

Eating with three fingers

source: silsilat ul-hudā wa nnūr ~ the series of guidance and light ~ tape no. 692

Question #6: “Is it sunnah to eat with three fingers generally with respect to all food or specifically with tharīd[1] only?”

Shaykh al-Albānī answers:

“There isn’t, in the Sunnah mentioned from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), that which will help us to answer this question. All that there is, is that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to eat with three fingers; but that which is necessary for us to say about this hadīth with regard to its fiqh (understanding), is that:

Firstly, this hadīth does not mean to determine that it is not permissible for the Muslim to eat by other means like the well-known spoons today. Rather, it only means that if the Muslim eats a food that can be eaten with three fingers, then he (should) not show that he is greedy with the food such that he eats with the whole handful while he is able to eat like the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to eat, with three fingers. Secondly, it is known that gravy of meat, for example, cannot be eaten with three fingers, so there it is necessary (to use) other means to eat it. And this is from the worldly affairs and not from the affairs of the religion, which the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was assigned that he conveys all the rulings of the religion to the people. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has said (regarding) worldly affairs: ‘You are more knowledgeable about your worldly affairs than me.’”[2]

~ asaheeha translations ~

[1] a dish of bread, meat and broth

[2] Sahīh aj-Jāmi’ #1488