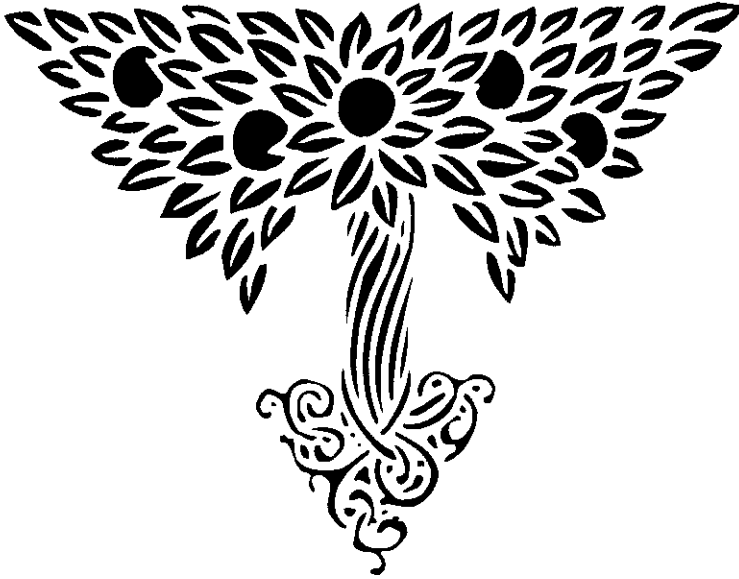




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TIGRINYA GRAMMAR



Edited by  
John Mason



**The Red Sea Press, Inc.**  
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## Introduction

This short handbook of the Tigrinya language is for anyone speaking English who wants to study Tigrinya. It has been derived from language learning materials prepared by the Inter-Mission Language Council in 1968. These materials were distributed in mimeograph form. However, the development of the computer and especially desktop publishing has made it possible to republish the grammar with a more legible typeface. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was interested in the project and helped materially with it. The process of typesetting the work gave the opportunity to do editing of content as well.

I am grateful to Kibrom Tseggai for his help on many aspects of the book. The Tigrinya language is changing continually. Although the examples and rules given here are as far as possible normal, correct usage, this is a descriptive grammar, not a prescriptive one.

The grammar includes a list of common phrases. Those who want to learn spoken Tigrinya should memorize such expressions early on. This will open the door for conversation and practice.

The revision of this grammar has been accompanied by prayers that it will be useful for the enjoyment of liberty in Eritrea.

## PART I

### Tigrinya and its Alphabet

TIGRINYA is one of the designated national languages of Eritrea and is probably the language most widely spoken there. It belongs to a family of related languages that A. L. Schlözer named the "Semitic" languages (1781). This family includes notably Arabic and Hebrew, as well as Aramaic and other Near Eastern languages like Ugaritic, which is known only from inscriptions. Tigrinya shows clearly the characteristic features of a Semitic language. The most important is the verb system, which has two "tenses," but several "aspects" (causative, intensive, reflexive, etc.). Another feature is the apparent derivation of related words from "roots" consisting of three consonants. For instance, **ጸሐፊ** *secretary*; **መጽሐፍ** *book*; **ጸሐፊ** *he wrote*.

Tigrinya uses a special writing system called the "Ge'ez" (or "Ethiopic") alphabet (or syllabary). The earliest inscription in Ge'ez is without vowels. However, at some point in the distant past, the vowels of the language began to be written by way of small additions or modifications to the consonants preceding them. Thus, although Arabic and Hebrew are usually written without vowels (or "unpointed"), languages that use the Ge'ez alphabet are always vowelised.

The normal syllable in Tigrinya is considered to be a consonant followed by a vowel. If a consonant ends a syllable, the sixth, neutral vowel is used with it. Most consonants are written in seven slightly different forms corresponding to the traditional seven vowels. The next table shows the vowels, including their traditional names. The system of vowels applied to all the consonants is exhibited in the alphabet chart, commonly called "ha hu" after the first two letters.

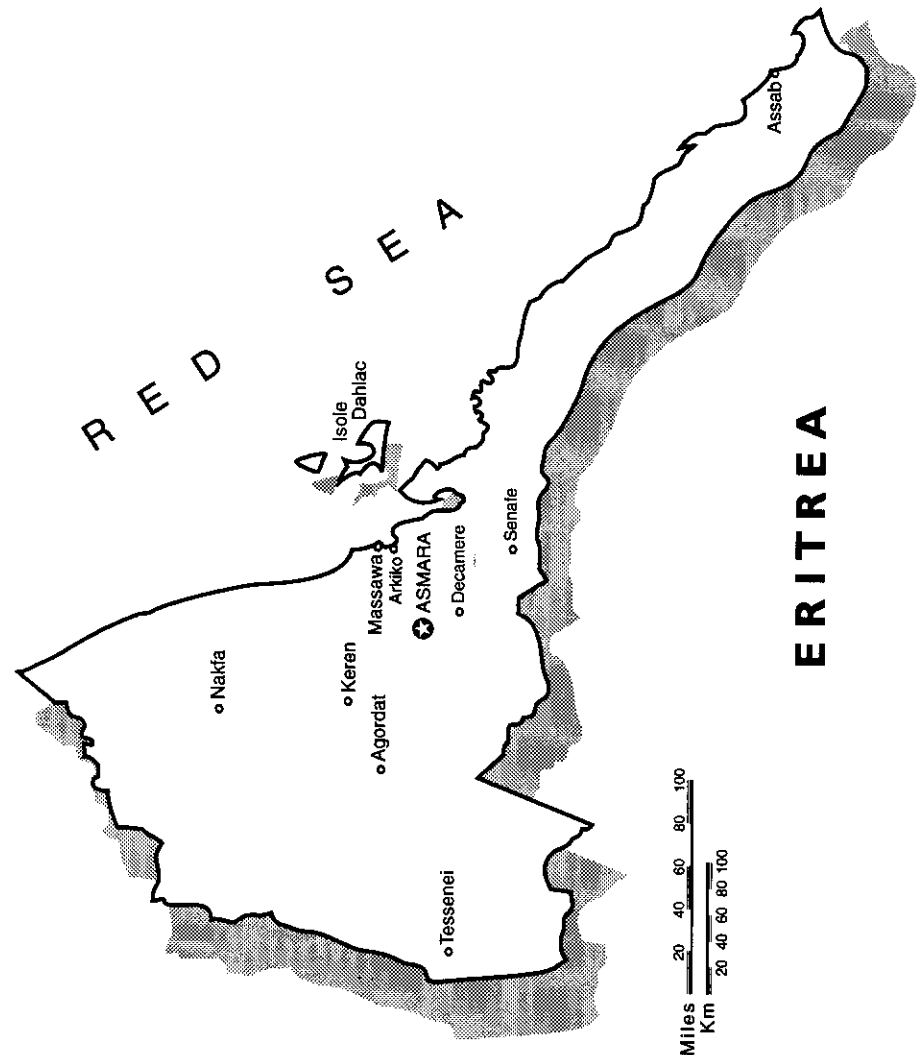
name	order	sound	transliteration	example	
ዓብ	1st	ě as in <i>den</i> (or <i>ă</i> )	e (or a)	ሀ	ha/he
ካብ	2nd	ū as in <i>lute</i>	u	ሁ	hu
ዛልከ	3rd	ē as in <i>sea</i>	i	ከ	hi
ራብዕ	4th	ǎ as in <i>father</i>	a	ሐ	ha
ኣምከ	5th	ie as in <i>Vietnam</i>	ie	ከ	hie
ሳድከ	6th	(neutral or null)	(not fixed)	ሀ	h
ሳብዕ	7th	ō as in <i>vote</i>	o	ሐ	ho

The alphabet chart shows the Ge'ez letters including some that are rarely seen. The column of pronunciations is given as a help for using the chart and memorizing the letters. The actual sounds of the letters, not to mention how to read them in context, can only be learned from an informant.

The traditional sound of the first vowel is ě, but for a few letters the first vowel was sounded ǎ, the same as the 4th vowel. These exceptions were notably ሀ, ከ, and ኣ. Recently in Eritrea, and in the field especially, the alphabet has been written in a more consistent way, so that in the 1st form these three characters are given the vowel ě, like the other letters. This means that the letter ከ is now being displaced by the 4th form ሐ in many words. The pronunciation of the words is the same in the old spelling and in the new. For example, ከሐ and ሐሐ are the same word pronounced the same way, but the spelling with ሐ is preferred.

