

## Positive Self-Work Strategies in Light of the Holy Quran, Surat Al-Kahf as a Model

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### Abstract

Many Islamic societies are looking for factors of renaissance and progress, and are trying hard to plan and make an effort to reach them, and individuals and groups are rushing to achieve this, and this requires foundations and controls to reach the desired goal. The images of positivity in the Holy Quran have varied, and the features of building the individual in several places, and among the noble surahs that emphasized these images is Surat Al-Kahf, which clarified the strategies, foundations and rules of positive self-work. This topic helps in discovering the areas of positivity in the situations of the stories mentioned in Surat Al-Kahf and deducing the Quranic strategy in building a positive personality through the Holy Surah. And to identify the features of the positive personality as they appear in it. And to spread the culture of interaction and positivity among the members of the Muslim generation by looking at positive situations. The problem of the research lies in the lack of knowledge of the strategies, foundations and controls that help achieve positive work at the individual level as mentioned in the Holy Quran. A set of approaches were used in this research to achieve the desired goals, namely: the inductive, descriptive and analytical approaches. Among the most important results: The Holy Surah has set an integrated strategy for building the individual, represented in a clear set of foundations and steps to control individual and psychological work within society. The Surah also presented realistic practical models represented in the story of the People of the Cave, the owner of the two gardens, Moses - peace be upon him - with Al-Khidr, and the story of Dhul-Qarnayn. It emphasized that the desired success can only be achieved by combining individual and collective efforts within society. And that building a distinguished personal personality, adhering to virtuous morals and positive values, correct ideas, and making sound decisions must lead to sound results.

**Keywords:** Strategies, Positive Work, The Soul, Surah Al-Kahf.

### Introduction

Many Islamic societies are looking for factors of renaissance and progress, and are trying hard to plan and make an effort to reach them, and individuals and groups are rushing to achieve

this, and this requires foundations and controls to reach the desired goal. This topic helps in discovering the positive aspects of the situations of the stories mentioned in Surat Al-Kahf as follows:

- 1- Deriving the Quranic approach to building a positive personality through the Noble Surah.
- 2- Identifying the features of a positive personality as they appear in the blessed Surah.
- 3- Spreading the culture of interaction and positivity among the members of the Muslim generation by looking at the positive situations in the Noble Surah.
- 4- Urging scholars, writers and students of knowledge to delve into discovering positive situations and activating them in society and urging Muslims to comply with them.

### **Research Problem**

The problem of the research lies in the lack of knowledge of the strategies, foundations and controls that help achieve positive work on the personal and psychological level of individuals as mentioned in the Holy Quran.

### **Objectives**

- 1- Standing on the practical strategies for building the self in Surat Al-Kahf.
- 2- Clarifying the foundations of a positive personality and its features on the individual level.
- 3- Providing a suitable practical role model to build a positive personality through the characters of the Surah.
- 4- Clarifying the effects of a positive personality in an individual's life.

### **Methodology**

In this research, I used a set of methods to achieve the desired goals, namely: the inductive, descriptive and analytical methods. I presented the Quranic verses, analyzed them and linked them to each other to reach a thematic unity and final results that achieve the research goals according to the plan set.

### **The Concept of Strategy**

It is a non-Arabic word, and by tracing the meanings and uses of the word, it becomes clear that what is meant by it is: high-level planning that ensures the achievement of goals through the use of specific means to reach the goal quickly.

### **Positivity as a Term**

It seems that positivity as a modern term corresponding to the meaning of negativity does not have a strong apparent connection to the linguistic derivation mentioned above, and its concept can be defined as follows:

Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Louh defined it as: "A psychological and behavioral state that gives a person an optimistic and charitable view of individuals, organizations and societies, and encourages him to perform his legal and moral responsibilities." Positivity has been said to be: a psychological state that stems from within the individual, nourished by faith, and the believer's sense of individual responsibility, which drives the believer to be selfless, to hasten to do good deeds, to give and sacrifice, to seize opportunities, and to invest in reality (Qasim, 2014).

