

FUNCTION C: EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES

MORNING AND AFTERNOON GREETINGS ➔ Formal greetings used in the morning are

<i>ṣabaah' él-kheer</i>	good morning	صباح الخير
<i>ṣabaah' él-kheeraat</i>	good morning	صباح الخيرات
<i>ṣabaah' én-nuur</i>	good morning	صباح النور

These expressions literally mean 'morning of goodness' and 'morning of light'. Remember that morning usually lasts until lunchtime--sometimes two or three o'clock in the afternoon! After lunch greet someone by saying

<i>masa' l-kheer</i>	good afternoon/evening	مساء الخير
<i>masa' l-kheeraat</i>	good afternoon/evening	مساء الخيرات
<i>masa' n-nuur</i>	good afternoon/evening	مساء النور

The expressions literally mean 'afternoon of goodness', 'afternoon of goodnesses' and 'afternoon of light'.

QUESTION WORD "HOW" ➔ The word *kiif* كيف (how) is used at the beginning of the sentence and marks a question., for example the common greeting

<i>kiifak?</i>	how are you? (to a man)	كيفك؟
<i>kiifek?</i>	how are you? (to a woman)	كيفك؟
<i>kiifkon?</i>	how are you? (to a group)	كيفكن؟

Note that pronouns are attached to the end of the word *kiif* كيف. You will also hear people using *shloonak?* شلونك؟. The word *shloon* شلون is actually a contraction of

<i>shu</i>	what	شو
<i>loon</i>	colour	لون

so the expression literally means "what's your colour?", in other words "how are you?" Other common greetings are

<i>shu akhbaarak?</i>	what's your news?	شو أخبارك؟
<i>kiif sahtak?</i>	how's your health?	كيف صحتك؟

Replies to all three greetings include

<i>tamaam</i>	fine	تمام
<i>maashi él-haal</i>	fine	ماشي الحال
<i>él-hamd éllah b-kheer</i>	fine thank you	الحمد لله بخير
	(lit. fine, praise be to God)	

There is no fixed pattern for greetings, except that they are lengthy. Do not feel you have to economise with the number of times you ask someone how they are, and do take time over the greeting and try to sound like you mean it. The importance of warm greetings is illustrated by the saying

<i>laqiini w la tghaddiini</i>	لقيني و لا تغديني
	If you greet me warmly,
	there is no need to feed me



1. Listen to the conversation and fill in the missing words.

- A *sabaah él-kheer*. صباح الخير. أ
- B *sabaah* _____. صباح _____ ب
- A *kifak?* كيفك؟ أ
- B *él-hamd éllah*. _____ *énte?* أنت؟ ب الحمد لله.
- A *maashi él-haal*. *shu* _____? ماشي الحال. شو _____؟ أ
- B *tamaam*. _____ *b-kheer*. تمام. _____ بخير. ب
- A _____ أ

SAYING GOODBYE ♦♦ When you leave someone's house, class or any gathering where you know people well, say

<i>khaatrak</i>	goodbye (to a man)	خاطرك
<i>khaatrek</i>	goodbye (to a woman)	خاطرك
<i>khaatrkon</i>	goodbye (to a group)	خاطركن

to which the reply is

<i>mae és-salaame</i>	go with peace	مع السلامة
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If you wish to reply to this, say

	may God keep you safe	
<i>allah ysallmak</i>	(to a man)	الله يسلمك
<i>allah ysallmek</i>	(to a woman)	الله يسلمك
<i>allah ysallmkon</i>	(to a group)	الله يسلمكن

Take care not to say *mae és-salaame* مع السلامة if you are the one leaving.

Syrians do not say "goodbye" to taxi drivers, shop assistants or waiters. When you leave a taxi, shop or restaurant, simply say *shukran* شكراً (thank you).