The letters as normally printed conform closely to those produced in handwriting done by scribes with calligraphic pens that vary the width of the strokes according to their direction. Vertical strokes are wide and horizontal ones are narrow. Handwriting done with other pens or pencils does not reproduce this feature and is not standardized.

Typewritten letters can be difficult to read, and a table of these forms is included for help on that point.



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ፍ	ፎ	ፇ	ፈ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፅ	ፈ
ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፅ	ፈ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፅ
ፇ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፅ	ፈ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ
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ᄤ	ᄥ	ᄦ	ᄧ	ᄨ	ᄩ	ᄪ	ᄫ	ᄬ
ᄭ	ᄮ	ᄯ	ᄰ	ᄱ	ᄲ	ᄳ	ᄴ	ᄵ
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ᅣ	ᅤ	ᅥ	ᅦ	ᅧ	ᅨ	ᅩ	ᅪ	ᅫ
ᅬ	ᅭ	ᅮ	ᅯ	ᅰ	ᅱ	ᅲ	ᅳ	ᅴ
ᅵ	ᅶ	ᅷ	ᅸ	ᅹ	ᆀ	ᆁ	ᆂ	ᆃ
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ᆟ	ᆠ	ᆡ	ᆢ	ᆣ	ᆤ	ᆥ	ᆦ	ᆧ
ᆨ	ᆩ	ᆪ	ᆫ	ᆬ	ᆭ	ᆮ	ᆯ	ᆰ
ᆱ	ᆲ	ᆳ	ᆴ	ᆵ	ᆷ	ᆸ	ᆹ	ᆺ
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## PART II

### LESSON 1

#### What is this? with Replies

The normal word order in simple sentences is:

SUBJECT, OTHER PARTS, VERB.

**እዚ መጽሐፍ እዩ።** *This is a book.*

In simple questions, the normal order is:

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN, INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN, VERB.

**እዚ እንታይ እዩ፤** *What is this?*

(One also hears **እንታይ እዩ እዚ፤**) In the reply to the question, the demonstrative pronoun may be omitted.

**እዚ እንታይ እዩ፤ መጽሐፍ እዩ።** *What is this? It is a book.*

Most nouns in Tigrinya do not have special forms to distinguish masculine and feminine genders. There is no neuter form. Nouns are masculine or feminine by nature, e.g. **ወዲ** boy (m.), **ጓል** girl (f.), **ሰብኣይ** man (m.), **ሰበይቲ** woman (f.), **አቦ** father (m.), **አደ** mother (f.), **ላም** cow (f.); or by custom, e.g. **ጸሓይ** sun (f.), **ወርሒ** moon (f.), **ቀንዴል** or **ሽምፃ** candle (f.), **ዙዕሶ** ball (f.), **ኮቩብ** star (m.), **ወረቐት** paper (m.), **ማዕጾ** door (m.), **ዘርኢ** seed (m.), **ንፋስ** wind (m.). Some nouns, including most nouns describing inanimate objects, can be used in either gender, e.g. **ገዛ** house, **ቤት** house. But **ፊልዓ** child and **ኣንበሳ** animal have their gender according to the context.

The demonstrative pronouns are inflected for gender.

<b>እዚ</b>	<b>እዚኣ</b>	<i>this</i>	(m., f.)
<b>እቲ</b>	<b>እቲኣ</b>	<i>that</i>	(m., f.)

The corresponding polite forms are

<b>እዚኦም</b>	<b>እዚኤን</b>	<i>these persons</i>	(m., f.)
<b>እቲኦም</b>	<b>እቲኤን</b>	<i>those persons</i>	(m., f.)

In the 2nd and 3rd persons, the Tigrinya verb is inflected for gender as well as number. In other words, when the subject is "you," Tigrinya can use four different verb forms, depending on whether the "you" is a man, a woman, a group of men, or a group of women. In the same way, the third person subjects "he," "she," "they (men)," and "they (women)," will require different forms of the verb.

**ንሱ ወዲ እዩ።** *He is a boy.*

**ንሳ ጓል እያ።** *She is a girl.*

**እቲ መስኮት እዩ።** *That is a window.*

**እቲኣ ዙዕሶ እያ።** *That is a ball.*

**ንሱኪ ኣብዚ ኔርኪ።** *You (a girl) were here.*

**ንሳቶም ኣብ ከረን ነይሮም።** *They (the men) were at Keren.*

**ንሳተን ሎሚ ናብ ከተማ ከይደን።** *Today they (the women) went to the city.*

Questions to be answered by "yes" or "no" make use of the suffix **ዶ**, affixed to the word which is emphasized. In addition, a rising tone is used.

**እዚዶ መንበር እዩ፤** *Is this a chair?*

An affirmative answer to such a question is indicated by **አወ** , which is invariant in form.

**እዚ ዓርፊ እየ፤ አወ።** *Is this a pen? Yes.*  
**እዚ ንል ዲያ፤ አወ።** *Is this a girl? Yes.*

A negative answer to such a question, however, requires a form of the verb **አይኮነን** *it is not*—agreeing with the subject.

**እዚ መጽሐፍ እየ፤ አይኮነን።** *Is this a book? No, it isn't.*  
**እዚ አዶ ሽምፃ እያ፤ አይኮነትን።** *Is this a candle? No.*

The noun may or may not be repeated in the negative reply.

## LESSON 2

What are These? What are Those?

### DEMONSTRATIVES

The demonstrative pronouns, **እዚ** , **እቲ** , have masculine and feminine forms in both singular and plural. In the spoken language, the polite forms of demonstratives and possessives are frequently used as plurals.

	Singular		Plural		Polite Forms
masc.	<b>እዚ</b> <i>this</i>		<b>እዚአቶም</b> <i>these</i>		<b>እዚአም</b>
fem.	<b>እዚኣ</b> <i>this</i>		<b>እዚኣተን</b> <i>these</i>		<b>እዚኤን</b>
masc.	<b>እቲ</b> <i>that</i>		<b>እቲአቶም</b> <i>those</i>		<b>እቲአም</b>
fem.	<b>እቲኣ</b> <i>that</i>		<b>እቲኣተን</b> <i>those</i>		<b>እቲኤን</b>

### PLURALS OF NOUNS

- Many nouns form their plural through the addition of a suffix. In the class of nouns whose plural can be formed by rule, those which add **ታት** are the most common.

**እምባ** *mountain* , **እምባታት** *mountains*.

- even here the **ታት** cannot be added without certain vowel changes. If the noun ends in 3rd form, e.g. **ክፍለ** *room*, the last letter must be changed to 6th form before adding **ታት**.

**ክፍለ** *room*, **ክፍልታት** *rooms*

- If the noun ends in 6th form, the last letter in most nouns changes to 4th form and adds only **ት**, e.g.

**ጥራዝ** *notebook*, **ጥራዛት** *notebooks*

(c) Some plurals add the suffix ት but incorporate other changes as well, e.g.

ስም *name* አስማት *names*  
ወዲ *boy* አወዳት *boys*.

2. Tigrinya is one of the South Semitic languages and has “internal” or “broken” plurals. These are plurals formed through changes inside the word rather than by suffixes. They may follow certain patterns, but often, while the resemblance between two plurals is apparent, it can hardly be reduced to a rule. Examples:

መንበር *chair*, መናብር *chairs*  
ወኸርያ *fox*, ወኸሩ *foxes*  
ገመል *camel*, አግማል *camels*  
ላም *cow*, አሓ *cattle*  
ሰበአይ *man*, ሰብኡት *men*

3. Some nouns have two plural forms.

ጎል *girl*, አዋልድ or አጓላት *girls*  
መበለት *widow*, መበላሉ or መበለታት *widows*.

4. Plurals of inanimate objects are mostly treated as collective and usually take singular pronoun and verb.

እዚ መናብር እዩ። *These are chairs.*  
እቲ ብርዕታት እዩ። *Those are pens.*

5. The forms of the negative *it is not* are:

	Singular		Plural
masc.	አይኮነን <i>it is not</i>	አይኮኑን	<i>they are not</i>
fem.	አይኮነትን <i>it is not</i>	አይኮናን	<i>they are not</i>

እዚአቶም አወዳት አይኮኑን። *These are not boys.*  
እቲአተን አዋልድ አይኮናን። *These are not girls.*

In some regions, when a noun is used with a numerical adjective, the noun may stay in the singular form although the verb is plural. But it is usual to have the plural of the noun also.

ክልተ ሰብአይ ናብ ቤተ መቐደስ ደየቡ። *Two men went up to the temple.*

ክልተ አሰብኡት ናብ ቤተ መቐደስ ደየቡ። *Two men went up to the temple. (preferred usage)*

## LESSON 3

### Adjectives

The adjective precedes the noun or pronoun which it modifies and agrees with it in gender and number.

