



Criticizing the Division of Polytheists Based on Belief in Resurrection from the Perspective of Patricia Crone

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Abstract

Orientalists are looking for new ways to study the Qur'an; among those who emphasize the method of reconstructing the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an is Patricia Crone, who presents her views on a belief subject in a complex article entitled "The Qur'anic Mushrikun and Resurrection" and this view has been reviewed and criticized by the author. Crone's opinion is that the polytheists are not explicitly distinguished by vague words based on their belief in the resurrection in the Qur'an. The research findings show that Crone divides the polytheists in the Qur'an into three categories based on their belief in the resurrection, and she mentions some examples for each category. The result of the research indicates that the classification of the polytheists was done by Crone without considering the context of the verses, which caused that the examples and criteria of each classification could not be compatible with the verses of the Qur'an.

Keywords: *Categorizing Qur'anic Polytheists; Crone; Polytheist Jews; Polytheists' Belief in Resurrection*

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the Holy Qur'an is the first and main source of Islamic knowledge. An accurate understanding of Islam is not possible without referring to this source and knowing its high teachings. Therefore, in addition to Muslim thinkers, Orientalists also studied the Qur'an to become aware of Islam. The results of Orientalists' studies differ from those of Muslim thinkers in many respects. Differences in their principles, assumptions, sources, and research methods are among the most important reasons for this difference. Choosing a critical and revisionist approach must also be added to these factors.

Patricia Crone is a contemporary Orientalist. Although her field of specialization is the history of Islam, her studies are not limited to this field and she has also commented on the Qur'an. Most of her views on the Qur'an are critical and based on doubts about the credibility of the sources, like her historical views. While seriously doubting the revelation of the Qur'an, she believes that the division of the

polytheists in the face of the resurrection narrated by Qur'an does not correspond to historical facts. In an article entitled "Qur'anic Polytheists and Resurrection"¹ she has explained her views in this regard. In the article, Crone explains that polytheists cannot be divided into believers and deniers in the face of the issue of belief in the resurrection. Rather, the resurrection of the polytheists should be questioned in the face of the resurrection of the Qur'an that has two divisions. Examining the verses of the Qur'an, it has been concluded that the Qur'an explicitly divides the polytheists into two groups of believers and deniers of the resurrection, and since the book of the Qur'an deals with this issue with complex and ambiguous words and phrases; therefore, it has caused the audience to be unaware of the existence of the third group of polytheists.

In line with this view, two forms of the problem are mentioned to explain the classification of polytheists in the Qur'an from Crone's point of view. The first aspect is to determine the basis and criterion of Crone in the classification of polytheists, so the questions that are considered are: From Crone's point of view, which verses of the Qur'an have spoken in vague words about the third category of polytheists? How does Crone relate the verses of the Qur'an to each other? On what basis does she classify the polytheists? How close is the result of her research to the Qur'anic teachings?

But the other side of the issue in the understanding of the Crone, which needs to be clarified, is what examples does the Crone put in the position of each group of pagans? Has she used the Qur'an alone to discover examples or does she refer to other sources as well? With the help of other sources, are their themes compatible with the meanings of Qur'anic verses in this regard? In order to achieve the purpose of the study in Crone's theory with respect to the two forms of the problem, Crone's criterion in the classification of polytheists and examples of each category, the research method is that in each section, first the verses cited by Crone in relation to the separation of polytheists is raised to determine her intended perception. In this regard, holy books, words, history and commentaries have been used. After determining Crone's analysis of the verses, according to the category of polytheists, each group of polytheists is examined with reference to verses and sources. It is important to note that other articles have been published examining Crone's views, such as "Analyzing the role of Patricia Crone's skeptical approach in shaping her views in the book "Mecca Trade and the Rise of Islam"²", which explains Crone's approach and the impact of these prejudices on the direction of Islamic studies. Another article, entitled "Critique of Patricia Crone's theological views in the field of Islamic studies"³, actually addresses Crone's skeptical view to Islamic sources and their authenticity and validity. Whereas the above articles deal with Crone's method of Islamic studies and describe her views; the present article seeks to analyze the Qur'anic subject of Crone based on the book of divine revelation and the holy books.

1. Classification of Polytheists Based On Belief in The Resurrection from Crone's Point of View

From the beginning of history until now, man has had an obvious desire for destiny after her death. The Qur'an, among other divine books, has raised the issue of the world after death and the fate of man and has given a clear answer to many ambiguities. One of these issues, which is considered ambiguous from Crone's point of view, is the issue of the belief of the polytheists in the resurrection, which tries to solve it by relying on the verses of the Qur'an. In this regard, by analyzing the verses, concludes that "the Qur'an has not clearly separated the polytheists as to whether they believe in the resurrection or deny the resurrection" (Crone, 2012, 447). By examining many verses about polytheists, Crone reconstructs the Qur'anic concepts about belief in their resurrection, and finally divides the

¹. Crone, Patricia, (2012), "The Qur'anic Mushrikun and Resurrection", BSOAS, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies/Volume 75/Issue 03/October/PP. 472-445.

