

225512 - Sound reasoning does not contradict sound, proven religious texts

the question

What is the meaning of Ibn al-Jawzi's words, "If you see that the hadith is contrary to reason, then know that it is fabricated", when many hadiths are contrary to reason, such as the Prophet's holding the neck of the jinni and the creation of camels from the jinn, and the tree which came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and others?

Detailed answer

Everything that is soundly narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is in accordance with reason and sound human nature, and it is not possible that sound reason could contradict the soundly narrated religious texts under any circumstances.

But sometimes the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) may say something bewildering that we cannot grasp by means of our reasoning. But the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never said anything that is impossible according to reason and that reason cannot accept.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is all true and the religious texts corroborate one another. It is in accordance with sound human nature and in accordance with what is instilled in humans of sound reasoning and what they know of sound aims and objectives. So the religious texts do not contradict sound reasoning, sound objectives or sound human nature, and they do not contradict other sound narrations from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Rather the one who thinks that there are contradictions is the one who believes in some un-soundly narrated hadiths, or he has understood from the text something that it does not indicate, or he believed in some idea that he thought was based on sound reasoning when in fact it was based on ignorance, or it was based on one's inspirational understanding when in fact it is based on flawed thinking; this applies

when his understanding is contrary to a soundly-narrated report from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Or he may contradict, on the basis of sound reasoning or sound understanding, a report that he thinks is narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), but in fact it is falsely attributed to him, or he may contradict a report because of a word that he thinks means one thing, but in fact it means something else."(*Al-Risalah al-'Arshiyyah* p.35).

He also said:

Whatever contradicts sound reasoning is wrong. There is nothing wrong in the Quran, Sunnah and scholarly consensus, but there are some words which some people may not understand, or they understand them incorrectly. Thus the problem is with them, not with the Quran and Sunnah."(*Majmu' al-Fatawa* 11/490).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Messengers (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not say anything that is impossible according to reason and definitely cannot be true according to reason; rather what is narrated from them is of two types:

- i. That which reason and sound human nature testify to be sound.
- ii. That which reason on its own cannot grasp, such as matters of the unseen of which the Messengers spoke, including details about al-barzakh and the Last Day, and details of reward and punishment. What is mentioned in these reports is not something that is completely impossible according to reason, and any report whose content one may think is impossible on the basis of reason is one of two things: either it is fabricated or falsely attributed to the Messengers, or that individual's human reasoning is corrupt, so he imagines that there is something wrong with it and thinks that his view is based on sound reasoning."(*Al-Ruh* (p, 62); see also: *al-Sawa'iq al-Mursalah* 3/829-830).

Based on that, the words of Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) –

“How good is the comment of the one who said: If you see that the hadith is contrary to reason, or contrary to some other, soundly narrated report, or contrary to the basic principles of Islam, then know that it is fabricated. (*Tadrib al-Rawi*, 1/327) –

mean: one of the signs of the fabricated hadith is that it is contrary to sound reason, or to a sound report, or to a basic principle that Muslims adhere to and are agreed on.

What is meant by it being contrary to sound reason is that the hadith says something that reason rejects, such as the hadith which says, “Allah created the horse and let it run and sweat, then He created Himself from its sweat.”

Al-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This cannot have been fabricated by a Muslim or one of sound mind; the one who is accused of fabricating it is Muhammad ibn Shuja‘, who was a deviant.”(*Tadrib al-Rawi* 1/328).

When a sahih hadith mentions something that human reason cannot grasp because of its shortcomings – such as some prophetic miracles, or some matters of the unseen – this is called “what reason cannot grasp,” and it is not to be called “what reason deems impossible,” because it is not contrary to reason; rather it makes reason unable to grasp it and wonder what exactly is meant. So the individual either accepts the report and admits his inability to grasp it, which is the response of the believer, or he rejects it, which is the response of the ignorant disbeliever.

The fact that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed the Sahabi to call the tree, so he called it and it followed him, or the fact that he held the jinni [by the throat] and throttled him until he felt the coolness of his saliva between his fingers, are signs of prophethood in which we must believe, if the report is sound. The Muslim increases in faith thereby, and the disbeliever increases in disbelief. There is nothing in rational thinking to dictate that such events should be deemed impossible or such reports should be deemed false, even though reason, on its own, is unable to grasp such things or understand them, or determine whether they happened or not, without these reports.

As for the hadith, “Pray in sheep folds but do not pray in camel pens, for they are created from the devils” (narrated by Ibn Majah (769); classed as sahih by al-Albani in *Sahih Ibn Majah*), according to the well-known view, it does not mean that they were created from the devils in a real sense. Rather what is meant is that eating camel meat gives a person aggressive and devilish characteristics, so the one who eats it may acquire such characteristics, because in the make-up of the camel, there is a characteristic that makes it resemble the jinn in being unfriendly and wanting to harm people. Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed people to do wudu’ after eating camel meat, and he forbade praying in the camel pens.

See: *Majmu‘ al-Fatawa* by Ibn Taymiyah (20/523, 21/10) and *Hashiyat Ibn ‘Abidin* (1/380).

For more information, please see the answer the question no. [6981](#) .

And Allah knows best.