**ጽቡቅ ወዲ** *handsome boy*

**ጽብቅቲ ጓል** *pretty girl*

#### 1. Some adjectives form the feminine regularly.

- (a) Adjectives whose second-to-last letter is 2nd form change that letter to 6th form and add **ቲ**. (In the example **ፋ** has the 2d vowel and changes to **ፍ**, with the 6th vowel. Then the final **ቲ** is added.)

**ንፋሶ ንፍሶቲ** *clever*

- (b) Adjectives whose second-to-last letter is 3rd form change that letter to 4th form.

**ሐጺር ሐጸር** *short*

- (c) Adjectives whose second-to-last letter is 4th form in the masculine singular show no change for the feminine.

**ሐያል ሐያል** *strong*

**ለባም ለባም** *wise*

#### 2. Some adjectives form the femine irregularly.

**ዓብዪ ዓባይ** *great*

**ቀይሕ ቀያሕ** *red*

## LESSON 4

### Plurals of Adjectives

Plurals of inanimate objects are often treated as collective and usually take a singular adjective and verb.

**እቲ ጥራዛት ዓብዪ'ዶ እዩ፤** *Are these large notebooks?*

**አይኮነን። ንእሽቶ እዩ።** *No, they are small.*

#### 1. The plurals of some adjectives are formed regularly.

- (a) Adjectives whose next-to-last radical in the masculine singular is 2nd form change the final radical to 4th form and add **ት**.

**ንፋሶ ንፋዓት** *clever*

- (b) Adjectives whose next-to-last radical in the masculine singular is 3rd form change the final radical to 1st form and add **ቲ**.

**ሐጺር ሐጸርቲ** *short*

**ጸሊም ጸለምቲ** *black*

Adjectives in this class that end in **ሕ** are exceptions. These make the plural for both masculine and feminine by adding **ቲ** to the feminine singular. ("c." means "common" gender.)

**ነዊሕ (m.), ነዋሕ (f.), ነዋሕቲ (plural, c.)** *tall*

**ጸፊሕ (m.), ጸፋሕ (f.), ጸፋሕቲ (plural, c.)** *flat*

(c) As has been observed, adjectives whose second-to-last letter is 4th form in the masculine singular do not change for the feminine singular. These adjectives have a common plural also and it is made by changing the last radical to 4th form and adding ት .

ለባም ለባማት *wise*

2. The plurals of some adjectives are formed irregularly. And as with nouns, some adjectives have more than one plural.

ዓብዱ (m.), ዓባይ (f.), ዓበይቲ (plural, c.) *great*

ንእሽቶ (sing, c.), ናእሽቱ (plural, c.) *small*

ዓሻ (sing, c.), ዓያሹ or ዓሽታት (plural, c.) *foolish*

## LESSON 5

### Demonstrative Adjectives

The demonstrative adjectives can be repeated and so have an initial and a secondary form.

እዚ ... እዚ (m.s.) *this* (nearby objects)

እዛ ... እዚአ (f.s.) *this*

እዞም ... እዚእም (m.pl.) *these*

እዞን ... እዚኤን (f.pl.) *these*

እቲ ... እቲ (m.s.) *that* (remote objects)

እታ ... እቲአ (f.s.) *that*

እቶም ... እቲእም (m.pl.) *those*

እቶን ... እቲኤን (f.pl.) *those*

The noun comes between the two adjectives.

እዚ ወዲ እዚ ንፋዕ እዩ። *This boy is clever.*

እቶን ኣንስቲ እቲኤን ኩናማ እየን። *Those women are Kunama.*

Less formally, the demonstrative adjective may not be repeated.

እዚ ወዲ ንፋዕ እዩ። *This boy is clever.*

እቶን ኣንስቲ ኩናማ እየን። *Those women are Kunama.*

Note that the demonstrative adjectives are identical in form with the demonstrative pronouns. The following examples illustrate the differences in syntax.

እዚ ጽቡቕ ዝህ ናተይ እዩ።

(adj.) *This beautiful house is mine.*

እዚ ጽቡቕ ዝህ እዩ።

(pron.) *This is a beautiful house.*

እዚ መንበር እዚ ድልዱል እዩ።

(adj.) *This chair is strong.*

እዚ ድልዱል መንበር እዩ።

(pron.) *This is a strong chair.*

እዚ መንበር እዚ ናተይ ኣይከኑን።

(adj.) *This chair is not mine.*

እዚ መንበር ኣይከኑን።

(pron.) *This is not a chair.*

## LESSON 6

### The Verb "to be" and Subject Pronouns

The verb "to be" in the present tense is conjugated as follows.  
(Some writers use እ instead of ኢ in some forms.)

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	ኢዩ	he is	ኢዮም	they are
f.	ኢያ	she is	ኢየን	they are
2 m.	ኢኻ	you are	ኢኹም	you are
f.	ኢኸ	you are	ኢኸን	you are
1 c.	እየ	I am	ኢና	we are

This verb is used for relations of identity and qualification (as with adjectives). Another verb, which can also be translated "to be," is used with the idea of presence, being in a place. Thus, ኢዩ would be used in sentences like "She is a woman" or "This book is new," but not in sentences like "The horse is in the meadow" or "The pen is on the table." A similar distinction between *ser* and *estar* is familiar to students of Spanish.

Sentences with ኢዩ :

እቲ ወረቓት ጻዕዳ ኢዩ። *The paper is white.*

እታ ኸዕሶ ከባብ ኢያ። *The ball is round.*

እቶም ሰብኡት ሓያላት ኢዮም። *The men are strong.*

እተን ቁልፅ ናእሽቲ ኢየን። *The children are small.*

The independent personal subject pronouns are as follows.

	Singular		Plural		Polite forms
3 m.	<b>ንሱ</b>	<i>he</i>	<b>ንሳቶም</b>	<i>they</i>	<b>ንሶም</b>
f.	<b>ንሳ</b>	<i>she</i>	<b>ንሳተን</b>	<i>they</i>	<b>ንሶን</b>
2 m.	<b>ንሰኻ</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ንሰኻትኩም</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ንሰኹም</b>
f.	<b>ንሰኺ</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ንሰኻትክን</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ንሰኸን</b>
1 c.	<b>እኔ</b>	<i>I</i>	<b>ንሕና</b>	<i>we</i>	<b>ንሳትና</b>

The polite forms are used when talking about or addressing a person to whom one defers. One might compare the English forms "Your honor," "Her majesty," and the like. The polite forms may also be used as plurals. The rules for using one form rather than another are social conventions. As with Spanish "Usted" and "tú," or German "Sie" and "du," mistakes of usage can involve people's feelings. When in doubt, the polite or plural form is safe. The form **ንሳትና** exists but is little used.

As in Latin and Greek, verb forms in Tigrinya are grammatically complete without subject pronouns. The presence of the pronoun can indicate a certain emphasis.

**ሓያል እዩ።** *He is strong.*

**ንሱ ሓያል እዩ።** *He is strong.*

## LESSON 7

### Negative of the Verb "to be"

The present tense of the negative of "to be" is as follows:

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	<b>አይኩነን</b>	<i>he is not</i>	<b>አይኩኑን</b> <i>they are not</i>
f.	<b>አይኩነተን</b>	<i>she is not</i>	<b>አይኩናን</b> <i>they are not</i>
2 m.	<b>አይኩንካን</b>	<i>you are not</i>	<b>አይኩንኩምን</b> <i>you are not</i>
f.	<b>አይኩንክን</b>	<i>you are not</i>	<b>አይኩንክንን</b> <i>you are not</i>
1 c.	<b>አይኩንኩን</b>	<i>I am not</i>	<b>አይኩንናን</b> <i>we are not</i>

**እዚ መጽሓፍ ቅብ፪ አይኩነን።** *This book is not large.*

**እዚ ዶ ርሳስ እዩ፤ አይኩነን፤ ብርሂ እዩ።** *Is this a pencil?*  
*No, it is a pen.*

The 1st person plural **አይኩንናን** *we are not*, is pronounced with stress on the final syllable. This is different from the 3rd person feminine plural, **አይኩናን** *they are not*, which has no such stress.

## LESSON 8

### "Give me" and "Show me"

Tigrinya imperatives are inflected for the person or persons addressed; that is, "Please give me" will use one verb form if the request is to a woman and another if it is to a man, and still others if it is to men or women, plural. Polite forms resemble the plurals.

