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SCIENCES OF THE QUR'AN

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Growing Up: *Bulugh*

A guide for Muslim girls becoming women

Puberty, purity and responsibility, explained calmly in plain words. For a girl to read, ideally with her mother beside her.



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BEFORE YOU START

A word to *you*, and to your mother

Something big and good is starting. Your body is changing, your feelings are growing, and soon Allah will count you among the women 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 girl to read. The best way to use it is with your mother, an older sister or a trusted teacher nearby, so you can ask whatever you like.

Mothers: 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 Your period: what it is and what to do

4 Purity and ghusl

5 Your new responsibilities

6 Hijab, modesty and the phone

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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 child 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
Your first period	Monthly bleeding called *hayd*. This is the usual sign for a girl. It counts if it happens at 9 lunar years of age or later.
A wet dream with fluid	If you wake up and find fluid after a dream, you have reached bulugh.
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 mother 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 girl goes through the same changes. They do not all arrive at the same time, so do not compare yourself with friends or cousins.

- You grow taller, and your body takes a new shape.
- Hair grows under the arms and on the body.
- Your skin gets oilier, and spots can appear. Wash your face gently and keep clean.
- You sweat more and your body smells different. Wash every day and wear clean clothes.
- Your breasts develop, and a clear or whitish discharge may appear. This is normal.
- Your first period comes, usually some time after the other changes begin.
- 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 girl who is growing up. What matters is how you take care of yourself and what you do with your new responsibilities.

SOMETHING TO DO TODAY

Make a small dua: *"Rabbi zidni ilma"*: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (Surah Ta-Ha, 20:114). Then ask your mother to help you put together a small bag with pads, a spare pair of underwear, tissues and a small bag for used items. Keep it in your school bag, so you are never caught by surprise.

3 Your period: *what it is* and what to do

A period is a natural monthly cycle. In fiqh it is called **hayd**. It is not an illness and it is not your fault. It is the way Allah made a woman's body, and the way it prepares for the future.

The basics

QUESTION	ANSWER
How long does it last?	At least three days and three nights, and at most ten days. Bleeding for less than three days is not counted as hayd. Bleeding for more than ten days is treated differently: ask your mother or teacher.
What does it look like?	Red, dark, brown, yellow or cloudy. Only pure white or clear is clean.
How often?	Between one period and the next there must be at least fifteen clean days. Many girls start with irregular cycles, and that is normal.
When is it over?	When the bleeding stops completely and you are clean (white or dry). Then you take a ghusl and go back to praying.

DURING YOUR PERIOD YOU MUST NOT

- Pray
- Fast
- Touch the mushaf or recite Qur'an as recitation
- Enter the masjid (including a masjid prayer hall at an Islamic centre)
- Go around the Ka'bah (tawaf)

YOU MAY

- Make dhikr and dua
- Listen to the Qur'an and learn its meaning
- Read a translation without the Arabic
- Study, cook, go out and do everything else in daily life

What about the prayers and fasts?

You do **not** make up the prayers you missed during your period. This is a mercy from Allah. You **do** make up the fasts of Ramadan that you missed, after Ramadan. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) explained it: "We were commanded to make up the fast, and we were not commanded to make up the prayer" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Haid).

What to do when it begins

1. Use a pad and change it often.
2. Stop praying and fasting from the moment you see blood.
3. Keep track of the start and end dates in a small notebook or on a chart. This will help you later, especially if your cycle changes.
4. When the bleeding has stopped completely, take your ghusl and begin to pray again.

IF SOMETHING DOES NOT LOOK NORMAL

If your bleeding is very heavy, lasts over ten days, or starts and stops in a way you do not understand, tell your mother. The Jamia Hafs Knowledge Hub has a full guide to the period and another for irregular bleeding. A doctor can help if the pain is strong or the bleeding is heavy.

4 Purity *and ghusl*

When ghusl is needed

- When your period ends.
- If you wake up with fluid after a dream. When Umm Sulaym asked the Prophet ﷺ whether a woman must bathe after such a dream, he said: "Yes, if she sees the fluid" (Sahih al-Bukhari 282).
- When bleeding after childbirth ends, later in life.

How to take a ghusl

1. Make the intention in your heart, and say Bismillah.
2. Wash your hands, then your private parts and anything 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. If your hair is loose, wet it from root to tip. If it is in a braid, the roots must be wet, and the braid need not be undone if water reaches the roots.
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 folds of the body and behind the ears. **Rinsing the mouth and nose properly is part of the ghusl.** Without it, the ghusl is not complete.

THINGS THAT STOP WATER

Nail polish, and anything that makes a layer on the skin or nail, stops water from reaching them. Take it off before wudu and ghusl. A henna stain is fine, but thick dried paste is not.

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 a prayer because the bathroom is busy.

Keeping clean every day

- Wash your private area with water after using the toilet.
- Wash and change pads regularly. Wash your hands afterwards.
- Wear cotton underwear, and change daily.
- Wash any blood or discharge off your body and clothes before you pray.

5 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. Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) is not required of women; you pray Dhuhr instead.
Sawm	Fasting the whole month of Ramadan, except for the days of your period, which you make up later.
Hijab and awrah	Cover your body, including your hair, in front of men who are not your close relatives (see chapter 6).
Gaze	Lower your eyes from what Allah has told us not to look at.
Zakat and Hajj	These become due only when you own enough wealth or the means to travel. Your parents can explain.
Truthfulness and manners	Tell the truth. Keep your promises. Be good to your parents. Do not mock, gossip 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 fast you missed is a debt to be made up (**qada**). Prayers are not made up for the days of your period. If you are not sure when you reached bulugh, think back honestly and tell your mother 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.