After these diverse and multiple definitions, we can define positive work strategies as: a set of rules and tangible and moral matters, organized in a systematic form, and can be applied practically within the responsibility incumbent upon the individual to carry out a specific task, after faith is established in his heart, and his sense of individual responsibility to adapt the reality around him to reach a specific goal in reforming the self, reforming society, and the ability to interact with others.

Psychological and individual foundations of a positive personality: The first stage of positive work must be with oneself, for it is the source of good and evil, as Allah the Almighty said: And by the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it with [distinction from] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instils it with corruption (Ash-Shams: 7-10). So if a person can overcome himself, he will move towards others with his work, not caring about the consequences or difficulties that befall him to achieve his goal. "Be assured that the positive, constructive change that you make within yourself will have a beneficial effect on your personality and all your activities" (Al-Mulla, 1997).

We must know that "self-identity is: the mental image that a person carries about himself and his sense of self." "These positives in our minds and feelings create in our lives: positivity, optimism, energy, the ability to defend oneself, and repel the attacks that come to us from the devils of mankind and jinn, and greater than them is the self-talk" (Hariri, 2003). Surat Al-Kahf explains the foundations of positive work towards oneself and the individual in many points, the most important of which are the following:

### **Individuality of Assignment**

This is by feeling his responsibility as an individual for what Allah has commanded and forbidden, and that he will be held accountable as an individual, and that he and those around him are responsible like him, except that the rule is: "And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another" (Al-An'am: 164), and the Almighty's saying: "And We have fastened every man's fate to his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open. Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant" (Al-Isra': 13-14).

Surah Al-Kahf comes to deepen these meanings in the human soul by directing individual commands in dealing with the soul, and directing the speech to the individual represented in the person of the Noble Prophet - may God bless him and grant him peace - and not the group as in His saying: {And recite what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His words, and you will not find besides Him any refuge. And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life. And do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance.} And he followed his own desires, and his affair was in vain (Al-Kahf: 27-28).

The Surah reminds every human being of what he will face in terms of accountability and questioning alone, and that he will stand for accountability alone and unique as his Lord created him the first time in the Almighty's saying: (And the Day We set the mountains in motion and you see the earth laid bare and We gather them and do not leave behind one of

them, and they are presented before your Lord in rows, [saying], "You have certainly come to Us as We created you the first time. Rather, you claimed that We would not make an appointment for you.") (Al-Kahf: 47-48) This is so that each of us begins with himself first before To guide others, so that he is not like a candle that burns to light the way for others. This sense of responsibility will make the Muslim do his duty towards what God has commanded him to do without looking at the actions of others, or their praise of him.

Focusing on the great matters and avoiding delving into small side issues is evident in three places

First: In the call not to delve into the length of their stay in the cave: The Truth, the Almighty, spoke about the disagreement that arose between the People of the Cave about the length of their stay in the cave, and the details related to them, which in reality are knowledge that does not benefit and ignorance that does not harm. The Almighty said: And thus We raised them up that they might ask one another. One of them said, "How long did you stay?" They said, "We stayed a day or part of a day." They said, "Your Lord is most knowing of how long you stayed..." (Al-Kahf: 19).

And the Almighty said: They said, "Your Lord knows best how long you stayed..." and this is a statement on the tongue of a group of them who wanted to end the dispute in this issue, so their position was positive, so they said to their brothers: Leave this issue that is of no benefit, and leave its matter to Allah Almighty, then they delved into a useful matter and said: Send one of you with this silver of yours to the city, and let him see which of them is the best food, and let him bring you provision from it, and let him be gentle, and let no one know about you.

The second: Leaving talk about their number and being busy with what is more important. Allah Almighty teaches us not to delve into arguments that are of no benefit, and to move on to what is beneficial and useful. After Allah Almighty mentioned the story of the People of the Cave and explained that the people They talked about their number and differed in their opinions. God Almighty said: "They will say, 'Three, their fourth being their dog.' And they will say, 'Five, their sixth being their dog,' guessing at the unseen. And they will say, 'Seven, their eighth being their dog.' Say, 'My Lord knows best their number. None knows them except a few. So do not dispute about them except an outward dispute, and do not ask any of them about them'" (Al-Kahf: 22). This difference is of no benefit; Knowledge of it is of no benefit, just as ignorance of it is of no harm because the Qur'an focuses on the places of admonition and exhortation.

