150265 - What Are the Barelvi Beliefs?

the question

What are the beliefs of the Bareilawi (or Barelvi) sect?

Summary of answer

The basic Barelvi beliefs are based on exaggeration about Prophet Muhammad and the members of his household, exaggeration about the righteous, enmity towards Ahl As-Sunnah, and diverting the people away from Jihad for the sake of Allah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What Are the Barelvi Beliefs?

The Barelvis are an extreme Sufi sect that appeared in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, in the city of Bareilly, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh during the days of British colonialism.

The basic principles of their misguided, deviant teachings are based on exaggeration about the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the members of his household, exaggeration about the righteous, enmity towards Ahl As-Sunnah , and diverting the people away from jihad for the sake of Allah.

Who is the founder of the Barelvi movement?

The founder of this sect was called Ahmad Reza Khan Taqii `Ali Khan; he called himself `Abd Al-Mustafa.

He was one of the misguided extremists. He used to say: “When you are confused, seek help from

the occupants of the graves.”

In his extreme exaggeration about the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he said: “The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is in control everywhere; he is the king of earth and the sovereign of mankind.”

And he said: “O Muhammad, I cannot say that you are Allah and I cannot differentiate between you and Him; your matter is for Him to judge, for He knows best what you really are.”

And he said: “Allah, may He be blessed and Exalted, gave the one who brought the Quran, our master Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), everything that is in Al-Lawh Al-Mahfudh.”

And he said: “The Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is light from the Light of Allah, and all of creation comes from his light.”

Amjad `Ali, one of their leaders, said: “The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is a deputy of Allah with complete authority, and the entire universe is under his control. So he does whatever he wants, he gives whatever he wants to whoever he wants, he takes whatever he wants, and there is no one in the universe who can alter his rule. He is the master of humans and whoever does not make him his sovereign is deprived of the sweetness of the sunnah.”

And he said: “Those who reject seeking help from the Prophets and saints and from their graves are heretics.”

Ahmad Yar Khan – one of their Shaykhs – said: “The Shar`i meaning of the one who is present and watching [this refers to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him] is that the one who is possessed of holy power is able to see the world like the palm of his hand from the place where he is; he can hear sounds from near and from far; he can go around the world in a single moment; he helps those who are in need and he answers those who call on him.”

The Barelvis used to build structures over graves and frequent them, lighting candles and lamps in them, offer sacrifices to them in fulfilment of vows, seeking barakah (blessing) from them, holding

celebrations for them, putting flowers and roses and cloths on them and putting curtains around them, and calling their followers to circumambulate the tombs, seeking barakah from them. (*Al-Kashf `an Haqiqat As-Sufiyyah,* 1/350; *As-Sufiyah: Nash'atuha wa Tatawwuruha,* p. 62; *Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Muyassrah fil-Adyan wal-Madhahib wal-Ahzab Al-Mu`asirah*, p. 302-306)

Can you pray behind a Barelevi Imam?

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas were asked:

There is a certain group in Pakistan that is called the Barelvis or the Nawari group, named after their current leader who is known as Nawari. I asked you for the Shar`i ruling concerning them and their beliefs, and praying behind them, so that this may bring peace of mind to many people who do not know the truth about them. And once again, I would like to ask you about some of their myths and widespread beliefs:

1. The belief that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is alive

2. The belief that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is present and can see what is happening, especially immediately after Jumu`ah prayer.

3. The belief that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) will definitely intercede for them.

4. They believe in the Awliya' and the occupants of graves, and they pray at their graves and ask them to meet their needs.

5. They build domes over graves and put lights in them.

6. They are known to say "Ya Rasul, Ya Muhammad (O Messenger, O Muhammad) (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

7. They get angry with the one who says Ameen out loud and raises his hands when praying, and they regard him as a Wahhabi.

8. They find it very strange when the Siwak is used at the time of prayer.

9. They kiss their fingers during Wudu', at the time of the Adhan, and after prayer.

10. Their Imam always recites the verse (interpretation of meaning): {Allah sends His Salah (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy, etc.) on the Prophet (Muhammad) and also His angels too (ask Allah to bless and forgive him)} [Al-Ahzab 33:56] after prayer, then all the worshippers send blessings upon the Prophet in unison and loudly.

11. They gather in circles after Jumu`ah prayer, standing, reciting and reciting poetry in praise of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) loudly.

12. After completing the recitation of the Holy Quran in Tarawih prayer in Ramadan, they make a great deal of food and distribute it in the forecourt of the mosque, as well as sweets.

13. They build mosques and adorn them elaborately, and they write over the Mihrab "Ya Muhammad (O Muhammad)".

14. They regard themselves as followers of the Sunnah and correct `Aqidah (belief), and think that others are in the wrong.

What is the Shar`i ruling on praying behind them?

They replied:

It is not permissible to pray behind one who is like this, and if one who knows that the belief of the imam is like that prays behind him, his prayer is invalid, because most of the things listed are characteristics of disbelief and innovation that are contrary to the Tawhid (affirmation of the Oneness of Allah) with which Allah sent His Messengers and which He revealed in His Books.

It is contrary to the clear meaning of the Quran, such as the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {Verily, you (O Muhammad) will die and verily, they (too) will die} [Az-Zumar 39:30] and {And the mosques are for Allah (Alone), so invoke not anyone along with Allah} [Al-Jinn 72:18].

The innovations that they do should be denounced in a gentle way; if they accept it then praise be to Allah. If they do not accept it, then shun them and pray in the mosques of Ahl As-Sunnah . We have a good example in the Close Friend (Khalil) of the Most Merciful, as Allah tells us he said (interpretation of the meaning): {And I shall turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides Allah. And I shall call on my Lord; and I hope that I shall not be unblest in my invocation to my Lord.} [Maryam 19:48]" (End quote from *Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah*, 2/396-398)

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on praying behind an imam from the Bareilawi sect, who believes that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is alive and present and can see us?

He replied: "If they believe that, then they have gone against Ijma` (consensus of the scholars), and if they seek his help, then that is Shirk, so it is not permissible to pray behind them." (End quote from *Thamarat At-Tadwin*, p. 8)

For more details, please see the following answers: 93150 , 20885 , 245 , 21524

And Allah knows best.