8571 - Jamaa’at al-Ahbaash (the Habashis)

the question

what's the Islamic point of view concerning the new group that appeared in Islam "AL AHBASH"? what are we supposed to do with them? and would you please tell me in brief what are the mistakes they have in their Aqeedah?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Alone, and peace and blessings be upon the one after whom there is no Prophet, and upon his family and companions.

The Standing Committee for Academic Research and Issuing Fatwaas (al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah li’l-Buhooth al-‘Ilmiyyah wa’l-Iftaa’) has received questions and requests for information concerning Jamaa’at al-Ahbaash (the Habashis) and about the person after whom this group is named, one ‘Abd-Allaah al-Habashi, who is based in Lebanon. This group conducts activities in various European countries, and in America and Australia. The Committee therefore examined the books and articles published by this group, in which their beliefs, thoughts and call are stated clearly. After examining this material and pondering the matter, the Committee issued the following statement to the Muslims:

Firstly:

It was reported in al-Saheehayn from the hadeeth of Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“The best of people are my generation, then the generation that follows them, then the generation that follows them.” And there are other versions of this hadeeth.

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“I advise you to fear Allaah and to listen and obey, even if a slave is appointed as your leader. Whoever among you lives after I die will see differences arise. I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of my rightly-guided successors (al-khulafaa’ al-raashidoon); clench your teeth on it (i.e., hold fast to it). Beware of newly invented things, for every innovation (bid’ah) is a going astray.” (Narrated by Ahmad, and Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi, who said, it is a saheeh hasan hadeeth).

One of the most important characteristics by which those first generations were distinguished and by which the achieved a higher level of righteousness than all other people, was the fact that they referred all their affairs to the Qur’aan and Sunnah; the Qur’aan and Sunnah were given precedence over all individual opinions, no matter whose opinion it was; they understood the texts of the two noble Revelations (i.e., the Qur’aan and Sunnah) in accordance with the principles of sharee’ah and the Arabic language; the sharee’ah was adopted in its entirety, and with regard to every single detail; ambiguous texts were referred to clear texts. Hence they upheld the sharee’ah and adhered to it, and they held fast to it. They did not add anything to it or take anything away from it. How could they add anything to it or take anything away from it when they were adhering to the divine texts which free from mistakes and errors?

Secondly:

Then these generations were succeeded by others among whom there were many innovations and invented matters, where everyone who had an opinion was enamoured of his opinion and forsook the texts of sharee’ah, and the texts were deliberately misinterpreted and distorted to suit people’s desires and ideas. Thus they went against the Trustworthy Messenger, and followed a way other than that of the believers. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers’ way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell — what an evil destination!” [al-Nisaa’ 4:115]

It is a part of the grace of Allaah towards this Ummah that in each age He sends to it scholars who are well versed in knowledge and who can stand up against every kind of bid'ah that distorts the beauty of the faith and contaminates its purity, and competes with or tries to destroy the Sunnah. This is the fulfilment of Allaah to protect His religion and sharee'ah, as He said (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'aan) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)" [al-Hijr 15:9]

And according to the hadeeth narrated in the books of Saheeh, the Sunans, the Musnads and others, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"A group of my ummah will continue to adhere to the commands of Allaah, and they will not be harmed by those who let them down or oppose them, until the Command of Allaah comes to pass, and they will be prevailing over the people." And there are other versions of this report.

Thirdly:

During the last quarter of the fourteenth century AH there emerged a group led by 'Abd-Allaah al-Habashi, who moved from Ethiopia to Syria, taking his miguidance with him, and he moved about in that region until he settled in Lebanon, where he started to call people to his way. His number of followers increased and his ideas – which are a mixture of the ideas of the Jahamiyyah [a group which misinterpreted the attributes of Allaah], the Mu'tazilah [a philosophical group many of whose ideas differ from those of Ahl al-Sunnah], grave-worshippers and Sufis – began to spread. He fanatically supported his ideas by engaging in debates and printing books and leaflets which propagate them.

Anyone who reads what has been written and published by this group will see clearly that their beliefs go beyond the pale of Islam, i.e. Jamaa'at al-Muslimeen (Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah). Among their false beliefs, for example are the following (this is not a complete list):

1.With regard to the issue of faith, they follow the school of thought of al-Irjaa' [those who believe

that sin does not matter so long as one is a believer] which is condemned in Islam.