The table below does not give a complete summary of imperative forms. Only one suffix, **ኒ** or "me," is shown. The forms for "give him," "give us," and so on, will use other suffixes.

<i>give me</i>	<i>show me</i>	Speaking to:
ሀበኒ	አርእየኒ	you (m.s.)
ሀብኒ	አርእይኒ	you (f.s.)
ሀቡኒ	አርእዩኒ	you (m. pl. or polite)
ሀባኒ	አርእያኒ	you (f. pl. or polite)

**ርሳስ ሀበኒ።** *Give me the pencil* (to an equal or a younger person)

**መጽሐፍ አርእያኒ።** *Show me the book* (to an older woman or group of women)

## LESSON 9

### Cardinal Numbers

Some of the written forms of the Tigrinya numbers are derived from letters of the Greek alphabet, e.g. Β (beta, 2) Γ (gamma, 3). Today for most purposes "arabic" numerals, like those in the left-hand column, are used.

1	፩	ሓደ (m.) ሓንቲ (f.)
2	፪	ክልተ
3	፫	ሰለስተ
4	፬	አርባዕተ
5	፭	ሓመሽተ
6	፮	ሽዱሽተ
7	፯	ሹብዓተ or ሽውዓተ
8	፰	ሸሞንተ
9	፱	ትሽዓተ
10	፲	ዓሰርተ
11	፲፩	ዓሰርተው ሓደ
12	፲፪	ዓሰርተው ክልተ
13	፲፫	ዓሰርተው ሰለስተ
14	፲፬	ዓሰርተው አርባዕተ
15	፲፭	ዓሰርተው ሓመሽተ
16	፲፮	ዓሰርተው ሽዱሽተ
17	፲፯	ዓሰርተው ሽውዓተ
18	፲፰	ዓሰርተው ሸሞንተ
19	፲፱	ዓሰርተው ትሽዓተ
20	፳	ዕስራ
21	፳፩	ዕስራን ሓደን
22	፳፪	ዕስራን ክልተን
23	፳፫	ዕስራን ሰለስተን
30	፴	ሰላሳ

# LESSON 10

## The Calendar

The days of the week are:

Sunday	ሰንበት	from Hebrew שַׁבָּת, <i>sabbath</i>
Monday	ሰኞ	Semitic root for "two"
Tuesday	ሰላሰ	cf. ሰላሰት <i>three</i>
Wednesday	ሬቡዕ	cf. ኣርባዕተ <i>four</i>
Thursday	ሓሙስ	cf. ሓሙሽተ <i>five</i>
Friday	ዓርቢ	cf. ዕራርቦ <i>sunset</i>
Saturday	ቀዳም	"first" or "prior" (to Sunday)

The months are:

ጥሪ	January	ሓምለ	July
ለካቲት	February	ነሐሴ	August
መጋቢት	March	መስከረም	September
ሚያዝያ	April	ጥቅምት	October
ግንቦት	May	ሕዳር	November
ሰኔ	June	ታሕሳስ	December

The calendar in Eritrea is the Gregorian calendar, the usual calendar of the Western world, with the names of the months as above. These are the same names and order of months as in the traditional Ge'ez calendar, but in that calendar they do not correspond with Gregorian months. The Ge'ez calendar also has a thirteenth month of five days, called **ጳጉሜን** (Gk ἐπαγόμενα, *intercalated*). In leap years, which occur one year before the Gregorian leap year, the thirteenth month is six days long, and the new year begins on 12 መስከረም.

40	፴	አርብዓ
50	፶	ሓምሳ
60	፷	ስሳ
70	፸	ሰብዓ
80	፹	ሰማንያ
90	፺	ተስባ
100	፻	ሚእቲ
140	፻፶	ሚእትን አርብዓን
141	፻፶፩	ሚእትን አርብዓን ሓደን
358	፪፻፶፰	ሰለስተ ሚእትን ሓምሳን ሸሞንትን
1,000	፲፻	ሺሕ
1,273	፲፪፻፸፫	ሺሕን ክልተ ሚእትን ሰብዓን ሰለስተን

If dates are given in the Ge'ez script, as on the title pages of books, it may be that they refer to the traditional calendar (ዓመተ ምስረት or ዓ. ም.). To determine the Gregorian year, add seven or eight to the Ge'ez year. The traditional date written ፲፱፻፶፩ (1951), found on the cover of the ሰዋሰው - ትግርኛ *Tigrinya Grammar* (Asmara: Franciscan Press), would thus be 1958 or 1959.

Eritrean holidays or anniversaries include:

10 ለካቲት፡ 1990	ሓርነት ከተማ ምጽዋዕ Liberation of Massawa
23 መጋቢት፡ 1977	ምስራር ናቕፋ Nakfa's Liberation
24 ግንቦት፡ 1991	መዓልቲ ሓርነት ኤርትራ Eritrean Liberation Day
20 ሰኅ	መዓልቲ ሰውላት ኤርትራ Eritrean Martyrs' Day
1 መስከረም፡ 1961	ባሕቲ መስከረም <i>First of September</i> በዓል ሰውራ <i>Revolution Day</i> Beginning of the Eritrean Armed Struggle for Self-determination
11 መስከረም	ርእሰ ዓመት ብኣቋጻጽራ ግእዝ <i>New Year in the Ge'ez calendar</i>

## LESSON 11

### Telling Time

The traditional notation of time began at 6:00 p.m. Thus the first hour, ሰዓት ሓደ ናይ ምሽት, would be 7:00 p.m. This usage is not common today. Standard time or G.M.T. is normal. Especially in villages it may not be necessary to give an exact hour, and the divisions of the day are as follows:

ወጋሕታ	– from first light to sunrise
ንግሆ	– from sunrise to midmorning
ረፍዲ ቅድሚ ቀትሪ	– from mid-morning to noon
ፍርቂ መዓልቲ	– midday, noon
ቀትሪ	– from noon to early afternoon
ኣጋ ምሽት	– afternoon (2 to 5 p.m.)
ዕራርቦ	– from about 5 p.m. to sunset
ምሽት	– from sunset to dark (6 to 7 p.m.)
ለይቲ	– night
ፍርቂ ለይቲ	– midnight

Examples of questions and answers about the time of day are as follows:

ሰዓት ክንደይ ከይኑ፤	<i>What time is it?</i>
or ሰዓት ክንደይ ኣሎ፤	
ሰዓት ክልተ ከይኑ።	<i>It is two o'clock.</i>
ሰዓት ሰለስተን ፈረቓን ከይኑ።	<i>It is three-thirty.</i>
ንሰዓት ሸውዓተ ኣሙሽተ ደቂቕ ጐደል።	<i>It is five minutes to seven.</i>
ሰዓት ሸዱሽተን ርብዕን ከይኑ።	<i>It is six-fifteen.</i>

Note that all times *after* the hour have ሰዓት; then the hour and minutes joined with the suffix pair -ን, -ን; then ከደኑ (*it has become*). Times *before* the hour have the preposition ን with ሰዓት, then the hour and minutes, then ንደኑ (*it remains*). More literal translations for the last two sentences above would be:

ንሰዓት ሸውዓተ ሐመሽተ  
ደቂቅ ንደኑ።

*To the seventh hour five  
minutes remain.*

ሰዓት ሸዱሽተን ርብዕን ከደኑ።

*The hour six and a quarter  
has arrived.*

## LESSON 12

### Present Tense of the Verb "to be present"

This verb is conjugated as follows:

#### Positive

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	አሎ	he is	አለው	they are
f.	አላ	she is	አለዋ	they are
2 m.	አሎኝ	you are	አሎኹም	you are
f.	አሎኽ	you are	አሎኹን	you are
1	አሎኹ	I am	አሎና	we are

#### Negative

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	የሎን	he is not	የለውን	they are not
f.	የላን	she is not	የለዋን	they are not
2 m.	የሎኝን	you are not	የሎኹምን	you are not
f.	የሎኽን	you are not	የሎኹንን	you are not
1	የሎኹን	I am not	የሎናን	we are not

The use of this verb ( አሎ ) can be confused with that of እዩ to be, since both words are often translated the same in English. To decide whether a form of እዩ or አሎ should be used, add the word "present" to "is," and if it makes sense, አሎ will usually be correct. Permanently fixed objects (as a house or field) take a form of እዩ.

ንሱ ሓረስታይ እዩ። *He is a farmer*

እቲ ዝብ ቀረባ እዩ። *That house is near.*

For animate objects, the negative of አሎ, present tense, is supplied by የሎኝ. For inanimate objects the negative of the present tense is supplied by የለበኝ, which is not conjugated.

