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New emoji is Israelis' way of saying 'wait a minute'

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(Emojipedia/Twitter)

(JTA) – A symbol of pinched fingers – ubiquitous among Israelis saying “wait a minute” or “have patience” – has been included in the 2020 list of approved emojis.

But the nonprofit Unicode Consortium, the organization that approves new emojis, is calling the emoji showing all fingers and thumb held together in a vertical orientation the “Italian hand gesture,” or “finger purse.” Italians use the symbol to show disagreement.

Try telling that to Israelis. They will only be able to think of it as the symbol for “rak rega,” or just a minute.





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Meanwhile, the Arab world also claims the gesture, with the Twittersphere celebrating the new emoji by calling it the “Arab mom’s favorite emoji.”

At least Israelis and Arabs can agree that they are happy with the new character.

The Unicode Consortium’s main function is to develop a universal character encoding scheme, allowing people around the world to use digital devices in any language. But it is more commonly known for selecting the emoji icons used by the world’s smartphones based on submissions from individuals and organizations who present their case with evidence for why each one is essential.

The organization last week announced the approval of 117 new emojis for 2020. Among the new symbols are people hugging, a gender neutral Santa and a father feeding baby. Oh, and an anatomical heart.

Sefaria, the online free Jewish library, last year designed a Torah emoji that it planned to submit to the consortium for consideration. In May, the Conference of European Rabbis called on the consortium to add new emojis to represent Jews – namely, a man wearing a kippah and a woman wearing a head covering.

There are now about 3,000 approved emojis.



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