6 Hijab, modesty *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 women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts, and not to show their adornment except what is apparent, and to draw their head-covers over their chests.*
>
> THE QUR'AN · SURAH AN-NUR, 24:31 (MEANING)

> *Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a head-cover (khimar).*
>
> THE PROPHET ﷺ · SUNAN ABI DAWUD 641

What hijab means

From bulugh, a girl covers her whole body in front of men who are not her close relatives (not her *mahram*), except her face and hands. In prayer, she covers everything except her face, hands and feet. The head is covered by a scarf. Clothes should be loose and not see-through. Her mahram (men she can never marry) include her father, grandfathers, brothers, uncles and, later in life, her sons. Cousins, neighbours and friends' brothers are not mahram.

A GENTLE WORD ON STARTING

Hijab is an act of worship and an honour, and no one should wear it as a punishment or in fear. If it feels hard, take it step by step: understand it first, ask questions, start with prayer, then add it in front of non-mahram men. Make dua for Allah to make it beloved to you. Mothers and elder sisters can help by wearing it with her and being kind to her.

Phones and screens

TRY THIS

- Charge your phone outside your bedroom at night.
- Use it in family rooms, not behind a closed door.
- Keep your accounts private, and only follow people you know.
- Leave any chat or group that turns bad.

NEVER

- Send photos of yourself to anyone, even a friend. They can be shared.
- Chat privately with a boy or man who is not a close relative.
- Meet a person you only know online.
- Keep a secret that makes you feel afraid. Tell your mother.

If someone pressures you or frightens you, you have not done anything wrong. Tell a parent right away, and save the messages.

7 Friends, feelings 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 their parents, and do not pressure you to do wrong. If a friend pulls you away from your prayer, be kind to her, but do not follow her.

Mood and feelings

You may feel tearful, irritable or tired in the days before and during your period. This is common, because your body is changing fast. It helps to sleep enough, eat well, drink water, move your body, spend time outside and talk to someone you trust. Make dua in sujud when you can pray, and in dhikr when you cannot. If a low mood lasts for weeks, tell your mother. Sometimes a doctor can help too.

Pain and period health

- Warmth, rest and a hot drink can ease cramps. A doctor or pharmacist can advise on pain relief.
- Eat iron-rich food, such as dates, spinach, lentils and meat, during and after your period.
- Very heavy or very painful periods are not something to put up with. Ask your mother to take you to a female doctor.

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): clipping the nails and removing underarm and pubic hair. Do not leave them for more than forty days (Sahih Muslim 258).
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 girl will sometimes pray late, spend too long on her phone, say a harsh word to her parents or forget to cover. 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 *mothers*

Your daughter is likely to feel awkward about all of this, and you may too. She will take her cue from you. If you are calm and kind, she 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 she is nine or ten, tell her what will happen so that nothing frightens her. It is much better she hears it from you than from the internet or friends.
- **Keep it private and short.** Choose a quiet time. Several short talks work better than one long one.
- **Use plain words.** Say "period" and "ghusl", not hints. Plain words remove shame.
- **Share your own first-period story** in a sentence or two. "It happened to me too, and this is what I did."
- **Prepare her:** a small bag with pads and spare underwear for school and trips, and a plan for what to do if it comes at school.
- **Never laugh at her,** and never tell her she is "unclean" or should hide it.

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 anyone makes you uncomfortable, tell me first."

PLEASE AVOID

- Mocking or comparing her with others.
- Making her feel guilty or ashamed for her body.
- Leaving her to find out from the internet.
- Giving rules without the reason behind them.

Make it easy for her

- Celebrate quietly, with a small gift or a special meal. It tells her that growing up is a good thing.
- Help her start hijab gently, and wear it with her.
- Set clear, calm rules for phones, and make them the same for the whole family.
- Pray for her by name. A mother's dua for her daughter 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 have a small bag ready with pads and spare underwear.
- [ ] I know how to take a ghusl, and what stops water.
- [ ] I pray all five prayers and track them.
- [ ] I note the start and end of my period.
- [ ] I have talked to my mother or a teacher about something I was unsure of.
- [ ] I have set up my phone for night time and privacy.
- [ ] I know what to do if I make a mistake: tawbah and keep going.

Quick answers

My period started while I was praying. What now?

Stop. The prayer is not made up later, and you take your ghusl when the period ends.

My period ended in the middle of the day in Ramadan. Do I fast?

That day cannot be counted as a fast, but it is good to keep from eating and drinking for the rest of the day out of respect for Ramadan. You make up the fast later.

Can I read Qur'an during my period?

You cannot touch the mushaf or recite it as recitation. You may listen, learn the meaning and make dhikr and dua. A student learning with a teacher may need a different answer, so ask your teacher.

Am I a bad Muslim if I find hijab hard?

No. Be patient, keep praying, ask for help and take one step at a time.

Words to know

Bulugh: reaching the age of responsibility.

Hayd: the monthly period.

Ghusl: the full ritual bath.

Wudu: washing for prayer.

Tayammum: dry ablution with clean earth.

Mahram: a close male relative you can never marry.

Awrah: what must be covered.

Haya: modesty and a sense of shame.

Qada: making up what was missed.

Tawbah: returning to Allah in repentance.

Sources. The Qur'an, 20:114; 24:31; 39:53. Sunan Abi Dawud 4403, 495, 641, 4833. Sahih al-Bukhari 24, 282, 893. Sahih Muslim 258, and Kitab al-Haid. Rulings follow the Hanafi school. For a question about your own situation, ask a teacher you trust.

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