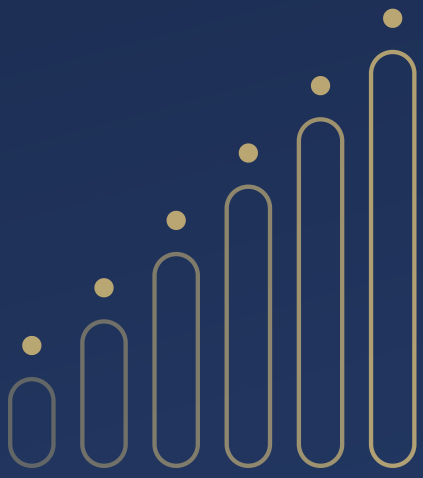
JAMIA HAFS
SCIENCES OF THE QUR'AN

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Growing Up: *Bulugh*

A guide for Muslim boys becoming men

Puberty, purity and responsibility, explained calmly in plain words. For a boy to read, ideally with his father beside him.



jamiahafs.com

BEFORE YOU START

A word to *you*, and to your father

Something big and good is starting. Your body is growing, your voice is changing, and soon Allah will count you among those who are responsible for their own prayers, their own fasts and their own choices. Nobody should feel shy or afraid about it. Allah made this stage, and He made it with care.

This guide explains three things in everyday words: what is happening to you, what Islam asks of you now, and how to keep clean in body and heart. It is written for a boy to read. The best way to use it is with your father, an older brother or a trusted teacher nearby, so you can ask whatever you like.

Parents: there is a short page for you near the end, with simple ways to start the conversation.

HOW TO READ IT

Read one part at a time. Each part ends with something you can do today. If a word is new, look at **Words to know** on the last page. The rulings follow the Hanafi school of fiqh, which is the way we teach at Jamia Hafs.

What you will find inside

1 What bulugh means

2 What is changing in your body

3 Purity: wet dreams, ghusl and staying clean

4 Your new responsibilities

5 Prayer: making it a habit

6 Modesty, the gaze and the phone

7 Friends, mood and looking after yourself

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1 What bulugh *means*

Bulugh means "reaching". In Islam it means reaching the age when you become responsible for your own actions. Before this age you are a child: your parents guide you, and you are not blamed for what you miss. After it, your prayers, your fasts and your choices are yours.

> *The pen is lifted from three: the sleeper until he wakes up, the boy until he reaches puberty, and the one who has lost his mind until he recovers.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SUNAN ABI DAWUD 4403

Notice the word *until*. The pen is lifted only for a time. When you reach bulugh, it starts to write. That is not a punishment. It means Allah trusts you with something, and He would not give it to you unless you were able to carry it.

How do you know you have reached it?

SIGN	WHAT IT MEANS
A wet dream or an emission	Fluid called *mani* comes out while you are asleep or awake. This is the usual sign for a boy. It counts if it happens at 12 lunar years of age or later.
No sign at all	If nothing has happened, you are counted as having reached bulugh when you complete **15 lunar years**. This is the position that fatwa follows in the Hanafi school. A lunar year is about eleven days shorter than the usual year, so 15 lunar years is about 14 years and 6 months.

ONE COMMON WORRY

Reaching bulugh does not mean you suddenly know everything. You will keep learning, and your parents and teachers are still there to guide you. What changes is that Allah now writes your deeds, and you must keep up the duties yourself.

2 What is changing *in your body*

Over a few years, almost every boy goes through the same changes. They do not all arrive at the same time, so do not compare yourself with friends.

- You grow taller, sometimes very quickly, and your shoulders widen.
- Your voice deepens. It may crack for a while. That passes.
- Hair grows under the arms, on the body and later on the face.
- Your skin gets oilier, and spots can appear. Wash your face and keep clean.
- You sweat more and your body smells different. Wash every day, and wear clean clothes.
- Your private parts grow and change. This is normal. You will have wet dreams or feel sudden desire. This is also normal.
- Your feelings go up and down faster than before.

All of this is part of how Allah created you. There is nothing dirty or shameful in being a boy who is growing. What matters is how you take care of yourself and what you do with your new strength.

