

## What Is Positive and Constructive Thinking?

### What Are Its Effects?

#### The Most Important Features of Positive and Constructive Thinking

“One hour of your contemplation is better than seventy years of worship.”<sup>1</sup>

Whenever the worth of contemplation is discussed, this outstanding *hadith* is mentioned. In fact, most of us have heard and acknowledged it several times. How often have we regarded the characteristics of positive and constructive thinking and topics worth thinking about? Honestly, most things we think about all day long are absurd and worthless, and it is unlikely that the person who said this *hadith* meant such thoughts.

Thinking is somehow the same as cooking. To have a good meal, these below-mentioned conditions should be met: availability of raw materials, their quality, as well as the proficiency of the cook. If one of these factors is ignored, the cooking process stops or the desired result is not achieved.

Picking a good topic is the first step for thinking. To acquire thinking skills, in addition to choosing a good topic, we must learn how to think. Our point of view on the topic is important as its output leads to growth in our human dimension. We can examine any subject from different perspectives even if the subject is useful and advantageous but all of them are not constructive. As you remember, in the

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<sup>1</sup>. Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 68, p. 327.

lesson on fire and light, everything in this world has both fire and light; it can be positive and constructive as well as negative and destructive. Thinking is not exempt from this rule.

Next, we want to explore what the most important characteristics of positive and constructive thinking are, and based on what criteria we can distinguish positive and constructive thinking from negative and destructive thinking.

### **Features of Positive and Constructive Thinking**

Characteristics of positive and constructive thinking in scientific terms: "Thinking means trying to solve problems and discover the unknowns." This definition of thinking is general and universal, but the type of thinking that God repeatedly refers to in the Quran and is superior to seventy years of praying goes beyond this. According to Islam, anything is not worthy of thinking about and spending time on. Our lifetime is finite and thinking about absurd matters would deter us from handling our fateful and vital affairs. Besides, thinking is the heart's nourishment, so if being impure and unhealthy, it will afflict the heart. By overthinking about anything, we nurture it in our soul and end up becoming like it. In fact, our thoughts are absorbed by our hearts and souls which will manifest whatever they have absorbed in the hereafter, like a compressed capsule opening to reveal its content. So the topics we think about and the deeds that are derived from the output of our thoughts are of great importance. Positive and constructive thinking takes us millions of years ahead in the hereafter and the eternal system, while weak and flawed thoughts undermine all our praying and good deeds. The worth of individuals depends on their thoughts and desires, and people in the hereafter will

be resurrected based on their intentions, not their deeds. Thinking produces intentions. Defining the main characteristics of positive and constructive thinking, we can say this type of thinking has the power to construct, which means it can make us human, not an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, and, not even an angel. Positive and constructive thinking is one that helps us understand ourselves, liberating us from limited, materialistic, and one-dimensional perspectives about ourselves and the world. Ultimately, it brings us happiness and peace in this world, as well as bliss in the hereafter.

Outside this framework, any type of thinking, even if it has an intellectual and modern appearance, is rotten and worthless because the criterion for the soundness of an idea is not its being up-to-date or modern, but its compatibility with the human truth. A thought that leads to emptiness, aimlessness, and depression, or turns a person into an animal that constantly seeks to satisfy its instincts is a sick, corrupt, and worn-out thought, even if it has a prestigious and classy name and carries the suffix "Ism," like Humanism, Nihilism, Marxism, etc.

### **The Most Important Effects of Positive and Constructive Thinking**

If thinking is systematic and based on human principles, it has many positive effects and results, some of which we will mention below:

- Thinking is the engine of the heart, and it can bring us closer to God and the purpose of our creation much more than worship.
- Healthy thinking helps us recognize the presence of God in every phase of life, empowering us to face obstacles and challenges without fear or despair.

- Thinking leads us to guidance and growth and makes us stop doing deeds that endanger our eternal life and the hereafter.
- Thinking burns the root of doubt and misconception, replacing them with certainty. A person who does not think always harbors doubts in his heart, and even if he dedicates his entire life to worship, he will eventually give up and show his inward state.
- Continuous and systematic thinking leads to victories by the heart. Those who contemplate find their way into the inner state of the world and understand things that cannot be understood by the general public.
- Thinking about the philosophy of creation leads to self-knowledge, and self-knowledge leads to friendship and interaction with the phenomena of the world. A person who knows himself loves and is at peace with everything in the world.

What other important effects come to your mind? Please share them with us in the comments section.