ማይደ አሎ! የለበኝ። *Is there water?—There is none.*

The use of አሎ as an auxiliary will be taken up in a later lesson.

## LESSON 13

### Common Prepositions

There are two kinds of prepositions, simple and compound.

Simple prepositions of one radical, e.g. ብ *by*, ን *to*, are prefixed to nouns, pronouns, and adjectives; those of two or more radicals, e.g. ካብ *from*, ብዘይ *without*, are written as separate words.

Compound prepositions consist of a simple preposition (usually ኣብ) plus another word, e.g. ኣብ ጥቅ *nearby*, ኣብ ቅድሚ *in front*, ኣብ ውሽጢ *inside*, ኣብ ልዕሊ *above*.

ብ *by* (mainly instrumental, but notice the examples)

ብበቕሊ መጸኡ። *He came by mule.*

ብክልተ ሰዓት ክወድኦ እየ። *I will finish it in two hours.*

ብከረን ኣቢሎም ናብ ናቕፋ አትዮም። *They came to Nacfa by way of Keren.*

ን *for* (to the advantage or disadvantage of something or someone)

እቲ መግቢ ንኸልቢ እየ። *The food is for the dog.*

ጴጥሮስ ንሓው ሀሪመዎ። *Peter struck his brother.*

ናይ *of* (possessive)

እቲ መጽሓፍ ናይ መምህር እየ። *It is the teacher's book.*

ምስ *with* (signifies association)

ሃብተ ምስ ዮሃንስ መጸኡ። *Habte came with Yohannes.*

ቅድሚያ ago, before (temporal)

ቅድሚያ ክልተ ሰዓት ሐወይ መጸአ። *My brother came two hours ago.*

ጴጥሮስ ናብ መቐበር ቅድሚያ ዮሃንስ አተወ። *Peter entered the tomb before John.*

ካብ from

ካብ ከተማ መጸአ። *She came from the town.*

ኣብ in, at

ኣብ ቤት ጽሕፈት ኣሎ። *He's at the office.*

ብዘይ without

ብዘይ ከውን ተባኢሶም። *They fought for no reason.*

ብዘይ ገንዘብ ዕዳጋ ከይዶም። *They went to the market without money.*

ናብ to, toward

ናብ ሩባ ከይዱ። *He went to the river.*

## LESSON 14

### Compound Prepositions

The most common compound prepositions are:

ኣብ ቅድሚያ in front of

ኣብቲ ቅድሚያ ገዛ ኣም ኣሎ። *In front of the house is a tree.*

ኣብ ቅድሚያ ባንክ ንራኸብ። *Let's meet in front of the bank.*

ኣብ ውሽጢ inside

እቲ መንበር ኣብ ውሽጢ ገዛ ኣሎ። *The chair is inside the house.*

ኣብ ጥቓ beside, near

እቲ ብርዲ ኣብ ጥቓ እቲ መጽሓፍ ኣሎ። *The pen is beside the book.*

ኣብ ልዕሊ above, over, on, upon

በራድ ኣብ ልዕሊ እቶን ኣሎ። *The kettle is on the stove.*

ኣብ ትሕቲ under, beneath, below

እቲ ቜልጻ ኣብ ትሕቲ ዓራት ኣሎ። *The child is under the bed.*

ኣብ ድሕሪ behind, outside

እቲ ዒላ ኣብ ድሕሪ ገዛ ኣሎ። *The well is behind the house.*

# LESSON 15

## Pronominal Suffixes

In Tigrinya as in other Semitic languages the normal way of expressing someone's possession of something is to attach an abbreviation of the pronoun – "his," "her," etc. – to the thing possessed, e.g. **ገዛ** *house*, **ገዛና** *our house*. Thus a noun can have many suffixes, a different one for each person, gender, and number. By way of illustration:

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	<b>ገዛኡ</b> <i>his house</i>	<b>ገዛእም</b> <i>their house</i>	
f.	<b>ገዛሏ</b> <i>her house</i>	<b>ገዛኡን</b> <i>their house</i>	
2 m.	<b>ገዛኻ</b> <i>your house</i>	<b>ገዛኹም</b> <i>your house</i>	
f.	<b>ገዛኸ</b> <i>your house</i>	<b>ገዛኸን</b> <i>your house</i>	
1 c.	<b>ገዛይ</b> <i>my house</i>	<b>ገዛና</b> <i>our house</i>	

The *plural* of "house" will have a paradigm of its own. The suffixes are the same, but often a vowel shift or other phonetic change is introduced when the suffixes are added.

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	<b>ገዛውቱ</b> <i>his houses</i>	<b>ገዛውቶም</b> <i>their houses</i>	
f.	<b>ገዛውታ</b> <i>her houses</i>	<b>ገዛውታን</b> <i>their houses</i>	
2 m.	<b>ገዛውትኻ</b> <i>your houses</i>	<b>ገዛውትኹም</b> <i>your houses</i>	
f.	<b>ገዛውትኸ</b> <i>your houses</i>	<b>ገዛውትኸን</b> <i>your houses</i>	
1 c.	<b>ገዛውቲይ</b> <i>my houses</i>	<b>ገዛውትና</b> <i>our houses</i>	

The literal translation "houses" may be misleading. The meaning of the expression "his houses" in Tigrinya is usually "his neighborhood." But for a landlord it could mean "his buildings."

## Possessive Pronominal Endings

nouns ending in:	my	our	your m.s.	your f.s.	your m.pl.	your f.pl.	his	her	their m.pl.	their f.pl.
5th <b>ደብዳቤ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
7th <b>ማዕጸ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
2nd <b>ሐሙ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
4th <b>ገዝ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
1st <b>አደ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
3rd <b>ዓዲ, ደ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>
6th <b>መጽሐፍ</b>	<b>ይ</b>	<b>ና</b>	<b>ኻ</b>	<b>ኸ</b>	<b>ኹም</b>	<b>ኸን</b>	<b>ኡ</b>	<b>ሏ</b>	<b>እም</b>	<b>ኡን</b>

## LESSON 16

### Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronouns that are independent, or stand as separate words, are as follows:

	Singular		Plural		Polite Forms
3 m.	ናቱ <i>his</i>		ናታቶም <i>their, theirs</i>		ናቶም
f.	ናታ <i>her, hers</i>		ናታተን <i>their, theirs</i>		ናተን
2 m.	ናትካ <i>your, yours</i>		ናታትኩም <i>your, yours</i>		ናትኩም
f.	ናትኪ <i>your, yours</i>		ናታትከን <i>your, yours</i>		ናትከን
1 c.	ናተይ <i>my, mine</i>		ናትና <i>our, ours</i>		

The possessive pronouns can be used as adjectives. In this usage, they replace the pronominal suffixes, and there is a suggestion of stress or emphasis.

ናተይ መጽሐፍ አብዚ አሎ። *My book is here.*

መጽሐፈይ አብዚ አሎ። *My book is here.*

The pronoun can be made negative with the prefix አይ and suffix ን. But it would be more usual to make the verb negative.

ናትካ ዲዩ፤ ናተይ እዩ። *Is it yours? —It's mine.*

ናትካ ዲዩ፤ ናተይ አይከኑን። *Is it yours? —It isn't mine.*

or አይናተይን እዩ። *It is not mine.*

## LESSON 17

### The Verb

Semitic languages are generally understood to have as a distinguishing feature a predominance of triconsonantal roots which are articulated by the vowels and in other ways to form systems of words of related meaning. A common illustration is Arabic KTB from which are formed the words for "write," "book," "author," and so on. The Tigrinya vocabulary can be analyzed in this way. Thus the words **ጽሑፉ** *he wrote*, **ጸሐፊ** *writer*, **መጽሐፍ** *book*, seem to be formed from a common "root" **ጸሐፊ** with a "root meaning" of *write*. The Semitic languages, and certainly Tigrinya, invite such an analysis.

The verbs in Tigrinya could be taken as a thorough working out of a method in which a root, consisting usually of three radicals, is articulated in patterns which convey different meanings and applications of the verbal idea that belongs to the root. These patterns form subordinate systems with relatively consistent emphases of their own, such as "passive," "reflexive," "intensive," and so forth. The inflections of these systems give the tense and specify the person and number of subjects and objects.

The simplest form of a verb is generally the 3rd person masculine singular, simple perfect tense, e.g. **ሰበረ** *he broke*. This form is called the "root form" of the verb and is used as the name of the verb. In English, the infinitive is used to name verbs ("to be," "to go"); in Latin and Greek, the present tense, 1st person singular is used (e.g. Latin *porto* *I carry*, *amo* *I love*). These conventions are fixed by tradition.