SOMETHING TO DO TODAY

Make a small dua: *"Rabbi zidni ilma"*: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (Surah Ta-Ha, 20:114). Then pick one habit to start this week: a daily wash and clean clothes, or a regular bedtime.

3 Purity: wet dreams, *ghusl* and staying clean

Wet dreams are not a sin

A wet dream is something that happens to you. You are not blamed for it, and it does not mean you did anything wrong. It does mean you need to wash and make yourself pure again.

WHEN YOU WAKE UP AND FIND...	WHAT TO DO
You remember a dream and there is wetness	Ghusl (a full bath) is required.
Wetness, but you are sure it is mani, even if you remember no dream	Ghusl is required.
A dream, but no wetness at all	No ghusl.
Wetness and you are not sure what it is (mani or something else)	Take a ghusl to be safe, and ask your father or teacher if it keeps happening.
You are sure it is not mani	Wash it off, and make wudu.

Three fluids to know

NAME	WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT NEEDS
Mani	The thick fluid that comes with desire, after which the body feels relaxed	Ghusl. The stain must be washed off clothes and bedding.
Madhi	A thin, clear, sticky fluid that comes when you think about or feel desire	Wash it off and make wudu. No ghusl.
Wadi	A thick, cloudy fluid that may follow urine	Wash it off and make wudu. No ghusl.

How to take a ghusl

1. Make the intention in your heart, and say Bismillah.
2. Wash your hands, then your private parts and any stain on your body.
3. Make wudu as for prayer.
4. Pour water over your head three times, making sure it reaches the roots of the hair.
5. Pour water over your right shoulder and then your left, and then let it flow over the whole body.
6. Check that no spot is dry, including the navel, the ears and under the arms. **Rinsing the mouth and nose properly is part of the ghusl.** Without it, the ghusl is not complete.

IF YOU CANNOT FIND WATER

If there is no water, or washing would harm you because of illness, you may use **tayammum** (dry ablution with clean earth) and pray. Do not miss Fajr because you are embarrassed or the bathroom is busy.

Until you have washed

NOT ALLOWED

- Praying
- Touching the mushaf
- Reciting Qur'an as recitation
- Entering the masjid

ALLOWED

- Dhikr and dua
- Listening to Qur'an
- Eating and sleeping (wash your hands and make wudu first)
- Studying and talking

Take your ghusl as soon as you can, and never let a prayer time pass because you were shy to wash. Keep a spare set of clean pyjamas where you can reach them.

4 Your new *responsibilities*

Reaching bulugh means that these duties now belong to you. You are not alone with them. Your family will help you, and Allah is easy on those who try.

DUTY	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
Salah	Five prayers every day on time. Pray Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) at the masjid with the congregation.
Sawm	Fasting the whole month of Ramadan.
Awrah	Keep your body covered from below the navel down to and including the knees, in front of everyone, including friends, and at the gym, pool or beach. Do not look at another person's awrah.
Gaze	Lower your eyes from what Allah has told us not to look at (see chapter 6).
Zakat and Hajj	These become due only when you own enough wealth or the means to travel. Your father can explain.
Truthfulness and manners	Tell the truth. Keep your promises. Be good to your parents. Do not bully, mock or lie.

What about prayers and fasts I missed?

Before bulugh you were being trained. Missed prayers from that time are not owed. From the day you reached bulugh, a prayer or fast you missed is a debt to be made up (**qada**). If you are not sure when you reached it, think back honestly and tell your father or teacher. They will help you work out what is owed and how to catch up. Do not carry it alone.

> *Command your children to pray when they become seven years old, and discipline them for it when they become ten.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SUNAN ABI DAWUD 495

If your parents began teaching you at seven, you already have the habit. If not, start now. It is never too late.

5 Prayer: making it *a habit*

Prayer is the first thing you will be asked about. Here is a simple way to make it part of your day.