² Khezrami Seyyed Ahmad Reza, Ma'ideh Bayram, "Analysis of the role of Patricia Crone's skeptical approach in shaping her views in the book "Mecca Trade and the Rise of Islam", History of Islam in the Mirror of Research 13, Volume 2, Series 41, Fall and Winter 2016, pp.- 60.

³ Nosrati Sepideh, Elmi Ghorban, Nasser's Past, "Critique and Review of Patricia Krone's revisionist views on Islamic studies", Islamic History and Civilization, Volume 13, Number 25, Spring and Summer 2017, pp. 147-121.

polytheists into three categories based on the verses of the Qur'an: "The pagans are divided into three groups based on their belief in the resurrection in the Qur'an: the believers, the hesitant and the deniers of the resurrection." (Ibid, 469). This kind of categorization of the pagans on the criterion of belief in the resurrection from the point of view of Crone should be analyzed. And there is much room for reflection as to what extent it can be consistent with the verses of the Qur'an and what examples Crone has included in each category. Therefore, in the continuation of this research, first the examples and beliefs of each group of pagans will be quoted in the view of Crone and then each of the groups of pagans will be examined.

1-2- The First Group of Polytheists

The first group are the polytheists who believed in God as the creator, the smaller beings as mediators, the Nubuwwah of all the prophets except the Prophet of the Qur'an, as well as the resurrection. It is noteworthy that from Crone's point of view, according to the verses, "these people believed in the resurrection without considering the imminence of the Day of Judgment:

«إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا. وَ نَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا» (معارج، 6-7)

Lo! they behold it afar off. While we behold it nigh. (Ma'ārij: 6-7)

And the reason they see the Day of Resurrection far away is due to the fearlessness to the Day of Judgment, which is due to their negligence and interest to the life of this world:

«يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ» (روم، 7)

"They know only some appearance of the life of the world, and are heedless of the Hereafter." (Rūm: 7)

«وَ فَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ مَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ» (رعد: ٢٦)

"and they rejoice in the life of the world, whereas the life of the world is but brief comfort as compared with the Hereafter." (Ra'd: 26)(Crone, 2012, 446)

From Crone's point of view, the Qur'an expresses the pagans' neglect of the Hereafter for two reasons; the first is that "they were sure that they were saved and immortal:

«وَ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً» (بقره، 80)

"And they say: The Fire (of punishment) will not touch us save for a certain number of days." (Baqarah: 80)

Crone believes that the second reason for their neglect is that God has promised paradise to their virtuous ancestors, such as Abraham and his followers who kept God's covenant.

Therefore, there is no fear about the resurrection that the Prophet warned them about. What the Prophet preached about the resurrection was ancestral religion, because the Qur'an promises paradise to the ancestors and generations before the Prophet who fulfilled the covenant of God:

«رَبَّنَا وَ ادْخُلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنِ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَ مَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَ أَرْوَاجِهِمْ وَ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ» (غافر، 8)

"Our Lord! And make them enter the Gardens of Eden which thou hast promised them, with such of their fathers and their wives and their descendants as do right. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, the Wise." (Ghāfir: 8)

And also in Surah Ra'd, verse 23 also referred to the same theme. (Ibid, 454).

Examining the First Group of Polytheists

The Qur'an introduces the polytheists as reckless people, those who see the Day of Judgment far away and are not worried; Crone accepts this description of the pagans, but "attributes it to the Jews"

(Ibid.) In the process of her study on the cause of the Jews' fearlessness toward the resurrection in the Qur'an, she concludes: The reason for their fearlessness was the negligence from Hereafter, and the reason for their negligence is twofold: one is that they "believed that the saved were promised in the Qur'an" (Ibid, 446) and the other was that in the Qur'an they were promised paradise because of their ancestors since they had done good deeds "(Ibid, 453). In other words, this is the view that forms the principles of Jewish law in relation to life after death and their immortality. In this section, we try to examine the Crone's view about the cause of Jewish recklessness towards the resurrection.

