20666 - The Jinn

the question

I have read your explanation on jinn (reference no: 2340).
Can you please explain further, such as jinn’s lifestyles, housing, children, family life, prayers (i.e. is it like ours?), burial after death, are normal haram (unlawful) and halal (lawful) things applicable? Do they fight each other like humans, have categories (i.e. like ours in terms of blacks, Europeans, this country, that country, etc.), are they affected by natural things like rain, winds, earthquakes, etc.?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The jinn are part of the creation of Allah, and they are His slaves who are accountable and subject to commands and prohibitions, just like human beings. There are believers, disbelievers and evildoers among them. Those of them who do good will enter Paradise and those who do evil will deserve to be punished. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).” [51:56]

And Allah says concerning the jinn (interpretation of the meaning):

“‘There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary; we are groups having different ways (religious sects).’” [72:11]

“And of us some are Muslims (who have submitted to Allah, after listening to this Quran), and of us some are al-Qasitoon (disbelievers those who have deviated from the right path). And whosoever has embraced Islam (i.e. has become a Muslim by submitting to Allah), then such have sought the

right path.

And as for the Qasitoon (disbelievers who deviated from the right path), they shall be firewood for Hell." [72:14, 15]

With regard to their being accountable and subject to commands and prohibitions, the scholars are unanimously agreed that they are accountable. Some of the scholars suggested that the accountability to which they are subject to is exactly the same as that to which human beings are subject to, whilst others suggested that their accountability is in accordance with their abilities and capabilities. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

They are enjoined concerning basic matters and minor issues according to their nature; they are not like human beings in essence and reality, so the commands and prohibitions to which they are subject to are not like those to which humans are subject to, but they have in common with humans, the fact that they are subject to commands and prohibitions, and rulings on what is permitted and what is forbidden. Concerning this I know of no dispute among the Muslims. End quote. Majmoo' al-Fatawa.

With regard to their lives and dwelling places, they are like all other creatures, they have their own lives, they get married and produce offspring. Allah says of Iblis (interpretation of the meaning):

"Will you then take him (Iblis) and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you?" [18:50]

With regard to their dwellings, they often gather in ruins and unclean places like toilets and garbage dumps. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "These toilets are haunted (inhabited by devils), so when anyone of you goes to the toilet let him say, 'A'oodhu Billahi min al-khubthi wa'l-khabaith (I seek refuge with Allah from the male and female devils)." [Abu Dawood].

With regard to the phrase al-khubthi wa'l-kabaith (translated above as "male and female devils"), it has been suggested that al-khubth may mean evil and al-khabaith may mean evil spirits, which

includes both male and female devils.

There is no doubt that the jinn die, for they are included in the words of Allah (interpretation of the meaning):

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.” [55:26]

It should be noted that the world of the jinn is the world of the unseen, and we do not know anything about it except that which Allah has told us in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Based on this, we cannot say anything about them except that which has been narrated in the texts of Islam; anything other than this is hidden from us. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And follow not (O man, i.e., say not, or do not, or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart of each of those ones will be questioned (by Allah)” [17:36]

For more information on this topic, see the book ‘Alim al-Jinn wa’l-Shayateen by Dr ‘Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar.

[Translator’s note: this book is available in English under the title The World of the Jinn and Devils in the Light of the Quran and Sunnah, published as Vol. 3 of the Islamic Creed Series by the International Islamic Publishing House, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.]

It should be noted that Allah has given us information about the jinn and other creatures for our benefit, and what He has concealed from us we do not need to know. If knowing it was essential for us, Allah would have told us. Hence we should not concern ourselves with such matters or look into the mysteries of the jinn which can only be known through revelation.

What a person should ask about is his religion, its acts of worship and beliefs, what he should do, and other important matters which have been enjoined or forbidden, so that he can be a true slave

of Allah.

In the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) we have a good example. They did not ask the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about such matters in which there is no benefit in knowing and no harm in not knowing.

I ask Allah to bless us with beneficial knowledge and enable us to do righteous deeds.

And Allah knows best.