boastfulness is present in every individual to a lesser or greater extent. Every person will have a desire to project himself by performing some feat or other. He intends to attract the attention of others around him through these actions. In a child these tendencies start manifesting themselves when it is about a year old.

The child wants to move around and attract the attention of others through its antics. It will repeat acts that make the parents and others happy. It will be pleased at the reaction of the parents and feels a subtle pride at its success in making them happy. The child sometimes indicates its satisfaction through gestures as if to assert its importance.

Pride in itself is not a negative trait. In fact, this feeling spurs an individual to strive for greater achievement with a competitive spirit. The child works hard to get a higher grade in his class. He tries to develop skills at elocution or become a skilled painter. It is this desire in the child to compete that proves the harbinger of the great poets, artists, authors and scientists of the future.

The presence of this trait of pride in children need not be a cause for worry. But the important thing is that it must be gainfully exploited to the advantage of the child. If it is guided in the right direction there can be salutary results. In the initial stages the child cannot distinguish between good and bad. It observes the reactions of the parents to decide at its actions and to arrive at a conclusion. A careful mentor will encourage the child's desirable actions by expressing happiness at them. The mentor can encourage good manners in a child by indicating his displeasure at its undesirable actions.

Some thoughtless parents, out of their love for the child, shower excessive adulation and praise without giving a thought as to whether the actions of the child are desirable or not. They thus lay the foundations of bad manners in the child inadvertently. In their adulation for the child they exaggerate its good qualities and keep praising the child at the drop of a hat.

There is every probability of such a child becoming conceited and progressively he becomes egotistic and arrogant. He will start expecting others' adulation as he does from his parents. When the child fails in getting the desired response, he becomes distraught. He develops rancor towards people and might

even go to the extent of thinking of causing harm to them at a later stage.

The parents should bear in mind that they have to groom the thinking of the child to guide him on the path of righteousness. Then will come the stage that the parents divert the child's mind towards God. Now on, if any of the child's action is found incorrect, instead of saying that dad doesn't approve of it, they should tell him that God will not approve of it.

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