

## Gesztusok

Following are some characteristic body language used to express congratulations.

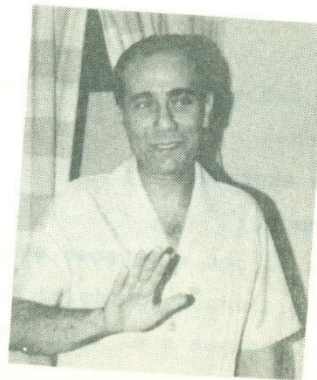
.A simple handshake expresses congratulations among acquaintances.



. Children also shake hands on such occasions. Here the little boy congratulates Magdy's daughter on the arrival of the baby.



. This gesture indicates that the person has had enough of whatever is mentioned or offered. In Magdy's case it indicates that he does not want any more children.



• Members of the family and very close friends usually embrace and kiss a person of the same sex on both cheeks to congratulate him on the occasion of a very happy event.



This same greeting is also performed when a dear friend has been away for a long time. In Arab airports and railway stations men kissing other men, women kissing other women on the cheek is a very common sight.

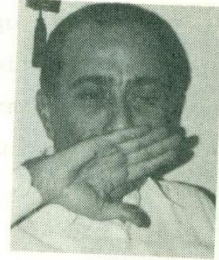
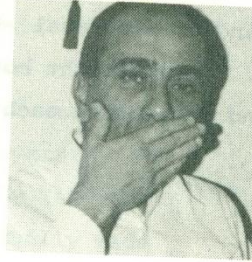




## GESTURES AND BODY LANGUAGE ( UNIT TWO )

Gestures presented in this unit express meanings of satisfaction, waiting, promising and threatening. Comparisons and contrasts between Egyptian, Japanese and other groups' body language will be briefly referred to.

. A unique Egyptian gesture that may be difficult for outsiders to understand is made by kissing the inside of the palm first, then the outside. It shows that the person is greatly satisfied with what he has achieved. It usually accompanies the words, /il hamdulillaah/. It also shows contentment with what God has granted His people.



Usually the first sale of the day is accompanied by this gesture as the green grocer or fruit seller pockets the price of what he has sold. Although it is mainly practiced by low-middle class people, others may occasionally use it either seriously or in jest.



. Another characteristic Egyptian gesture is made by holding the fingers and thumb of the right hand upwards moving the hand slowly up and down from the elbow. It means "wait", "take it easy", "cool it." (photo right) . It could also mean a threat, if accompanied by the appropriate face expression. In this case it implies, "wait and see what will happen to you as shown on left.



. Warning or threatening is also expressed by hooking the thumb and index fingers of the right hand, with other fingers outstretched, moving the arm from the elbow up and down . It means, " I'll give it to you. You'll soon see what will happen to you, so be careful. " The same meaning can also be conveyed by pointing the index finger at the listener and moving it up and down several times in a stabbing motion. On the right both children are threatening each other each using a different gesture .



A somewhat similar gesture in Japanese nonverbal communication is the sign for money or riches as indicated in the photo on the right.

On the left is the Egyptian sign for money made by rubbing the thumb and the inside of the index and middle finger imitating the movement of counting bank-notes.



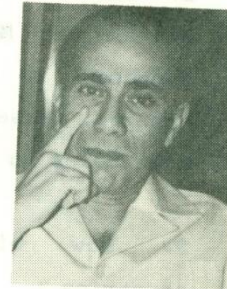


An Egyptian would point the index finger of the right hand under the left eye, then move it to a position below the right eye indicating that he will carry out a promise or fulfill a pledge. The implicit meaning is that he is swearing by his own eyes that what he has promised will be fulfilled. This gesture is usually accompanied by the



the words /min il ceen di w- il ceen di/ meaning from this eye and that.

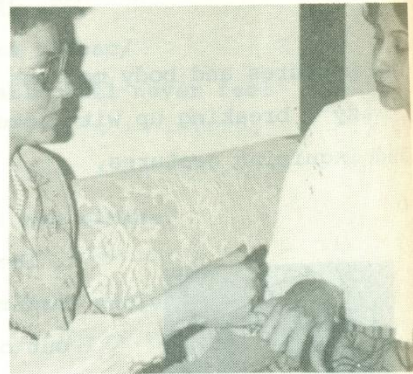
A similar gesture in Japanese body language means "I" usually made by young children.



Both the Egyptian, (right) and the Japanese, (left), are using corresponding gestures in their cultures meaning "I, or it is me." The Egyptian gesture is made by pointing the index finger towards the heart.

. In order to emphasize that they are not going to deal with one another any more two Egyptians would link the hooked little fingers of their right hands as shown right.

This body motion is likely to be misunderstood by Japanese because:



they have a similar one which indicates a pledge that two people promise to fulfill, as shown on the left.