1. **Know the times.** Use the Jamia Hafs prayer times page and put the times on your phone.
2. **Set an alarm for Fajr** and put your phone across the room, so that you must get up.
3. **Make wudu as soon as the adhan is called.** It is easier than leaving it until the last minute.
4. **Pray in congregation** at the masjid when you can. Ask your father to take you, or go with a friend.
5. **Start with the fard**, then add the sunnah prayers one by one.
6. **Take your time.** Be calm in standing, bowing and prostrating. Prayer done in a rush is not what Allah asked for.
7. **Keep a short tracker.** A tick for each prayer on a card or in a notebook is enough.

IF YOU FORGET OR OVERSLEEP

Pray it as soon as you remember. Do not leave it for later. A missed prayer must be made up in order, as soon as you can.

Learning to pray correctly

Many boys pray every day but have never been taught the details. If you are unsure about the words or the movements, ask for help. A short lesson with a teacher is worth many months of guessing. Jamia Hafs also has free *How to Pray* sheets in the Library.

6 Modesty, the gaze *and the phone*

Allah has put **haya** in you: a natural sense of shame about what is wrong. The Prophet ﷺ taught that haya is part of faith (Sahih al-Bukhari 24). It is your protection, and it is also a mark of strength.

> *Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them.*
>
> THE QUR'AN · SURAH AN-NUR, 24:30

> *Do not follow one glance with another. The first is yours; the second is not.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SUNAN ABI DAWUD 2149

What this means in daily life

- Your eyes will land on things you did not choose. That is not a sin. Look away straight away.
- Do not search for, watch or keep pictures or videos that you would hide from your father.
- Treat every girl and woman as someone's sister, daughter and mother. Speak to them with respect, and do not tease or follow them.
- Do not be alone in a private space with a girl who is not a close relative.

Phones and screens

TRY THIS

- Charge your phone outside your bedroom at night.
- Use it in family rooms, not behind a closed door.
- Use a filter on the home Wi-Fi and on your phone.
- Leave any chat or group that turns bad.

NEVER

- Send a photo of your body to anyone.
- Meet a person you only know online.
- Keep a secret that makes you feel afraid. Tell your father or mother.

When desire grows strong

Strong desire is a normal part of becoming a man. Allah did not ask you to feel nothing. He asked you to guard yourself, and He gave you ways to do it. Allah also warns us not to go near what leads to wrongdoing (Surah Al-Isra, 17:32), and tells us that the believers are those who guard their private parts (Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23:5).

> *O young people! Whoever among you can marry, let him marry; and whoever cannot, let him fast, for fasting protects him.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 5066

- Fast on Mondays and Thursdays.
- Play sports, and keep your body and day busy.
- Go to bed early and get up for Fajr. Long nights alone with a phone are where the trouble starts.
- Do not stay alone with thoughts. Talk to your father or a teacher you trust. Nothing you say will shock them, because they were once your age.

7 Friends, mood and *looking after yourself*

> *A man follows the religion of his friend, so each of you should look carefully at whom he takes as a friend.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SUNAN ABI DAWUD 4833

Good friends make good things easier. Choose friends who remind you of Allah, respect your parents, and do not pressure you to do wrong. If a friend pulls you away from your prayer, be kind to him, but do not follow him.

Mood swings

You may feel angry, sad or restless for no clear reason. This is common at your age because your body is changing fast. It helps to sleep enough, eat well, move your body, spend time outside and talk to someone you trust. Make dua in sujud, because it is the time when a servant is closest to his Lord. If a low mood lasts for weeks, tell your parents. Sometimes a doctor can help too.

Looking after your body

HABIT	WHY AND HOW
Wash daily	Clean skin and clothes. Wash after sweating.
Teeth	Brush or use the miswak, especially before wudu and prayer.
Nails and body hair	The Prophet ﷺ taught natural habits (fitrah): trimming the moustache, clipping the nails, and removing underarm and pubic hair. Do not leave them for more than forty days (Sahih Muslim 258).
Beard	When your beard starts to grow, the sunnah is to let it grow. In the Hanafi school, shaving it is not allowed. Ask your father if you have questions.
Sleep and food	Eight to ten hours of sleep, and real meals. Growing bodies need both.