Seeing The Day of Judgment Far Away or Denying It

First, in examining Crone's view, the first part deals with her interpretation of the polytheists' belief in the resurrection. In confirmation of the belief of polytheists in the resurrection, Crone invokes verses 6 and 7 of Surah Ma'ārij, which say:

«إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيداً . وَ نَرَاهُ قَرِيباً» (معارج، 6-7)

Lo! they behold it afar off. While we behold it nigh. (Ma'ārij: 6-7)

By reflecting on the mentioned verses, it is obtained that these verses are about the deniers of the resurrection, not the heedless, which means that they believed in the resurrection but they considered it far-fetched:

The two pronouns in "They see it" and in "We see it" refer to the torment [Ma'ārij, 1], or to the Day of Resurrection [referring to verse 4 of Ma'ārij] and the torment in which it is,

The next verse confirms the first possibility which says:

"يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ" [معارج، 8]

"The day when the sky will become as molten copper." (Ma'ārij: 8)

And what is meant by "Seeing" is the nearness of that torment or that day and believing that in a kind of virtual providence, He called it seeing and If the disbelievers see the torment of the Day of Resurrection far away and believe in its distance, this belief is doubtful, and they consider its possibility unlikely, not that they believe in the resurrection, but they think it is far away, because the one who believes in the resurrection will never ask for the torment of it. (Tabataba'i, 9, 20, 1417).

Therefore, according to the context of the verses, the polytheists not only see the occurrence of the Day of Judgment far away, but also consider it impossible, and also the reason for the impossibility of seeing the resurrection in the Qur'an is stated for fear of punishment, not what Crone considers seeing the resurrection to be far away due to lack of concern and recklessness of the polytheists.

The Material Root of the Polytheists' Neglect of the Resurrection

Crone has stated the reason for the deniers of the resurrection in the Qur'an, especially the Jews, and she does not consider negligence as a reason for denying the resurrection, but she believes that the polytheists believed in the resurrection and only neglected and forgot about it:

«يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِراً مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ» (روم، 7)

"They know only some appearance of the life of the world, and are heedless of the Hereafter." (Rūm: 7)

In this verse, they know only the appearance of the life of this world and are ignorant about the Hereafter and the promises of God and have no knowledge, but we cannot ignore the context of the verse and the meaning of all the words used in it and say that the reason to see the resurrection far away is the

negligence of the polytheists from the Hereafter. While the phrase "They know" as in Kashshāf (Zamakhshārī, 6, 3, 1407) is a substitute for the phrase "They do not know" and:

«وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ» (لقمان، 20)

“Yet of mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah, without knowledge.” (Luqmān: 20)

Considering that wherever there is a Badal in the word, "Mubaddilun Minh" is a fall, it is understood that there is no difference between ignorance and knowing that it does not transcend material things, that is, one whose action is alone in material things, is in fact the same as the ignorant. (Tabataba'i, 236, 16, 1417)

Of course, this way of thinking is not only for a certain people, but every nation that considers originality for matter also rules the same life, knowledge, power and planning of things that they laid down for a material being also consider for God and Hereafter. In this regard, it was necessary for Crone to pay attention to the literary analysis of verses 3-5 of Surah Qāf, about the polytheists who consider the resurrection far away:

«أَ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ . قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِندَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ . بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيحٍ»

“When we are dead and have become dust (shall we be brought back again)? That would be a far return! We know that which the earth taketh of them, and with Us is a recording Book. Nay, but they have denied the truth when it came unto them, therefor they are now in troubled case.”

A very important point that should not be overlooked is that according to the word "Marij" meaning "confused and disturbed" (Mughniyeh, 139, 7, 1995), "sometimes they say that Muhammad is crazy, sometimes they say: he is a magician, sometimes they say he is a poet, and they are confused in their work, and once they say about the Qur'an that it is magic, and they are confused about this" (Tabarsi, 237, 23, 1412)

"So they live in a confused state, and they understand the truth in an irregular and confusing situation, and at the same time they deny it" (Tabataba'i, 508, 18, 1417). Secondly, the reason for the negligence of the polytheists in these verses is in conflict with what Crone has stated.

The reason for the negligence of the polytheists, considering the context of the mentioned verses, has been the denial of the truth, but in understanding the concept of the negligence of the polytheists, Crone has used the skill of matching between the Qur'an and the holy books without paying enough attention to the lexical and conceptual structure of the verses to express the reason for the negligence of the polytheists as their confidence in their immortality from God

Fear of Resurrection in the Qur'an and Tanakh

In examining the verses that Crone recites about the negligence of the polytheists, there is a need for further explanation both in the Qur'an and in the holy books. The Qur'an repeatedly points out that the deniers have forgotten the remembrance of Allah and the Last Day:

«قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَ لَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَ آبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَ كَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا» (فرقان، 18)

“They will say: Be Thou Glorified! it was not for us to choose any protecting friends beside thee; but Thou didst give them and their fathers ease till they forgot the warning and became lost folk.” (Furqān: 18)