Third: In the conversation of Al-Khidr with our master Moses - peace be upon him. The blessed verse clarifies that the scholar knows when to elaborate in the conversation if the matter requires elaboration, when to be brief if the matter requires brevity, and when to be silent if the matter requires silence. So when our master Moses asked Al-Khidr: Shall I follow you so that you may teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment? (Al-Kahf: 66), the answer was: {He said: Then if you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I mention it to you (Al-Kahf: 70). We learn from the above that the Muslim must avoid arguing about useless matters in which ignorance does not harm, just as knowledge of them does not benefit, as happened in the story of the People of the Cave. If the purpose of arguing with an opponent is to prove a truth mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, then it is permissible.

**Commitment to Good Company and Not Sitting With Negative People**

After Allah the Almighty mentioned the story of the young men of the cave who loved each other for the sake of Allah and their company was good, Allah the Almighty commanded His Messenger Muhammad - may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him - to be patient with his poor believing companions, so Allah the Almighty said: {And be patient with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, desiring... (Al-Kahf: 28).

**Humility in seeking knowledge**

The positivity in the story of Moses with Al-Khidr, peace be upon them, is evident through Moses' humility and his politeness as a student of knowledge towards his teacher Al-Khidr during their companionship, even though Moses, peace be upon him, is the Prophet of God Almighty and His interlocutor, and he is one of the resolute messengers. However, he was not conceited and stood politely and humbly before his teacher Al-Khidr. This is evident in the Almighty's saying: {He said, "You will find me, if God wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in anything" (Al-Kahf: 69), where he presented the will and did not say: patient, God willing, then he added another characteristic, which is that he would not disobey his teacher in anything. Moses, peace be upon him, was polite and humble when he asked to follow his teacher, so he did not say: Shall I be your colleague, companion, or friend? But he expressed it through following, as Allah the Almighty said: Moses said to him, "Shall I follow you so that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?" (Al-Kahf: 66). This scene from the story teaches us that the seeker of knowledge should not tire or become weary of seeking knowledge, even if it is difficult and tiring, and that he should be polite and humble no matter how high his social status is among people, and not be deceived by his knowledge, certificate, or status no matter how high it is.

**Positive Self-Talk**

Self-talk: "It is what a person says or affirms to himself when he is affected by himself, or interacts with his self-assessment of his performance" (Al-Mulla, 1418). The positivity is evident in Dhul-Qarnayn's response, attributing all the credit for strength and empowerment to God, as God Almighty said: "He said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true' (Al-Kahf: 98).

He was not deceived by money or power, nor did he become arrogant or conceited, nor did he become intoxicated by the ecstasy of power and knowledge. Rather, he remembered God, thanked Him, and returned to Him the righteous work that He had guided him to, and disavowed his strength to the strength of God, and entrusted the matter to Him. He dealt with the temptation of power with sincerity and humility to God Almighty. Dhul-Qarnayn declared his belief in God and the Last Day, and that the mountains, barriers, and dams will be crushed before the Day of Judgment, and the earth will return to being level, as God Almighty said: "And the earth and the mountains will be lifted up and crushed with a single blow" [Al-Haqqah: 14].

**Positive Expectations of Things and Being Optimistic and Hopeful**

Optimism means: "Belief in positive results, and expecting them even in the most difficult situations, crises, and challenges" (Scott, 2003). One of its fruits is that the optimist feels his authority and strength and that he is in control of his life with wisdom and intelligence, even

when facing various problems. This characteristic is evident in the conversation of our master Moses - peace be upon him - with Al-Khidr. When Al-Khidr told him that he would not be able to be patient with him because he did not know what Al-Khidr was doing, our master Moses' response - peace be upon him - was full of positive anticipation of what his situation would be in the future, so he said: He said, "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in anything" (Al-Kahf: 69).