. Egyptians count on their fingers by using fingers of the right hand to help bend those of the left hand inwards starting "one" with the little finger Japanese start by folding the thumb of the right hand first for "one" as shown on the left.







. To indicate that he does not understand what is going on, does not know who a new comer is an Egyptian would turn the half cupped right hand in a clock-wise motion moving it at the wrist. This gesture is widely understood all over the Arab World although it does not communicate anything to other social groups. Even children sometimes use this gesture as shown above. Its meaning is conveyed in Western culture by raising the eye-brows, widening the pupils of the eyes or shrugging the shoulders. It has no equivalent in Japanese culture.

When the Japanese reach five in counting, they open their palm stretching the fingers out and adding fingers from the right hand to increase the number as shown on the right indicating "six".



The two ladies in the photo left are motioning number seven in their respective cultures (Japanese on the left, Egyptian on the right)



. Motioning "No" in Egyptian culture is done by raising the index finger of the right hand and moving it right and left several times at the elbow. This motion is sometimes accompanied by shaking the head from side to side and uttering a clicking sound. "No" in Japanese is made by moving the arm at the elbow with the palm of the hand outstretched showing the edge to the viewer.



## GESTURES AND BODY LANGUAGE ( UNIT FOUR )

In this section gestures dealing with calling a waiter, praying, indicating that a job has been finished, showing that a person does not care, has forgotten or is beckoning to others to approach will be shown. Differences between Egyptian and contrasting Japanese gestures will be mentioned.



. Clapping hands does not always indicate applause in Egypt. In a third class coffee house or restaurant, it is the usual way for the customer to call the waiter. This gesture is considered unacceptable in higher class establishments.

The Japanese custom of clapping the hands twice on entering a shrine is neither followed nor readily understood by Egyptians.

- . Praying to God to save somebody or to grant a wish is done by opening the hands, fingers and palm upwards, with the eyes looking towards heaven, as shown on the right.

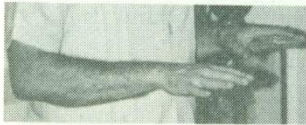


The Japanese gesture for praying is done by closing the palms together, with the eyes closed as well looking downwards as shown on the left



. Egyptians use two gestures to indicate that something has been finished or completed . The open palms of the two hands may be brushed in a motion that simulates shaking off of sand or dirt as seen on the right.

The other gesture is done by moving the palms in a criss cross fashion horizontally , with the open palms pointing downwards.



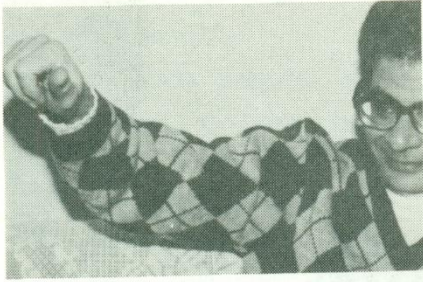
. To show that something is considered unimportant or to indicate that one does not care about something or someone, an Egyptian would flick the hand at the wrist palm downwards in a dismissing motion, as shown on the right. This gesture would mean, "Don't worry", "This doesn't bother me", or, "I couldn't care less."



. If an Egyptian suddenly remembers something very important which he has forgotten or was about to forget he/she may strike the forehead with the heel of the open palm as shown on the left or snap the fingers as shown down right.







. Beckoning to someone to approach or come nearer is done, in Egypt, by stretching the arm forward, with the open palm downwards and fingers repeatedly flexed inwards towards the palm. Beckoning using one finger is considered extremely rude. This gesture is similar to the Japanese one expressing the same meaning except that the Japanese use the whole hand instead of the fingers only, as shown down left.



. To indicate secret communication between two people, biting the lower lip with the upper teeth is done. Some Egyptians would also wink to deliver a secret message to a friend.

The American custom of winking at somebody to express support or approval is almost always misunderstood by Egyptians. If a man is winking at a woman, it would be taken as sexual advance. If a woman does it, she would be considered immoral. It is safer to avoid this gesture except among good friends.





. In order to indicate that two things or two people are very similar, equal or even identical, an Egyptian would rub the two index fingers gently back and forth with the palm downwards and the other fingers closed. This same unique gesture, which is understood all over the Arab World, may also show that two people always go together, to the point of being almost inseparable.

. Pointing to or tapping the temple with the index finger refers to intelligence, ingenuity, sharp perception or high mental ability. This gesture is not to be confused with the other one meaning "crazy" which is done by moving the cupped fingers anti clockwise near the temple as explained in Unit three.



. A gesture that is almost universal is made by moving the arm at the elbow with the open, downward palm of the right hand from left to right. In Egypt it would indicate a threat to slaughter or harm somebody, as shown on the left. In Japan it refers to a similar meaning of getting rid of a person by firing him.