But despite seeing the verses, they continue their negligence:

«إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَ رَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ اطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا وَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ» (يونس، 7)

“Lo! those who expect not the meeting with Us but desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of Our revelations.” (Yūnus: 7)

But the verse does not say that the negligence of the heedless of the Hereafter and their attachment to the world will prevent them from denying the resurrection and the punishment of the Hereafter, as it goes on to say:

«أُولَئِكَ مَاوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ» (يونس، 8)

“Their home will be the Fire because of what they used to earn.” (Yūnus: 8)

In Tanakh, the Israelites' neglect of the divine command is also seen: "My people have forgotten to burn incense for Abatil, and they slip them through the old ways to walk in the furnaces of the roads to the ways that have not been built." (Jeremiah, 18:15), and elsewhere there is a kind of doubt and fear of the resurrection: "Sinners say, 'Who among us will dwell in the burning fire, and who among us will dwell in the everlasting fire?' (Isaiah 33:14).

The fear of the polytheists from the Day of Judgment, which is expressed in a limited way in Tanakh, is clearer in the Qur'an:

«إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ» (توبه، 45)

" They alone ask leave of thee who believe not in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt they waver." (awbah: 45)

The verse clearly states that the negligence of the deniers of the Day of Judgment is due to the fear of the Day of Punishment, Allameh Tabataba'i writes: "Doubtful people are afraid that their thoughts will be exposed and disgraced because they are not honest" (Tabataba'i, 388, 9, 1417). Therefore, in addition to the clarification of the Qur'an, the texts of the holy books, have also clearly warned the pagans about their neglect about resurrection and their disobedience to God's commands.

Rescue Without Any Fear

Crone states one of the reasons for the neglect of pagans to the Resurrection as the fact that because the pagans believe that they are survivors:

« فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالِدَارُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ» (اعراف، 169)

“And a generation hath succeeded them who inherited the scriptures. They grasp the goods of this low life (as the price of evil-doing) and say: It will be forgiven us. And if there came to them (again) the offer of the like, they would accept it (and would sin again). Hath not the covenant of the Scripture been taken on their behalf that they should not speak aught concerning Allah save the truth? And they have studied that which is therein. And the abode of the Hereafter is better, for those who ward off (evil). Have ye then no sense?” (A'rāf: 169)

By witnessing this verse, she deals with the issue of negligence of the polytheists from the Day of Judgment with a historical course. Just as the concept of salvation in the Bible, especially in the Torah, is deeply intertwined with the ethnic ideals of the Jews, the mainstays of the Old Testament writings, such as the books of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, etc., are based on ethnocentrism and Mahdiyyism. While the purpose of the Qur'an in the matter of salvation on the promised day is to obtain a moral meaning that gives another meaning to the verse. The above verse speaks of the survivors who inherited the book and learned the teachings and rules contained in the book, and on the other hand, the point under discussion is that "The requirement of this inheritance was that they should practice piety and go to the

house of the Hereafter, and ignore the unstable pleasures of this world and the incomes that prevent permanent and eternal rewards."

But unfortunately, "they will take this world" with both hands, take these pleasures and throw themselves on it. And they have no fear of sin, no matter how great it is. (Tabataba'i, 389, 8, 1417). With such a claim, hereafter is meaningless, and therefore the pursuit of worldly aspirations is the principle of Jewish law, and seeking wealth and pleasure are recommended." (Durant, 399, 1, 1992). What is certain is that despite hoping in God, it is a false hope that not being anxious and afraid of sin and saying that God forgives us, and in fact it is the promise of Satan:

«يَعِدُّهُمْ وَيُؤْمِنُهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا» (نساء، 120)

"He promiseth them and stirreth up desires in them, and Satan promiseth them only to beguile." (Nisā': 120)

In fact, hope in the Qur'an is to place two cups of fear and hope.

Benevolent Ancestors and the Standard of Salvation

Another reason for the pagans' neglect of the resurrection in Crone's writings is the honest fathers who save their generation. This way of thinking is based on the principles of Judaism, because if the Jewish people obey the divine commandments, God will immortalize their descendants: "And Yahweh commanded us to do all these statutes, and to fear Yahweh our God, to be good for ever, and to keep us alive, as it is this day." (Deuteronomy, 6: 20-25). This sentence means that immortality after death occurs only when the material desires are kept in the world; but there is no mention of the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, as Will Durant's statement confirms this inference. "The Hebrew were very concerned about the affairs of this world, because in the ancient Jewish religion there was no paradise, so it was necessary to reward the good in this world, or not to be rewarded at all," he says. Durant, 399, 1992, 399). Crone considers Abraham (PBUH) to be one of the virtuous ancestors of the Jewish people, but the context of the verses of the Qur'an challenges such an interpretation:

«مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ» (آل عمران، 67)

"Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah), and he was not of the idolaters." (Āle 'Imrān: 67)

In this verse, God calls Ibrahim (AS) a Muslim having a monotheistic religion, not a Jew or a Christian. The Qur'an, on the other hand, has explained the criterion of immortality for all as faith and righteous deeds. In Surah Al-Imran, a group of the People of the Book have been called the righteous:

«... وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ» (آل عمران، 114)

"They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. These are of the righteous." (Āle 'Imrān: 114)

On the other hand, in Surah Mā'idah, there are some verses about the religion of Moses (PBUH) and the Torah is introduced as a book of guidance:

«وَكَيْفَ يُحْكِمُكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ النُّورُ أَهِيَ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ» (مائدة، 43)

"How come they unto thee for judgment when they have the Torah, wherein Allah hath delivered judgment (for them)? Yet even after that they turn away. Such (folk) are not believers." (Mā'ida: 42)

The Jews who ignore the divine teachings have been criticized, or in Surah Baqarah:

«وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتَّبِعُونَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ» (بقره، 113)

"And the Jews say the Christians follow nothing (true), and the Christians say the Jews follow nothing (true); yet both are readers of the Scripture. Even thus speak those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differ." (Baqarah: 113)

This verse expresses the pride and exclusivity of the Jews to immortality who think their law is not destroyed; another verse is:

«إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ» (مائدہ، 69)

"Lo! those who believe, and those who are Jews, and Sabaeans, and Christians - Whosoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right - there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve." (Mā'ida: 69)

This verse initially refers to other religions, then it commands to the faith and Righteous action. From the connection of these two groups, a group of verses that introduce the secret of immortality as faith and righteous deeds, and another group of verses that express human immortality provided that the Torah and other holy books are followed; it turns out that doing righteous deeds are the same commands that the scriptures contain. In addition, it should not be overlooked that righteous action is closely related to the principle of monotheism; as Tabataba'i says according to the verse:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ» (فاطر، 10)

"Whoso desireth power (should know that) all power belongeth to Allah. Unto Him good words ascend, and the pious deed doth He exalt." (Fāir: 10)

He says good deed raises clean word and the "Meaning of clean word is true ideas like monotheism and its ascent means closeness to God, and righteous deed means any deed that is issued according to the true beliefs and is compatible with it" (See: Tabataba'i, 1995, 458,1).

The result is that Crone knows the only way to be salvation in the afterlife is to belong to virtuous ancestors, and she has found verses in the Qur'an that she cites to prove her claim. But the Qur'an also states other verses that state the criterion of salvation, faith and righteous deeds, as mentioned. In fact, Crone did not want to cite these verses; because in the Jewish law, faith and righteous deeds are mentioned in a very limited way, which is not significant, and Crone is also committed to the Jewish law and is a fanatic.

2. The Second Group of Polytheists

Crone describes the second group of polytheists on the basis of their belief in the resurrection: "This group, like the first group, believed in God as a creator, they believed in smaller beings and in the prophets, but they only doubted the resurrection and were not sure that God would resurrect them after death, and some of them resisted this fact and believed that God would not resurrect them: (Crone, 2012, 469)

«أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّنْ نَجْمَعُ عِظَامَهُ»

"Thinketh man that We shall not assemble his bones?" (Qiyāma: 3; cf. Sāffāt: 6; Yāsīn: 78; Isrā': 51)

Crone, to give an example, refers to the story of Pharaoh and his armies who doubted the resurrection: "Pharaoh and her armies thought they would not return to God." (Qaşaş, 39) (Ibid, 2012, 447).

Examining The Second Group of Polytheists

In the second category of pagans, Crone refers to two main axes, first; the polytheists showed by approaching God that they believed in life after death; Secondly, they believed in all the prophets, and

thirdly, they believed in life after death, except in all its dimensions. Crone's axes in the second category of pagans need to be examined.