It is known that the belief of the Muslims, which was that followed by the Sahaabah, the Taabi'een and those who follow their path until the present day, is that faith (eemaan) is the matter of words spoken by the tongue, beliefs held in the heart and actions done by the body. Belief must be accompanied by submission to the laws of Islam, otherwise that so-called faith is not valid.

There are many reports from the Salaf which confirm this belief, for example the words of Imaam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him): "Among the consensus of the Sahaabah and the Taabi'een and those who came after them, and those whom we have met, is that they say: faith is words, actions and intentions; one of these three will not be complete without the others."

2.They allow seeking help from and seeking refuge with the dead, and praying to them instead of to Allaah. This is shirk akbar (major shirk) according to the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and the consensus (ijmaa') of the Muslims. This shirk is the same as the religion of the earlier mushrikeen, such as the kuffaar of Quraysh and others, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meanings:

"And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not, nor profit them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allaah'" [Yoonus 10:18]

"Verily, We have sent down the Book to you (O Muhammad) in truth. So worship Allaah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allaah's sake only.

Surely, the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allaah only. And those who take Auliyaa' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): 'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allaah.' Verily, Allaah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allaah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever"

[al-Zumar 39:2-3]

"Say (O Muhammad): 'Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and the sea (dangers like storms), (when) you call upon Him in humility and in secret (saying): If He (Allaah) only saves us

from this (danger), we shall truly, be grateful.'" [al-An'aam 6:63]

"And the mosques are for Allaah (Alone), so invoke not anyone along with Allaah" [al-Jinn 72;18]

"Such is Allaah, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmeer (the thin membrane over the date stone).If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you (O Muhammad) like Him Who is the All-Knower (of everything)" [Faatir 35:13-14]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Du'aa' (supplication) is worship." This was narrated by the authors of Sunan with a saheeh isnaad. And there are many aayaat and ahaadeeth which say the same thing. This indicates that the earlier mushrikeen knew that Allaah was the Creator and Provider, the One Who brings benefit or causes harm, and they worshipped their gods so that they would intercede for them with Allaah and bring them closer to Him. Thus they committed shirk. Allaah ruled that they were guilty of kufr and shirk, and commanded His Prophet to fight them until all worship was for Allaah Alone, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and polytheism, i.e. worshipping others besides Allaah), and the religion (worship) will all be for Allaah Alone" [al-Anfaal 8:39]

The scholars have written many books on this topic in which they have explained clearly the true Islam with which Allaah sent His Messengers and revealed His Books. They also discussed the religion and beliefs of the people of the Jaahiliyyah, and their actions which went against the laws of Allaah. One of the best writers on this topic was Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him), in his numerous books. One of the most concise of his works is Qaa'idah Jaliyyah fi'l-Tawassul wa'l-Waseelah.

3.In their view, the Qur'aan is not the Word of Allaah in the true sense.

It is known from the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and by the consensus of the Muslims, that Allaah speaks whenever He wills, in a manner that befits His Majesty, may He be glorified, and that the Qur'aan, both its letters and meanings, is the word of Allaah in the true sense. Allaah says (interpretation of the meanings):

"And if anyone of the Mushrikoon (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah) seeks your protection then grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allaah" [al-Tawbah 9:6]

"and to Moosa (Moses) Allaah spoke directly" [al-Nisaa' 4:164]

"And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice" [al-An'aam 6:115]

"a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allaah [the Tauraat (Torah)], then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it?"

[al-Baqarah 2:75]

"They want to change Allaah's Words. Say: 'You shall not follow us; thus Allaah has said beforehand.'" [al-Fath 48:15]

And there are many well known aayaat which say the same thing. Numerous mutawaatir reports from the Salaf confirm this belief, which is stated in the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah – to Allaah be praise and blessings.

4. They think that it is obligatory to interpret the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah which speak of the attributes of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted (i.e., to understand them differently from the apparent meaning). This is contrary to the consensus of the Muslims, from the Sahaabah and Taabi'een to those who follow their path until the present day. The Muslims believe that it is obligatory to believe in what is stated in the texts about the Names and attributes of Allaah, without distorting the meanings, denying any of His attributes, discussing the hows and whys or likening any of Allaah's attributes to human attributes. They (the Muslims) believe that there is none like unto Allaah and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing; they do not deny any of the attributes

with which He has described himself. They do not change the words from their (right) places or belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names or signs. They do not discuss the nature of His attributes, or liken His attributes to the attributes of His creation, because there is nothing that can be compared to Him, and He has no equal or rival.

