2340 - The world of the Jinn

the question

I have read in the Holy Qur'an what a jinn is, but I really don't understand what they really are. Can you please send me more information on them.

Peace be unto you!

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Quraan and Sunnah indicate that the jinn exist, and that there is a purpose for their existence in this life, which is to worship Allaah Alone, with no partner or associate. Allaah says (interpretation of the meanings):

And I (Allaah) created not the jinns and humans, except they should worship Me (Alone). [al-Dhaariyaat 51:56].

O assembly of jinns and mankind! Did there not come to you Messengers from amongst you, reciting unto you My Verses? [al-Anaam 6:130]

The world of the jinn is an independent and separate world, with its own distinct nature and features that are hidden from the world of humans. Jinns and humans have some things in common, such as the possession of understanding and the choice between the way of good and the way of evil. The word jinn comes from an Arabic root meaning hidden from sight. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

Verily he [Shaytaan] and his qabeeluhu [his soldiers from the jinn or his tribe] see you from where you cannot see them [al-Araaf 7:27]
Allaah has told us in His Book the essence from which the jinn were created. He says (interpretation of the meaning):

And the jinn, We created aforetime from the smokeless flame of fire. [al-Hijr 15:27]

And the jinns did He create from a smokeless flame of fire. [al-Rahmaan 55:15].

According to a hadeeth narrated by Aaishah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: The angels were created from light, the jinn were created from fire, and Aadam was created from that which has been described to you. (Reported by Muslim, 5314).

Types of jinn

Allaah has created different types of jinn. Among them are some who can take on different forms, such as dogs and snakes; some who are like flying winds with wings; and some who can travel and rest. Abu Thalabah al-Khushani said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: The jinn are of three types: a type that has wings, and they fly through the air; a type that looks like snakes and dogs; and a type that stops for a rest then resumes its journey.


The jinn and the sons of Aadam

Every individual among the sons of Aadam has a jinn who has been appointed to be his constant companion (qareen). Ibn Masood said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, There is not one of you who does not have a jinn appointed to be his constant companion. They said, And you too, O Messenger of Allaah? He said, Me too, but Allaah has helped me and he has submitted, so that he only helps me to do good. (Reported by Muslim, 2814). Al-
Nawawi said in his commentary on Muslim (17/175): He has submitted he became a believing Muslim. This is the apparent meaning. Al-Qaadi said: Know that the ummah is agreed upon the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was protected from Shaytaan, physically and mentally, and with regard to his speech. This hadeeth contains a reference to the warning against the fitnah (temptation, trial) and whispers of the qareen (constant companion from among the jinn). We know that he is with us so we should beware of him as much as possible.

Their powers

Allaah has given the jinn powers that he has not given to humans. Allaah has told us about some of their powers, such as the ability to move and travel quickly. An ifreet from among the jinn guaranteed to the Prophet Sulaymaan (peace be upon him) that he would bring the throne of the Queen of Yemen to Jerusalem in a moment faster than that needed for a man to get up from where he was sitting. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

An ifreet (strong one) from the jinns said: I will bring it [her throne] to you before you rise from your place (council). And verily, I am indeed strong, and trustworthy for such work. One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye! then when Sulaymaan saw it placed before him, he said, This is by the Grace of my Lord [al-Naml 27:39-40].

The food and drink of the jinn

The jinn eat and drink. Ibn Masood said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: Someone from among the jinn called me, and I went with him and recited Quraan for them. He took us and showed us the traces of where they had been and the traces of their fires. They asked him for food and he said, You can have every bone on which the name of Allaah has been mentioned that comes into your possession, as meat, and all the droppings as food for your animals. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, So do not use [these things] for cleaning yourselves [after relieving oneself], for they are the food and provision of your
brothers. (Reported by Muslim, 450). According to another report: A delegation of jinn from Naseebeen came to me, and what good jinn they are! They asked me for food and I prayed to Allaah for them, so that they would not pass by bones or droppings, but they would find food on them. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 3571). The believing jinn may eat any bone on which the name of Allaah has been mentioned, because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not permit them to have anything on which Allaahs name has not been mentioned those are for the kuffaar among the jinn.

The beasts of the jinn

According to the hadeeth narrated by Ibn Masood, that we have quoted above, the jinn asked the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for provision, and he said to them: and [you can have] all the droppings as food for your animals.