Polytheists' Nearness to God

Some of the polytheists of the Age of Risālah, like the polytheists of the Age of Ignorance, believe in some of the beings who, in their opinion, had the greatest unseen power and influence in nature, and even human destiny depended on them, as deities in the position of Lordship. "Polytheists think that the divinity of the goddess was that a group of pagans believed in the extent of the divinity of the goddess"

﴿وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (أنعام، 81)

“How could I fear what you ascribe [to Him] as [His] partners, when you do not fear ascribing to Allah partners for which He has not sent down any authority to you? So [tell me,] which of the two sides has a greater right to safety, if you know?” (An‘ām: 81)

That is, they accepted the Lordship of God as the universal Lordship at the whole universe, and another group of them believed in the limitation of the Lordship of God, and they considered the Lordship influential only in some of the matters that concern them, such as intercession, forgiveness, honor, victory in wars. God rebuked them in the Qur'an, saying:

﴿أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ﴾ (ملك، 21)

“Or who is he that will provide for you if He should withhold His providence? Nay, but they are set in pride and forwardness.” (Mulk: 21)

(Sobhani, 2004, 421, 1). Crone writes: "The purpose of the pagans in worshipping idols was not only to be close to God, but also to seek intercession from God, and this is a sign of their belief in life after death" (Crone, 2012, 452). It is noteworthy that the pagans never called their idols "Lord", but believed that the Creator of both worlds was "Allah"; they called their idols "Goddesses", the gods. They recited the word "Goddess" in their culture meant idols, and the deity also means one to whom one pays attention and appeals (Rashid Reza, 1414, 7, 11). Thus, the reaction of the pagans to the power of the deity and their worship was a feeling of closeness to God. But without fragmenting the verse and according to the end of the verse, Crone's perception of the polytheists' belief in God and the Hereafter changes. The end of the verse states the other purpose of the pagans for the worship of idols that Crone has neglected it:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ (زمر، 3)

“Lo! Allah guideth not him who is a liar, an ingrate.” (Zumar: 3)

"The end of this verse refers to the fact that what the pagans claimed in their saying, they did not believe in their conscience and mind, and they lied in their claim, and their motive is to worship idols have been worldly motives and to achieve dignity, authority and victory over the opponent, and obtain welfare, healing and intercession" (Sobhani, nd, 63).

"Arab's poems and proverbs that were common among them, above all, can show the true face of the history of the pagans" (Ibid, 1958, 35), for example: "Arabs in ignorance era are only seeking the interests of the world like camels and booty and victory over the enemy, etc. They did not seek the Hereafter, so they did not know the Hereafter, nor did they believe in it, unless the end of evil and destruction occurs in this world" (Ali, 1413, 128, 1). Crone's Qur'anic studies indicate that the verses of the Qur'an are like historical sentences that can be easily traced back to belief and other issues. Therefore, it cannot be said that just believing in the existence of life after death and the hereafter is a reason to believe in the resurrection.

Believe in the Prophets

The term "Nabī" has been repeated many times in the Bible and has been applied to various groups; "Some of them were fortune tellers whose job was to foretell the future" (Will Durant, 1986, 369), but "Nabī means more to announce divine commandments and religious affairs and to announce the future" (Hawks, 1998, 837). "This work would gain people's trust in the Prophet and the Prophet used this factor to attract people to theology and create fear of committing sin and strengthen the morale of believers" (Rāmyār, 1972, 179), but the term "Nabī" in the Qur'an differs from what the scriptures define. In the Qur'an, Nabī "is a servant chosen by God to whom God reveals teachings to guide the servants to salvation" (Tabataba'i, 1417, 184).

The Qur'an does not call the various fortune tellers and individuals who were introduced as prophets in the holy books Nabī, but the Qur'an makes the knowledge and prophecy of the prophets conditional on God's permission:

«قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا أَنبِئُ بِمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ» (أنعام، 50 و رك: هود، 31)

“Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen; and I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought?” (An'ām: 50; cf. Hūd: 31)

Call for Tawhīd and Ākhirah are the common goals of all the prophets, as the Qur'an says:

«لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ» (اعراف، 59)

“We sent Noah (of old) unto his people, and he said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other Allah save Him. Lo! I fear for you the retribution of an Awful Day.” (A'rāf: 59)

In this verse, Noah (PBUH) calls the people to monotheism and resurrection, or Moses (PBUH) invites his people to the Hereafter:

«إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ» (طه، 15)

“Lo! the Hour is surely coming. But I will to keep it hidden.” (Tāhā: 15)

The desire for immortality is an innate desire in the human soul and the mission of the prophets has been based on this, as the Holy Qur'an declares the immortality of the life of the hereafter:

«وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ» (عنكبوت، 64)

“But the answer of his folk was only that they said: "Kill him" or "Burn him." Then Allah saved him from the Fire. Lo! herein verily are portents for folk who believe.” (‘Ankabū: 64)

"Al-Hayawan" means a life in which death has no way:

«إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ» (مومنون، 37).

