

Ghusl — the obligatory bath

When the whole body must be washed, what actually makes it valid, and the way the Prophet ﷺ did it.



★ The command

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا

“And if you are in a state of janabah, then purify yourselves.” The whole body, not a part of it.

Qur'an 5:6

★ What makes it obligatory

Janabah: marital relations, or the discharge of maniyy whether awake or asleep. Also the end of haid and of nifas.

- A wet dream with no trace on waking needs no ghusl

Qur'an 5:6 · Sahih al-Bukhari 282 · 331

★ And these too

The body of a Muslim who has died is washed. One entering Islam bathes. Ghusl is not for uncleanness — it lifts a state.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1253 · Sunan Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Taharah · hasan

★ The two that must happen

An intention in the heart, and water reaching every part of the skin and the roots of the hair. Everything else is sunnah.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1 · Qur'an 5:6

★ The way he ﷺ did it

Wash the hands; wash the private parts; then make wudu as for prayer; then work water into the roots of the hair.

Sahih al-Bukhari 248 · 276

★ Then the water

Three handfuls over the head, then water over the whole body, the right side before the left. Nothing is left dry.

Sahih al-Bukhari 248 · 272

★ Plaited hair

A woman need not undo her plaits for janabah so long as the water reaches the scalp. Umm Salamah was told so plainly.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Hayd

★ Ghusl that is sunnah

Before Jumu'ah, before the two 'Eid prayers, and for ihram. The Friday bath is stressed for everyone who attends.

Sahih al-Bukhari 877 · 879

★ If there is no water

Tayammum stands in its place: clean earth over the face and the hands. Do not sit out the prayer waiting for a tap.

Qur'an 4:43 · Sahih al-Bukhari 348