The dwelling-places of the jinn

The jinn live on this earth where we do. They are mostly to be found in ruins and unclean places like bathrooms, dunghills, garbage dumps and graveyards. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us to take precautions when entering such places, by reciting the adhkaar (prayers) prescribed by Islam. One of these was reported by Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) entered the toilet, he would say, Allaahumma innee aoodhu bika min al-khubuthi wal-khabaaith (O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from the evil ones, male and female). (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 142; and Muslim, 375). Al-Khattaabi explained that khubuth is the plural of khabeeth (evil or dirty masculine form), and khabaith is the plural of khabethah (evil or dirty feminine form), and that what is meant is male and female shayaateen.

Some jinns are Muslims and some are kaafirs
Allaah tells us that some of the jinn said (interpretation of the meaning):

And some of us are Muslims, and of us some are al-qaasitoon (disbelievers those who have deviated from the Right Path). And whosoever has embraced Islam, then such have sought the Right Path. And as for the qaasitoon, they shall be firewood for Hell. [al-Jinn 72:14-15]

The Muslims among the jinn are of different levels as regards righteousness and taqwa. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

[Some jinn said:] There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary; we are groups, each having a different way (religious sects, etc.) [al-Jinn 72:11]

The story of how the first jinn of this ummah became Muslim was narrated by Abd-Allaah ibn Abbaas, who said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out with a group of his Companions heading for the marketplace of Ukaaz. This was when the shayaateen were prevented from getting any news from heaven, and shooting stars had been sent against them. The shayaateen went back to their people, who said, What is the matter with you? They said, We cannot get news from heaven, and shooting stars were sent against us. Their people said, Nothing is stopping you from hearing news from heaven except some new event that must have happened. Go and look in the east and the west of the earth, and see if you can find out what it is that is stopping you from hearing news from heaven. Those who went out in the direction of Tihaamah came upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in Nakhlah, when he was on his way to Ukaaz, and found him leading his Companions in Fajr prayer. When they heard the Quraan, they listened to it and said, By Allaah, this is what is stopping us from hearing news from heaven. When they went back to their people, they said, O our people, we have heard a wonderful Recital (the Quraan). It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allaah). [al-Jinn 72:2 interpretation of the meaning]. Then Allaah revealed to His Prophet peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) the
words (interpretation of the meaning): Say (O Muhammad): It has been revealed to me that a group of jinns listened (to this Quraan) [al-Jinn 72:1], and Allaah revealed to him what the jinn had said. (reported by al-Bukhaari, 731).

Their reckoning on the Day of Resurrection

The jinn will be called to account on the day of Resurrection. Mujaahid (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, concerning the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): but the jinns know well that they have indeed to appear (before Him) (i.e., they will be brought to account) [al-Saffaat 37:158]: They will be brought to judgement. Saheeh al-Bukhaari, Baab Dhikr al-Jinn wa Thawaabihim wa Iqaabihim.

Protection from the harm of the jinn

Because the jinn can see us while we cannot see them, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us many ways to protect ourselves from their harm, such as seeking refuge with Allaah from the accursed Shaytaan, reciting Soorat al-Falaq and Soorat al-Naas (the last two Soorahs of the Quraan), and reciting the words taught by Allaah in the Quraan (interpretation of the meaning): Say: My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the shayaateen (devils). And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they may attend (or come near) me. [al-Muminoon 23:97-98]

Saying Bismillaah (in the Name of Allaah) before entering ones home, before eating or drinking, and before having intercourse will also keep the Shaytaan from entering the house or partaking with a person in his food, drink and sexual activity. Similarly, mentioning the name of Allaah before entering the toilet or taking off ones clothes will prevent the jinn from seeing a persons awrah or harming him, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, To put a barrier that will prevent the jinn from seeing the awrah of the sons of Aadam, let any one of you say Bismillaah when entering the toilet.
Strength of faith and religion in general will also prevent the jinn from harming a person, so much so that if they were to fight, the one who has faith would win. Abd-Allaah ibn Masood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: A man from among the Companions of Muhammad met a man from among the jinn. They wrestled, and the human knocked down the jinn. The human said to him, You look small and skinny to me, and your forearms look like the front paws of a dog. Do all the jinn look like this, or only you? He said, No, by Allaah, among them I am strong, but let us wrestle again, and if you defeat me I will teach you something that will do you good. The human said, Fine. He said, Recite, Allaah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever-living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists [Aayat al-Kursi al-Baqarah 2:255 interpretation of the meaning]. The human said, Fine. He said, You will never recite this in your house but the Shaytaan will come out of it like a donkey breaking wind, and he will never come back in until the next morning. (Reported by al-Daarimi, 3247).

This is a brief summary about the jinn, and their nature and characteristics. Allaah is the Best of protectors and the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.