142516 - Can We Speak While Eating in Islam?

the question

Can we speak while eating?

Summary of answer

Can Muslims talk while eating?

-There is no Islamic prohibition on speaking while eating.
-The Prophet spoke while eating in several Hadiths.
-Scholars confirm that talking during meals is allowed.
-The belief that one must remain silent while eating is a myth.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is Speaking While Eating Allowed in Islam?

There is nothing in the Prophet's Sunnah to indicate that it is not allowed to speak while eating. The popular saying among some, that there is "no greeting and no talking over food" has no basis in Shari`ah.

What Does the Sunnah Say about Speaking while Eating?

It is proven that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) talked while eating.

In Al-Bukhari (3340) and Muslim (194) it is narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: One day some meat was brought to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of

Allah be upon him) and the foreleg, which he used to like, was offered to him. He took a bite, then he said: “I will be the leader of mankind on the Day of Resurrection. Do you know why that is? … Then he quoted the lengthy Hadith about intercession.

In Sahih Muslim (2052), it is narrated from Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) asked his family for condiments and they said: We do not have anything but vinegar. He called for it and he started eating it, saying: “What a good condiment vinegar is, what a good condiment vinegar is.”

Scholars’ Opinions on Speaking during Meals

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This shows that it is recommended to talk while eating, so as to put the diners at ease. (End quote from Sharh Sahih Muslim, 14/7)

Putting diners at ease, which is mentioned by Imam An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) here, is something that is well known and prevalent among the Arabs, because it is part of honouring the guest and showing generosity to talk to people whilst they are eating, especially guests.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to speak while eating, as seen above in the Hadith about vinegar, and as he said to his stepson `Umar ibn Abu Salamah, who was eating with him: “Mention the name of Allah and eat from that which is closest to you.” (End quote from Zad Al-Ma`ad, 2/366)

In these Hadiths, there is evidence that it is permissible to speak while eating. As for the Hadiths that mention the command to speak while eating or that forbid doing so, none of them are authentic.

Al-Hafidh As-Sakhawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I do not know anything about it, either forbidding it or approving it. (End quote from Al-Maqasid Al-Hasanah, p. 510)

Shaykh Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Talking while eating is like talking while not

eating: good talk is good and bad talk is bad. (End quote from Silsilat Al-Huda wan-Nur, tape no. 15/1)

Refer to these answers for more details: (6503, 13348, 163573, 147645, 9304, 3020, 145160, 171848, 264200)

And Allah knows best.