Likewise, in Dhul-Qarnayn's anticipation of solving the great problem that befell the people who asked him to build them a dam to protect them from the corruption of Gog and Magog and their repeated attacks on them, we find that his response was also full of positive anticipation of the success of the mission and the prevention of these attacks, so he said: He said, "That in which my Lord has empowered me is better, so help me with strength; I will make a way for you to be patient" (Al-Kahf: 69) "Between you and them is a barrier" (Al-Kahf: 95). From here, the Muslim must develop within himself the law of positive expectation of things, and have good thoughts about his Lord, even if the circumstances surrounding him are extremely difficult and bad and do not, at first glance, carry within them any good tidings or relief from a crisis that the person is going through.

### **Initiative Without Assignment**

This is when a person starts the work himself without being asked to do so, and this is because he is convinced of the necessity of positive work and the individual responsibility falls on his shoulders, so he starts working without waiting for an assignment to do so, "Initiative is directly taking action and taking the lead in accomplishing things and following up on tasks. It is an influential and effective means of achieving high levels of personal effectiveness. Initiative stems from feelings of self-confidence, positivity, and bearing responsibility, and is an indicator of a high level of maturity. There is no doubt that it is evidence that a person's motivations are internal and that he moves himself by himself. Let us remember that God Almighty, in light of His comprehensive will, created man free to make his decision and choose his action" (Al-Faqih, 2004).

A person with a positive personality must be an initiator of every action that is in the interest of Muslims; the initiative is a beautiful word and a great meaning; it suggests seriousness, gives a sense of determination, indicates high ambition, and calls for contributing to all areas of goodness. Perhaps this positive initiative is clearly shown in the three actions that Al-Khidr did. When he breached the ship, killed the boy, and built the wall, this was his initiative without any assignment. As soon as he had the knowledge that God had given him, Al-Khidr embarked on positive action and did not pay attention to the denial of the Prophet of God, Moses, peace be upon him.

Likewise, he did not take time with the Prophet of God to correct his view of him at the time. Rather, he completed all of his actions, then after the work was finished, he began to explain the reasons that made him embark on these actions that appeared on the surface to be bad and reprehensible actions. The negative initiative that leads to disbelief, disobedience and the destruction of personal life is also evident in the refusal of Iblis - may God curse him - to prostrate to Adam, which was the reason for his departure from faith and the destruction of himself and his offspring, and even his attempt to seduce all of the children of Adam, as in the Almighty's saying: And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated,



except for Iblis. He was one of the jinn and disobeyed the command of his Lord. Then would you take him and his offspring as allies instead of Me while they are an enemy to you? An evil exchange for the wrongdoers (Al-Kahf: 50).

### **Conclusion**

After this blessed journey with the foundations of positive action as stated in Surat Al-Kahf, I think We have learned about the most important of these foundations that help in the success of work, and they were on the personal and psychological level. We conclude with the most important results and recommendations:

### **Results**

- 1- The Surah has set a complete strategy for building the self and the individual, represented in seven controls and steps as follows:
  - i. Individual assignment.
  - ii. Focusing on the great matters and leaving the small side matters.
  - iii. Commitment to good company and not sitting with negative people.
  - iv. Humility in seeking knowledge.
  - v. Positive self-talk.
  - vi. Positive expectations of things and being optimistic and hopeful.
  - vii. Initiative without assignment.
- 2- The Surah presented realistic practical models represented in the story of the People of the Cave, the owner of the two gardens, Moses - peace be upon him - with Al-Khidr, and the story of Dhul-Qarnayn.
- 3- The desired success can only be achieved by combining individual and collective efforts within society.
- 4- Building a distinguished personal character, committing to virtuous morals and positive values, correct ideas, and making sound decisions must lead to sound results.

### **Recommendations**

1. Spreading the culture of interaction and positivity among the Muslim generation by looking at positive attitudes and working to apply them.
2. Every individual must care about himself and his society; one cannot progress without the other.
3. Urging scholars, writers and students of knowledge to delve into discovering the positive attitudes found in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and activating them in society, and urging Muslims to comply with them.

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