8 When you slip: *coming back* to Allah

Everyone makes mistakes. A growing boy will sometimes pray late, look when he should have looked away, say a harsh word to his parents, or spend a night on his phone. What matters is that you do not stay there.

> *Say: O My servants who have wronged themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.*
>
> THE QUR'AN · SURAH AZ-ZUMAR, 39:53

Four steps of tawbah

1. **Stop** the wrong thing now.
2. **Feel regret** for what you did.
3. **Decide** sincerely not to go back to it.
4. **Put right** any wrong done to a person: give back what you took, or ask forgiveness.

Then make a dua of your own, in your own words, and ask Allah to help you. Pray two rak'ahs if you wish. Do not tell others about your private mistakes. Allah has already covered it, and He loves for you to be covered.

REMEMBER

Shaytan wants you to feel that you are too far gone to return. The Qur'an says the opposite: the door is open, and Allah is waiting. Make tawbah and go on.

9 A page for *fathers*

Your son is likely to feel awkward about all of this, and you may too. He will take his cue from you. If you are calm and kind, he will learn that these questions are safe to ask.

> *Each of you is a guardian, and each of you is responsible for those in your care.*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 893

How to begin

- **Talk early.** Before he is 12, tell him what will happen so that nothing frightens him. It is much better he hears it from you than from the internet or friends.
- **Keep it private and short.** Choose a quiet time, perhaps on a drive or a walk. Several short talks work better than one long one.
- **Use plain words.** Say "wet dream" and "ghusl", not hints. Plain words remove shame.
- **Share your own experience** in a sentence or two. "It happened to me too, and this is what I did."
- **Show him the practical things:** where to put the spare clothes, how the ghusl is done, how to wash the stain.
- **Never laugh at him,** and never shout about what is natural.

THINGS YOU CAN SAY

- "You are growing up, and I am proud of you."
- "What is happening to your body is normal and it is from Allah."
- "You can ask me anything. I will not be angry."
- "If you make a mistake, come to me first."

PLEASE AVOID

- Mocking or comparing him with others.
- Threatening him over private matters.
- Leaving him to find out from the internet.
- Giving rules without the reason behind them.

Make it easy for him

- Keep a spare set of pyjamas and a towel in his room.
- Take him to the masjid for Fajr and Jumu'ah yourself.
- Set clear, calm rules for phones and make them the same for the whole family.
- Pray for him by name. A father's dua for his son is not turned away.

10 Checklist, questions *and words to know*

This month

- [ ] I know the signs of bulugh and what they mean for me.
- [ ] I know how to take a ghusl and where my spare clothes are.
- [ ] I pray all five prayers and track them.
- [ ] I have talked to my father or a teacher about something I was unsure of.
- [ ] I have set up my phone for night time and for filters.
- [ ] I have a daily washing and tooth routine.
- [ ] I know what to do if I make a mistake: tawbah and keep going.

Quick answers

Can I pray if I had a wet dream and have not bathed yet?
No. Take the ghusl first, then pray. If water is not available, use tayammum.

Do I have to take ghusl at night?
It is better to take it as soon as possible. If it is not possible, at least wash your private parts and make wudu until you can take the ghusl, and take it before the next prayer.

I missed some Ramadan fasts after bulugh. What now?
Make them up, one day for each missed day, as soon as you can.

Am I a bad Muslim if I have strong desires?
No. Desire is part of how you were made. What counts is what you do with it.

Words to know

Bulugh: reaching the age of responsibility.

Ghusl: the full ritual bath.

Wudu: washing for prayer.

Tayammum: dry ablution with clean earth.

Mani: the fluid that requires ghusl.

Awrah: what must be covered.

Haya: modesty and a sense of shame.

Qada: making up what was missed.

Tawbah: returning to Allah in repentance.

Fitrah: natural habits of cleanliness.

Sources. The Qur'an, 20:114; 23:5; 17:32; 24:30; 39:53. Sunan Abi Dawud 4403, 495, 2149, 4833. Sahih al-Bukhari 24, 893, 5066. Sahih Muslim 258. Rulings follow the Hanafi school. For a question about your own situation, ask a teacher you trust.

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