“There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and we shall not be raised (again)” (Mu'minūn: 37)

According to the mentioned verses, all the prophets at all times and places invited their followers to return to God and the Hereafter, but some not only did not doubt, but also denied the Day of Judgment:

«فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا...» (طه، 16)

“Therefore, let not him turn thee aside from (the thought of) it who believeth not therein but followeth his own desire, lest thou perish.” (Tāhā: 16)

According to the words of the Qur'an, Crone's interpretation of the verses cannot be considered correct that some polytheists were skeptical of the resurrection event. In fact, the Qur'an explains that the polytheists, knowing the message of the prophets, did not want to believe in the Hereafter. For this reason, the non-acceptance of the words of the prophets is subject to the slandering to the prophets by the polytheists as well:

«وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ» (سبأ، 34)

" And We sent not unto any township a warner, but its pampered ones declared: Lo! we are disbelievers in that wherewith ye have been sent." (Saba' 34)

And on the other hand the holy books consider obedience to the prophets obligatory: "God punishes those who don't hear the commands of the prophet" (Deuteronomy 18: 8). According to Crone's writings, the first and second groups of polytheists accepted all the prophets, but such a claim could not be consistent with the contents of the verses of the Qur'an and the holy books.

Believe in Death

Because man considered death to be equal to extinction, he did not want to be exterminated with death, such a belief led them to think that after death, the souls of the dead might return to the living. For this reason, the issue of life after death had become a public concern; to the extent that they devised measures to escape the return of the dead or to meet some of their own needs, some of which include: "Putting a pile of stones on a dead body with strong ropes, sewing the corpse to the ground, giving gifts to the dead after burying the corpse, planting thorns around the graves, burying food, jewelry and all kinds of defense equipment along with the dead and burying alive women and servants of the corpse with him" (Nās, 2003, 23). Therefore, before the advent of Islam, there was a belief in the soul.

In this regard, Crone in her Qur'anic research refers to the story of Pharaoh who doubted the resurrection: "Pharaoh and his army thought that they would not return to God" (Qaṣaṣ, 39) "(Ibid). The verses of the Qur'an answer this doubt about the skepticism of the polytheists about the event of the Day of Judgment. Some people believed in life after death and resurrection and even dealt with the deniers of the resurrection, but it was only a nominal belief and they had no sign of a firm and true belief. In fact, these people not only did not doubt the resurrection, but also denied it; in other words, they were aware of the resurrection but did not believe in it:

«وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا» (نمل، 14)

“And they denied them, though their souls acknowledged them, for spite and arrogance.” (Naml: 14)

That gives the following conclusion in the lexical study of the verse: The word "jahd" means to deny something that has been established in the heart or to prove something that has been denied in the heart. (Rāghib Isfahani, 423, 2008) and "The word Istīqān and Yaqīn both have the same meaning" (Tabataba'i, 1417, 15, 491) and also it means that "Pharaoh and his people denied their oppression (against the Israelites) and their arrogance against Moses, and this denial was only verbally, because they knew in their hearts that the miracles of Moses were true. (Tabarsi, 85, 18, 1412). In fact, the Holy Qur'an introduces the majority of ignorant people as believers in God and mixed with polytheism along with the denial of the Day of Judgment. The error of the polytheists in many denials was due to their conception in knowing the power of God:

«وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ» (زمر، 67)

“And they esteem not Allah as He hath the right to be esteemed, when the whole earth is His handful on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens are rolled in His right hand. Glorified is He and High Exalted from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him).” (Zumar: 67)

In matters related to miracles and matters outside of ordinary power, human power should not be considered as a scale of judgment, but the power of God should be considered. (Sobhani, 125, 2004, 125, 5).

The pagans apparently doubted their belief in the resurrection, but in fact denied the resurrection:

«أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ» (سبأ، 8)

“Hath he invented a lie concerning Allah, or is there in him a madness?” (Saba’: 8)

But that they were mentioning their word in a skeptical form, they wanted to give a neutral color to their judgment about the resurrection with a kind of pretense and demagoguery. (Sobhani, 2002, 5)

3. The Third Group of Polytheists

In this category, Crone has focused on the two main axes of belief in the resurrection by the pagans; one is the denial of God and the second is the denial of the resurrection. She has examined the differences of opinion in the third category mentioned in Surah Jāthiyah and two previous pagans in belief in God and resurrection:

«وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ» (جاثية، 24)

" And they say: There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time; when they have no knowledge whatsoever of (all) that; they do but guess.” (Jāthiah: 24)

She compares these categories with the help of the example of a rich man in the Qur'an. She explains when rich man's friend asked him if he denies the One Who has created him:

«قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاكَ رَجُلًا»، «لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أُحَدِّثُ» (كهف، 37 و 38)

“His comrade, when he (thus) spake with him, exclaimed: Disbelievest thou in Him Who created thee of dust, then of a drop (of seed), and then fashioned thee a man? But He is Allah, my Lord, and I ascribe unto my Lord no partner.” (Kahf: 37-38)

The rich man replied that I will not put a partner for my Lord. Crone writes with this example: "The rich man did not deny the Lord because he did not set up a partner for the Lord, but this third group considers themselves before the Lord:

«أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ» (جاثية، 23)

“Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god and whom Allah has led astray knowingly.” (Jāthiah: 23)

They submit their desires to the Lord and worship Him and the purpose of their worship is obedience. (Crone, 2012, 470).