## The Basic Verb Families

Tigrinya verbs can be classified in "families" according to the nature of the radicals that they contain. Some of the families are subdivided into two "types" according to whether the second radical is geminated or "doubled." Such doubling affects the way that individual forms of a verb are derived from its basic consonantal root. The presence of certain letters or sounds, notably the laryngeals, also affects the production of forms. Verbs in a given class are changed in regular patterns to produce the tenses, aspects, persons, and so forth, that the verb forms can express. To conjugate a verb means to derive and list in order all the verb forms that belong to that verb. In English, the verbs themselves change very little. Conjugating is a matter of supplying auxiliary verbs and pronouns to a very few forms.

In Tigrinya there are many different forms. There are also auxiliaries. The five basic families and their subdivisions are as follows:

### Family I

Verbs whose root form radicals are all written with 1st form vowels.

#### I, type A

The second radical is not doubled. (There is an exception in the imperfect when there is no final vowel. This means the word ends with a 6th form final, e.g. **ይሰበር** *he breaks*.)

**ቀተለ** *kill*, **ሰበረ** *break*, **ሐጸበ** *wash*

#### I, type B

The second radical is doubled.

**ፈጸመ** *complete*, **መረቐ** *bless*, **ሐገዘ** *help*

### Family II

The third radical is a laryngeal or **የ** or **ወ**. (The laryngeals are **አ**, **ዐ**, **ሀ**, and **ሐ**.) This family has three subdivisions corresponding to these three possibilities. Each subdivision may be of type A or B, depending on gemination of the second radical.

#### II-1. Third radical is a laryngeal.

##### II-1, type A

**በልዔ** *eat*, **ሰርሔ** *work*, **በጽሔ** *arrive*

##### II-1, type B

**ወርሔ** *spend the month*, **ረስዔ** *forget*, **ተከሐ** *substitute*,  
**ጸውዐ** *call*

#### II-2. Third radical is **የ**.

##### II-2, type A

**ሰተየ** *drink*, **ዐበየ** *grow*, **ደለየ** *want*, **ጠመየ** *be hungry*

##### II-2, type B

**ቀኒየ** *spend some time*, **ጸለየ** *pray*, **ከረየ** *be angry*

#### II-3. Third radical is **ወ**.

##### II-3, type A

**ዐጸወ** *close*, **አተወ** *enter*, **ፈተወ** *resemble*

##### II-3, type B

**ፈነወ** *loosen*, **ሐለወ** *guard*, **ሐሰወ** *lie*

### Family III

The middle radical is *a laryngeal* or **የ** or **ወ**. This family also has three subdivisions corresponding to these three possibilities. A subdivision may be type A or B if the second radical can be geminated.

#### III-1. The middle radical is *a laryngeal* (**አ**, **ዐ**, **ሀ**, or **ሐ**).

Laryngeals cannot be doubled, so these are all of one type.

**ጸሐፈ** *write*, **ጠዕመ** *be sweet (taste)*, **ለአኸ** *send*, **ሰሐበ** *pull*

#### III-2. The middle radical is **የ**.

##### III-2, type A

**ከደ** *go*, **ሸጠ** *sell*. The **የ** is a "weak" radical and is dropped in the perfect conjugation of this type of verb.

##### III-2, type B

**ቀየረ** *change*, **ጸየቸ** *stain*, **ጠየቸ** *inquire*

#### III-3. The middle radical is **ወ**.

##### III-3, type A

**ዞረ** *go around*, **ጸረ** *carry*, **ሞተ** *die*. In conjugating the perfect tense of this type of verb, a radical with a 1st form vowel is followed by **ወ**. The radical changes to 7th form, and **ወ** is dropped.

##### III-3, type B

**ዘወረ** *drive*, **ለወጠ** *change*, **ከወለ** *hide*

Verbs II-1, II-2, II-3, and III-2, III-3, are conjugated in the same patterns as family I, in the two types A and B. With few exceptions, the changes of spelling that occur happen for phonetic reasons when a laryngeal or **ወ** or **የ** is

combined with the vowel of an adjacent radical. Verbs III-1 do not have types A and B and do not follow either pattern consistently.

### Family IV

Verbs of four radicals, and not ending in **የ** or **ወ**. These verbs are classified as type C.

**ገንጸለ** *unfold*, **ደንገጸ** *pity*, **መስከረ** *testify*, **ቀልጠፈ** *go quickly*

### Family V

Verbs of four radicals ending in **የ** or **ወ**. These verbs are also of type C.

#### V-1. Four radicals ending in **የ**.

**ደርበየ** *throw away*

#### V-2. Four radicals ending in **ወ**.

**ሰንደወ** *toss*

Family IV and V verbs are conjugated like verbs of type B in the other families, but the second radical stays in the 6th form and there is no doubling. In family V, the presence of **የ** or **ወ** causes phonetic changes.

## Verb Families

Family		Type of Verb	Example
I	A	3 radicals	<b>ጸረገ</b> <i>clear, clean</i>
	B	3 radicals	<b>ፈጸመ</b> <i>complete</i>
II	1 A	final laryngeal	<b>በልዐ</b> <i>eat</i>
	B	final laryngeal	<b>ረሰዐ</b> <i>forget</i>
	2 A	final ʔ	<b>ሰተየ</b> <i>drink</i>
	B	final ʔ	<b>ቀኝየ</b> <i>spend some days</i>
	3 A	final ወ	<b>ዐጸወ</b> <i>close</i>
	B	final ወ	<b>ፈኝወ</b> <i>loosen</i>
III	1	middle laryngeal	<b>ጸሐፈ</b> <i>write</i>
	2 A	middle ʔ	<b>ከደ</b> <i>go</i>
	B	middle ʔ	<b>ቀየረ</b> <i>change</i>
	3 A	middle ወ	<b>ሞተ</b> <i>die</i>
	B	middle ወ	<b>ዘወረ</b> <i>drive</i>
IV		4 radicals	<b>ገንጸለ</b> <i>unfold</i>
V	1	4 radicals, final ʔ	<b>ደርበየ</b> <i>throw away</i>
	2	4 radicals, final ወ	<b>ሰንደወ</b> <i>toss</i>

## Verb Types

Type A (middle radical not doubled) verbs are found in families I, II, III.

Type B (with doubling) are found in families I, II, III.

Type C is defined as including all verbs in families IV and V, and verbs with a primary internal change stem. "Primary Internal Change Stem" verbs are conjugated through internal changes instead of prefixes and suffixes. In these verbs, the first radical is 4th form and stays in this form throughout the conjugation, with an exception in the nounal infinitive. Verbs of this type are **ባረኸ** *bless* and **ናፈቅ** *long for*.

In Type A verbs, the second radical of the root form of the verb is doubled in the imperfect tense, when the final radical is without a vowel (that is, the final radical is in the 6th form and closes a syllable rather than beginning a new one).

Type B verbs have doubling throughout.

Type C verbs have no doubling. Also, Family III—1 has no doubling, because the laryngeals are not doubled.

Tigrinya spelling does not indicate where doubling, or "gemination," occurs. Here it is shown by two dots under the double letter.

# LESSON 18

## Simple Perfect of All Verb Families

The simple perfect expresses action accomplished in the past. It is used to narrate things that took place in the distant past:

**በመጀመርታ አምላክ ሰማይን ምድርን ፈጠረ።**

*In the beginning, God created heaven and earth.*

It is seldom used in simple sentences in ordinary conversation. But it does have other important uses and they will be studied later.

The simple perfect of **ጸረገ** *clear* is as follows:

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	<b>ጸረገ</b>	<i>he cleared</i>	<b>ጸረጉ</b>	<i>they cleared</i>
f.	<b>ጸረገች</b>	<i>she cleared</i>	<b>ጸረጋ</b>	<i>they cleared</i>
2 m.	<b>ጸረግካ</b>	<i>you cleared</i>	<b>ጸረግኩም</b>	<i>you cleared</i>
f.	<b>ጸረግኪ</b>	<i>you cleared</i>	<b>ጸረግኩን</b>	<i>you cleared</i>
1 c.	<b>ጸረግኩ</b>	<i>I cleared</i>	<b>ጸረግና</b>	<i>we cleared</i>

The verb chart shows how to form the simple perfect tense of verbs representing each of the main types of verbs.

