



## ABHAYA MUDRA: SCHEMES

**News:** When Rahul Gandhi made his first speech as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, he made reference to the Abhaya mudra, which is an open palm gesture that represents comfort and freedom from fear. He emphasized that the abhaya mudra has religious significance in Islam, Buddhism, and Jainism and is a common motif in images of Jesus Christ, Lord Shiva, and Guru Nanak.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

**Fearless Gesture (Abhaya Mudra)**

**Forms:** Right palm outward at shoulder height, fingers pointing upward; other fingers extended upward, index finger occasionally touches thumb. It takes both hands to perform double abhaya mudra.

**Significance:** Connected to the Buddha following Enlightenment, symbolizing safety, calmness, and empathy.

- Represents the Buddha calming a crazy elephant, signifying his capacity to give his disciples fearlessness. This has mythological significance.



**Other Important Mudras in Buddhism:** Dharmachakra mudra, Bhumisparsha Mudra, Varada mudra, Dhyāna Mudrā, Vajra Mudrā, Vitarka Mudrā, Karana Mudrā, Uttarabodhi Mudra, Anjali Mudra.



**Bhumisparsha Mudra**  
Touching the earth as Gautama did, to invoke the earth as witness to the truth of his words.



**Varada Mudra**  
Fulfillment of all wishes; the gesture of charity.



**Dhyana Mudra**  
The gesture of absolute balance, of meditation. The hands are relaxed in the lap, and the tips of the thumbs and fingers touch each other. When depicted with a begging bowl this is a sign of the head of an order.



**Abhaya Mudra**  
Gesture of reassurance, blessing, and protection. "Do not fear."



**Dharmachakra Mudra**  
The gesture of teaching usually interpreted as turning the Wheel of Law. The hands are held level with the heart, the thumbs and index fingers form circles.



**Vitarka Mudra**  
Intellectual argument, discussion. The circle formed by the thumb and index finger is the sign of the Wheel of Law.



**Tarjani Mudra**  
Threat, warning. The extended index finger is pointed at the opponent.



**Namaskara Mudra**  
Gesture of greeting, prayer, and adoration. Buddhas no longer make this gesture because they do not have to show devotion to anything.



**Jnana Mudra**  
Teaching. The hand is held at chest level and the thumb and index finger again form the Wheel of Law.



**Karana Mudra**  
Gesture with which demons are expelled.



**Ksepana Mudra**  
Two hands together in the gesture of 'sprinkling' the nectar of immortality.



**Uttarabodhi Mudra**  
Two hands placed together above the head with the index fingers together and the other fingers intertwined. The gesture of supreme enlightenment.

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