Crone, further confirming her interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, points out the connection between the denial of God and the denial of the Hereafter in the Qur'an:

«وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ» (أنعام ١٥٠، همجنين نجم، 27؛ زمر، 45)

“Follow thou not the whims of those who deny Our revelations.” (An’ām: 150; cf. Najm: 27; Zumar: 45)

She cites some verses of the Qur’an as examples and evidence for the claim that the polytheists in the previous two categories did not place their desires before the Lord, so they believed in the Hereafter. With this interpretation of the mentioned verses, “Whoever denies God, denies the Hereafter” (Crone, 2012, 470).

Reviewing the Third Group

The suspicion raised by Crone about the denial of God by the pagans is that they denied God, and to prove her claim, she mentions the verse:

«أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ» (جاثية، 23)

“Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god and whom Allah has led astray knowingly.” (Jāthiah: 23)

«وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ» (جاثية، 24)

" And they say: There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time.” (Jāthiah: 24)

Contrary to Crone's claim, studies of this verse show that these polytheists did not deny God, but stubbornly resisted God in order to achieve their desires. Since the word "Goddess" precedes the word "Carnal Desires" to prove that such a person knows that she has a god that she should worship, but instead of God Almighty, she worships her carnal desires, and she puts them in the place of God and obeys them. Thus, such a person is consciously a disbeliever in God Almighty, and for this reason, following the sentence in question, she said: "God misled her while having knowledge" (Tabataba’i, 236, 18, 1417).

The term Dahrīyūn cannot mean time; rather, it means universe:

«وَأَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَ سَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لِيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ فَنَأَى يُوْفِكُونَ» (عنكبوت، 61)

“If you ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth, and who has disposed the sun and the moon?’ They will surely say, ‘Allah.’ Then where do they stray?” (‘Ankabū: 64)

"Dahr" means universe; that is, they attributed the passage of time due to material reasons, not that they do not accept God. Because the common thought of the polytheists of Hejaz was that they accepted God, but they had a serious problem in the monotheism of God, and for this reason, He continues:

«وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ» (جاثية، 24)

"when they have no knowledge whatsoever of (all) that; they do but guess.” (Jāthiah: 24)

Examining Crone's claim on denial of God by this group, it is understood that Crone has neglected the context of the verses. In the text of the article of Qur’anic polytheists and resurrection, in the explanation of the verses of denial of God by the third group of polytheists, she refers to the message from the Qur’an that this group put their demands before the Lord and denied the Lord, but as a result "This group denied God" (Crone, 2012, 470)

Crone concludes from putting several verses together to have a common theme that this group denied God and, consequently, the resurrection. But the point that Crone has neglected is the context of the verses, because she attributes the denial of God to Dahrīyūn absolutely, not with the condition of denying the Lordship of God.

Conclusion

From Crone's point of view, the Qur'an places all polytheists in one group and considers all of them as deniers of the resurrection. However, she claims that according to the verses, the Qur'anic polytheists are of three categories: believers, hesitant and deniers of the resurrection.

- 1- The result of the study of the first group of polytheists, i.e. the believers in the resurrection, shows that Crone's example, which is included in the first group of polytheists, is the Jewish people, and she knows the reason for the Jews' neglect of the Day of Judgment stated in the Qur'an is that the Jewish people believe that they are rescued because of their virtuous ancestors. However, the study of each of Crone's reasons has shown that Crone has not paid attention to the context of the verses in the Qur'anic studies, and by fragmenting many verses, she has caused her to have a different interpretation of the meanings of those verses.
- 2- The second group of polytheists from Crone's point of view are those who only doubt the resurrection. But an examination of the verses on the belief of the polytheists in the prophets and the belief in death shows that the Qur'an says that this group of polytheists apparently doubted the resurrection, but in fact denied the resurrection and asked for it. In other words, the Qur'an has revealed their denial.
- 3- The division of the third group of polytheists from Crone's point of view is not very accurate, because the third group of polytheists consists of those who both deny the existence of God and deny the resurrection. By examining this category in the Qur'an, it can be said that they put their desires before the Lord, and this led to their disbelief in the Lordship of God, while Crone attributed the absolute denial of God to this category.

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