Imaam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “I believe in Allaah and in what has come from Allaah as Allaah meant it. I believe in the Messenger of Allaah and in what has come from the Messenger of Allaah as the Messenger of Allaah meant it.” Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “We believe in it; we do not reject anything that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, and we do not describe Allaah with more than He has described Himself.”

5.Among their false beliefs, they deny that Allaah is above His creation.

The belief of the Muslims, as indicated by the verses of the Qur’aan, the ahaadeeth of the Prophet, sound human nature and clear common sense is that Allaah is above His creation, over His Throne, and nothing at all of His creatures’ affairs is hidden from Him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and then He rose over (Istawaa) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty)”. [al-A’raaf 7:54] – this phrase appears seven times in the Qura’aan. And Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (i.e. the goodly words are not accepted by Allaah unless and until they are followed by good deeds)” [Faatir 35:10]

“And He is the Most High, the Most Great” [al-Baqarah 2:255]

“Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High” [al-A’laa 87:1]

“And to Allaah prostrate all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, of the moving (living) creatures and the angels, and they are not proud [i.e. they worship their Lord (Allaah) with humility]. They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded” [al-Nahl

16:49-50] – and there are other similar aayaat.

And many saheeh ahaadeeth have been narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) on this topic, for example: the story of the Mi'raaj (ascent into the heavens), which is mutawaatir, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed through the heavens one by one, until he reached his Lord, Who brought him close or called to him, and enjoined fifty prayers upon him, then he kept going back and forth between Moosa (peace be upon him) and his Lord. He came down from the presence of his Lord to Moosa, and Moosa asked him, "How many (prayers) have been enjoined upon you?" When he told him, he said, "Go back to your Lord and ask Him to reduce them." So he went back up to his Lord and asked Him to reduce them.

It was reported in al-Saheehayn that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When Allaah created His creation, He wrote in a Book which is with Him, above the Throne: 'My Mercy prevails over My wrath.'"

It was reported in al-Saheehayn from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do you not trust me, when I am the trustee of the One Who is in the heaven?"

In Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah and Sunan Abi Dawood it is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The Throne is above water, and Allaah is above the Throne, and Allaah knows what you are doing."

In Saheeh Muslim and elsewhere it is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to the slave-girl, "Where is Allaah?" She said, "In heaven." He said, "Who am I?" She said, "You are the Messenger of Allaah." He said: "Set her free, for she is a believer."

This is the pure belief which was adhered to by the Muslims: the Sahaabah, the Taabi'een and those who have followed them in truth until the present day, praise be to Allaah. Because of the great importance of this topic and the fact that so much evidence (daleel) – more than one thousand aayaat and ahaadeeth – points to it, the scholars have devoted books to it, e.g., al-Haafiz

Abu ‘Abd-Allaah al-Dhahabi in al-‘Alu li’l-‘Aliy al-Ghaffaar, and al-Haafiz Ibn al-Qayyim in Ijtimaa’ al-Juyoosh al-Islaamiyyah.

6. They speak of some of the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in a manner that is not appropriate.

An example of that is their statement that Mu’aawiyah (may Allaah be pleased with him) was a faasiq (rebellious evildoer). In this regard they go along with the Raafidis (may Allaah curse them). The Muslims should not discuss what happened among the Sahaabah, may Allaah be pleased with them all; they should refrain from speaking whilst believing that all of them were good and had the virtue of having been companions of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). It was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do not slander my Companions, for even if any of you were to spend (in charity) gold equivalent to the size of Mount Uhud, he would never reach their level, not even half way.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim). And Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And those who came after them say: Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.” [al-Hashr 59:10]

This is the sound belief concerning the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). This is the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa’ah throughout the centuries. Imaam Abu Ja’faar al-Tahhaawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, explaining the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa’ah:

“We love the companions of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but we do not go to extremes in our love for any of them, and we do not disown any of them. We hate those who hate them, and we do not say anything but good about them (the companions). Love for them is true religion, faith and goodness; hatred for them is kufr, hypocrisy and transgression.”