## Simple Perfect Tense – Families I and II

Family Group – Type	I		II		II		II	
	1-A	1-B	1-A	1-B	2-A	2-B	3-A	3-B
አነ ንሕና ንሰኻ ንሰኸ ንሰኸትኩም ንሰኸትኩን	ጸረግኩ	ፈጸምኩ	በላዕኩ	ረሳዕኩ	ሰቴኸ	ቀኔኸ	ዓጸኸ	ፈኖኸ
	ጸረግና	ፈጸምና	በላዕና	ረሳዕና	ሰቴና	ቀኔና	ዓጸና	ፈኖና
	ጸረግካ	ፈጸምካ	በላዕካ	ረሳዕካ	ሰቴካ	ቀኔካ	ዓጸካ	ፈኖካ
	ጸረግኪ	ፈጸምኪ	በላዕኪ	ረሳዕኪ	ሰቴኪ	ቀኔኪ	ዓጸኪ	ፈኖኪ
ንሰኸትኩም ንሰኸትኩን	ጸረግኩም	ፈጸምኩም	በላዕኩም	ረሳዕኩም	ሰቴኩም	ቀኔኩም	ዓጸኩም	ፈኖኩም
	ጸረግኩን	ፈጸምኩን	በላዕኩን	ረሳዕኩን	ሰቴኩን	ቀኔኩን	ዓጸኩን	ፈኖኩን
ንሰ ንሳ	ጸረገ	ፈጸመ	በልዔ	ረሰዔ	ሰተዩ	ቀነዩ	ዓጸወ	ፈነወ
	ጸረገች	ፈጸመች	በልዔች	ረሰዔች	ሰተዩች	ቀነዩች	ዓጸወች	ፈነወች
ንሳቶም ንሳተን	ጸረጉ	ፈጸሙ	በልዐ	ረሰዐ	ሰተዩ	ቀነዩ	ዓጸዉ	ፈነዉ
	ጸረጋ	ፈጸማ	በልዓ	ረሰዓ	ሰተዩ	ቀነዩ	ዓጸዋ	ፈነዋ

Simple Perfect Tense – Families III, IV, and V

Family Group – Type	III 1-A	III 2-A	III 2-B	III 3-A	III 3-B	IV	V 1	V 2
አነ	ጸሐፍኩ	ከድኩ	ቀየርኩ	ሞትኩ	ዘወርኩ	ገንጸልኩ	ደርቤኹ	ሰንዶኹ
ንሕና	ጸሐፍና	ከድና	ቀየርና	ሞትና	ዘወርና	ገንጸልና	ደርቤና	ሰንዶና
ንሸኻ	ጸሐፍካ	ከድካ	ቀየርካ	ሞትካ	ዘወርካ	ገንጸልካ	ደርቤካ	ሰንዶካ
ንሸኺ	ጸሐፍኪ	ከድኪ	ቀየርኪ	ሞትኪ	ዘወርኪ	ገንጸልኪ	ደርቤኪ	ሰንዶኪ
ንሰኻትኩም	ጸሐፍኩም	ከድኩም	ቀየርኩም	ሞትኩም	ዘወርኩም	ገንጸልኩም	ደርቤኩም	ሰንዶኩም
ንሰኻትኩን	ጸሐፍኩን	ከድኩን	ቀየርኩን	ሞትኩን	ዘወርኩን	ገንጸልኩን	ደርቤኩን	ሰንዶኩን
ንሱ	ጸሐፊ	ከደ	ቀየረ	ሞተ	ዘወረ	ገንጸለ	ደርቦ	ሰንደወ
ንሳ	ጸሐፊት	ከደት	ቀየረት	ሞተት	ዘወረት	ገንጸለት	ደርቦት	ሰንደወት
ንሳቶም	ጸሐፊ	ከደ	ቀየሩ	ሞቱ	ዘወሩ	ገንጸሉ	ደርቦ	ሰንደወ
ንሳተን	ጸሐፊ	ከደ	ቀየራ	ሞታ	ዘወራ	ገንጸላ	ደርቦ	ሰንደዋ

LESSON 19

Simple Imperfect of All Verb Families

The Tigrinya imperfect is used for actions that are incomplete or customary. By itself, the imperfect expresses what is customary or usual. For example,

ሰብ ይምነ፡ እዝኒ ይፍጽም።

*Man proposes, God disposes.*

ኣብ ተዋሰኦ ይሰርሕ።

*He works in the theater.*

The simple imperfect together with the corresponding form of the helping verb **ኣሎ** expresses actions taking place in the present.

ንሱ ሐጂ ይሰርሕ ኣሎ።

*He is working now.*

ኣብ ውሻጠ ይድቅስ ኣሎ።

*He's sleeping in the back.*

ኣብ ጽርግያ ባንዴራ የንበልብሉ ኣለው።

*They're stringing banners over the road.*

The verb chart shows how to form the simple imperfect tense of verbs representing each of the main types of verbs.

Imperfect Tense – Families I and II

Family Group – Type	II					
	I	I	II	II	II	II
	1-A	1-B	1-A	1-B	2-A	2-B
አነ	እጸርግ	እፍጽም	እበልፅ	እርስፅ	እሰቲ	እቕኒ
ንሕና	ንጸርግ	ንፍጽም	ንበልፅ	ንርስፅ	ንሰቲ	ንቕኒ
ንስኻ	ትጸርግ	ትፍጽም	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰቲ	ትቕኒ
ንስኺ	ትጸርጊ	ትፍጽሚ	ትበልፂ	ትርስፂ	ትሰትዪ	ትቕንዪ
ንስኻትኩም	ትጸርጉ	ትፍጽሙ	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰትዩ	ትቕንዩ
ንስኻትክን	ትጸርጋ	ትፍጽማ	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰትያ	ትቕንያ
ንሱ	ይጸርግ	ይፍጽም	ይበልፅ	ይርስፅ	ይሰቲ	ይቕኒ
ንሳ	ትጸርግ	ትፍጽም	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰቲ	ትቕኒ
ንሳቶም	ይጸርጉ	ይፍጽሙ	ይበልፅ	ይርስፅ	ይሰትዩ	ይቕንዩ
ንሳተን	ይጸርጋ	ይፍጽማ	ይበልፅ	ይርስፅ	ይሰትያ	ይቕንያ

Imperfect Tense – Families III, IV, and V

Family Group – Type	III					
	III	III	III	III	IV	V
	1-A	2-A	2-B	3-A	3-B	1
አነ	እጽሕፍ	እኸይድ	እቕይር	እመውት	እዘውር	እድርቢ
ንሕና	ንጽሕፍ	ንኸይድ	ንቕይር	ንመውት	ንዘውር	ንድርቢ
ንስኻ	ትጽሕፍ	ትኸይድ	ትቕይር	ትመውት	ትዘውር	ትድርቢ
ንስኺ	ትጽሕፊ	ትኸዲ	ትቕይሪ	ትሞቲ	ትዞሪ	ትግንጽሊ
ንስኻትኩም	ትጽሕፋ	ትኸዱ	ትቕይራ	ትሞቱ	ትዞሩ	ትግንጽሉ
ንስኻትክን	ትጽሕፋ	ትኸዳ	ትቕይራ	ትሞታ	ትዞራ	ትግንጽላ
ንሱ	ይጽሕፍ	ይኸይድ	ይቕይር	ይመውት	ይዘውር	ይድርቢ
ንሳ	ትጽሕፍ	ትኸይድ	ትቕይር	ትመውት	ትዘውር	ትድርቢ
ንሳቶም	ይጽሕፋ	ይኸዱ	ይቕይሩ	ይሞቱ	ይዞሩ	ይግንጽሉ
ንሳተን	ይጽሕፋ	ይኸዳ	ይቕይራ	ይሞታ	ይዞራ	ይግንጽላ

## LESSON 20

### Gerundive

The gerundive is the tense customarily used to express completed action. It can be used in the main clause of a sentence as the equivalent of the English present perfect:

**ናብ መዓርፎ ነፈርቲ ከይዱ።** *He has gone to the airport.*

Narratives of the remote past use the simple perfect tense in Tigrinya. Otherwise, the gerundive is the equivalent of the English past tense.

**ሐወይ ናብ ባጽዕ ከይዱ።** *My brother went to Massawa.*  
**ናይ ሕክምና ሓገዝ ረኺቦም።** *They received medical assistance.*

Verbs which have a final **ወ** , or a middle **ወ** not doubled, change the **ወ** to **የ** in the conjugation of this tense.