Fourthly:

What we may note about this group is that they follow weird fatwas, and their fatwas go against the shar'i texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Examples of that include the following:

They permit gambling with the kuffaar in order to take away their money; they permit stealing their crops and animals, on the condition that this stealing will not cause fitnah (tribulation); they permit dealing in ribaa when dealing with the kuffaar; they permit those who are in need to buy lottery tickets, which is haraam.

Other ways in which they obviously go against the sharee'ah include:

They permit looking at a non-mahram woman in a mirror or on a screen, even with desire; they say that persisting in looking at a non-mahram woman is not haraam; they say that for a man to look at any part of a woman who is not permissible for him is not haraam; they say that if a woman goes out wearing make-up and perfume but she does not have the intention of attracting men, this is not haraam; they permit free mixing of men and women; and they have other odd and outrageous fatwas which go against sharee'ah and they consider things which are major sins to be permissible. We ask Allaah to keep us safe from that which will provoke His wrath and earn His punishment.

Fifthly:

Some of the outrageous means they use to turn people away from the scholars who have deep knowledge, and put people off from reading their books or referring to the reports transmitted from them, include: slandering them, belittling them and undermining them, and even denouncing them as kaafirs. Chief among the scholars whom they defame in this manner is the imaam and mujaddid Shaykh al-Islam Abu'l-'Abbaas Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Haleem ibn 'Abd al-Salaam ibn Taymiyah, may Allaah have mercy on him. 'Abd-Allaah al-Habashi even wrote a book specifically about this reforming imaam, in which he accused him of being misguided and misled; he attributed to him words that he did not say, and fabricated other lies about him. Allaah will deal with him, and it is before Allaah that all disputing parties will ultimately meet.

They also slander the reforming imaam Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, may Allaah

have mercy on him, and his call for reform which he undertook in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, where he called people to follow Tawheed and cast aside Shirk, to honour the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah and to act upon them, and to uphold the Sunnah and do away with bid'ah. Through him, Allaah revived the teachings of Islam that had been forgotten, and He did away with whatever He willed of bid'ah and innovation. The effects of this call – by the grace and blessings of Allaah – spread throughout the Islamic world, and Allaah guided many people thereby. But this misguided group have directed their arrows against this call of the Sunnah and those who make this call; they have fabricated lies and propagated doubts and confusion, and they have rejected this clear call to follow the Qur'aan and Sunnah. They have done all of this to put people off the truth and to prevent them from following the straight path. We seek refuge with Allaah from that.

No doubt the hatred that this group has towards the great and blessed scholars of this ummah is indicative of the hatred that they hold in their hearts towards everyone who calls people to worship Allaah Alone and adhere to Tawheed, which was the belief and way of the people of the best generations. This group is far away from the essence of true Islam.

Seventhly:

Based on what we have said above, and other things that we have not mentioned here, the Committee makes the following statements:

1-Jamaa'at al-Ahbaash (the Habashis) is a misguided group which is beyond the pale of the Muslim community (Jamaa'at al-Muslimeen, i.e., Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah). They must come back to the truth which was followed by the Sahaabah and Taabi'een in all aspects of religion, action and belief. This is better and more lasting for them.

2-It is not permissible to follow the fatwas of this group, because they adopt odd views which clearly contradict the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and they follow some far-fetched and corrupt interpretations of some shar'i texts. All of these are reasons why ordinary Muslims should not trust their fatwas or believe them.

3-What they say about the Ahaadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not to be trusted, whether it has to do with the isnaad or the meaning of a hadeeth.

4-Muslims in all places must beware of this misguided group and warn others against them. They must beware of falling into their traps under any name or banner, and they should seek reward by advising their followers who have been deceived by them, and explain the faults in their way of thinking and their beliefs.

Having stated this clearly to the people, the Committee asks Allaah, may He be exalted, by His Most Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes to protect the Muslims from all fitnahs (trials, temptations), both visible and invisible, to guide those Muslims who have gone astray, to reform their affairs, to turn the plots of the plotters against them, and to suffice the Muslims against their evil. For Allaah is Able to do all things, and He is most Generous in responding. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and those who follow them in truth.