The gerundive of **ነገረ** say or tell is as follows:

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	<b>ነገሩ</b>	<i>he said</i>	<b>ነገሮም</b>	<i>they said</i>
f.	<b>ነገራ</b>	<i>she said</i>	<b>ነገረን</b>	<i>they said</i>
2 m.	<b>ነገርካ</b>	<i>you said</i>	<b>ነገርኩም</b>	<i>you said</i>
f.	<b>ነገርኪ</b>	<i>you said</i>	<b>ነገርክን</b>	<i>you said</i>
1 c.	<b>ነገረ</b>	<i>I said</i>	<b>ነገርና</b>	<i>we said</i>

## LESSON 21

### Gerundive in Subordinate Clauses

Many actions that would be expressed in English by using a series of coordinate clauses are expressed in Tigrinya with the gerundive as a kind of subordinate clause, followed by the main verb.

**ናብ በረኻ ከይደም ዕንጨይቲ ይኣርዩ ኣለዉ።** *They have gone into the wilderness and are picking up wood (lit. Having gone into the wilderness they are picking up wood)*

**በሊዮምን ሰትዮምን ይኸዱ ኣለዉ።** *They have eaten and drunk and are going (lit. Having eaten and drunk they are going)*

**መጽሐፍካ ከፈትካ ኮፍ በል።** *Open your book and sit down (lit. Having opened your book sit down)*

The gerundive has other uses that will be studied later.

## LESSON 22

### Imperative-Jussive

The imperative-jussive stem of the Tigrinya verb is fully conjugated. In English, the imperative is used only for the second person. For example, ናብ ሩባ ኬድኪ ማይ ኣምጽኡ። *Go to the river and bring water* is addressed to "you," second person feminine, and can be translated directly into English. But an imperative in the first person ("I," "we") or third person ("he," "she," "it," "they") may have to be translated with such a phrase as "let them" or "let us." Here, "let" means "may it happen," not "allow them" or "permit us." Other names for the "imperative" and "jussive" moods are "hortatory," and "cohortative." There is a "cohortative" in Hebrew and a "hortatory subjunctive" in Latin.

ናብ ደገ ንኺድ። *Let's go outside.*

ሕጉስ እንተሎ ይዘምር። *If anyone is happy, let him sing.*

ጸጋ ምስ ዙላትኩም ይኹን። *Grace be with you all.*

ነቲ ፈረስ ኣብቲ ዓንዲ እሰር። *Tie the horse to the pillar.*

The imperative-jussive of ረሰዐ is as follows:

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	ይረስዕ <i>let him forget</i>	ይረስዑ	<i>let him forget</i>
f.	ትረስዕ <i>let her forget</i>	ይረስዓ	<i>let them forget</i>
2 m.	ረስዕ <i>forget!</i>	ረስዑ	<i>forget!</i>
f.	ረስዒ <i>forget!</i>	ረስዓ	<i>forget!</i>
1 c.	እረስዕ <i>let me forget</i>	ንረስዕ	<i>let us forget</i>

## LESSON 23

### Future Tense

The future tense is formed from the simple imperfect by adding the prefix **ከ** and using the appropriate form of እዩ *to be* as an auxiliary verb.

ሐወይ ጽባሕ ኪመጽእ እዩ። *My brother will come tomorrow.*

ማርያም ማይ ክትቀድሕ እያ። *Mariam will draw water.*

The verb ገበረ *make or do* is conjugated in the future as follows:

#### Singular

3 m.	ኪገበር	እዩ	<i>he will do</i>
f.	ክትገበር	እያ	<i>she will do</i>
2 m.	ክትገበር	ኢኻ	<i>you will do</i>
f.	ክትገበሪ	ኢኽ	<i>you will do</i>
1 c.	ክገበር	እየ	<i>I will do</i>

#### Plural

3 m.	ኪገበሩ	እዮም	<i>they will do</i>
f.	ኪገበሩ	እየን	<i>they will do</i>
2 m.	ክትገበሩ	ኢኹም	<i>you will do</i>
f.	ክትገበሩ	ኢኸን	<i>you will do</i>
1 c.	ክንገበር	ኢና	<i>we will do</i>

The prefix **ከ** becomes **ኪ** when the verb form to which it is prefixed begins with **ይ**. This occurs in three of the four third person forms above.

## LESSON 24

### Negative of All Tenses

The verb is made negative in Tigrinya by the addition of a prefix **አይ** and a suffix **ን**, or in other words, by adding **አይ...ን** to the inflection of the word. Many verbs have object pronouns suffixed to them, but the suffix **ን** comes last, e.g. **አይመስለካን** *It doesn't seem so to you.*

When the verb already begins with **ይ**, a second **ይ** is not added. Thus the negative of **ይገብር** *he is doing* is **አይገብርን** *he is not doing*, rather than \***አይይገብርን**.

When the verb form begins with **እ**, the resulting \***አእይ** becomes **አየ**. Thus the negative of **አቅትል** *I cause to kill* is **አየቅትልን** *I am not causing to kill*.

For a negative command, the prefix is **አይት** and the letter **ን** is not added at the end. Thus the negative of **ንገር** *say* is **አይትንገር** *don't say*.

For the jussive, **አይ** is prefixed to the jussive form.

Note: an asterisk \* marks forms given as examples only, and not found in the language.

## LESSON 25

### Infinitives, Adverbial and Nounal

The Tigrinya *adverbial* infinitive is formed by adding the prefix **ከ** to the simple imperfect. This is the same form as the future without the auxiliary verb. The adverbial infinitive can be translated with an English infinitive, as in the examples.

**ትግርኛ ክምሃር እደሊ አሎኹ።** *I want to learn Tigrinya.*  
**ሓንቲ ሰበይቲ ማይ ክትቀድሕ መጺአ።** *A woman came to draw water.*

The Tigrinya *nounal* infinitive is formed by prefixing **ም** to the verb, after changing all its radicals to the 6th form, but the next to the last radical to the 4th. Thus for the verb **ቀተለ** the nounal infinitive is **ምቅታል**. For **ደርበዩ** the nounal infinitive is **ምድርባይ**.

This form is used like English infinitives and gerunds.

**ምፍላስ መሬት የልምዕ።** *Sowing makes the ground lush.*  
**ምጉሓፍ ክልኩል እዩ።** *Throwing trash is forbidden.*  
**ምሕያኽ ብዕሪር አይፍቀድን እዩ።** *To chew gum is not allowed.*

## LESSON 26

### The Verb "to have"

"To have something" is expressed by an appropriate form of **አለ** with an object suffix attached to it. That is, "I have the book" would be **መጽሐፍ አለኝ** (lit) *The book is to me*. Object suffixes as such will be studied in a later lesson. Even so, one can see in the examples below that the pronoun object suffixes work like other inflections for gender and person: *he she you I* and so on.

In this use of **አለ**, the verb is inflected to agree with its subject, which is the thing possessed. This usage is like the Latin dative of possession, e.g. *liber mihi est*, translated *I have the book*, but more literally, *The-book to-me is*. The verb agrees with "book," not "I."

<b>አብዑር አለውኒ።</b>	<i>I have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኒ።</b>	<i>I have cows.</i>
<b>አጣል አለዋና።</b>	<i>We have goats.</i>
<b>አኸላሳት አለውኸን።</b>	<i>You (f.p.) have dogs.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለኝ።</b>	<i>I have a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላትኒ።</b>	<i>I have a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውኒ።</b>	<i>I have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኒ።</b>	<i>I have cows.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለካ።</b>	<i>You (m.s.) have a book.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለኪ።</b>	<i>You (f.s.) have a book.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለኩም።</b>	<i>You (m.pl.) have a book.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለኩን።</b>	<i>You (f.pl.) have a book.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለኛ።</b>	<i>We have a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላትና።</b>	<i>We have a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውና።</b>	<i>We have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋና።</b>	<i>We have cows.</i>

<b>ላም አላትካ።</b>	<i>You (m.s.) have a cow.</i>
<b>ላም አላትኪ።</b>	<i>You (f.s.) have a cow.</i>
<b>ላም አላትኩም።</b>	<i>You (m.pl.) have a cow.</i>
<b>ላም አላትኩን።</b>	<i>You (f.pl.) have a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውኸ።</b>	<i>You (m.s.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውኸኒ።</b>	<i>You (f.s.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውኸኩም።</b>	<i>You (m.pl.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውኸኩን።</b>	<i>You (f.pl.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኸ።</b>	<i>You (m.s.) have cows.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኸኒ።</b>	<i>You (f.s.) have cows.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኸኩም።</b>	<i>You (m.pl.) have cows.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኸኩን።</b>	<i>You (f.pl.) have cows.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለዎ።</b>	<i>He has a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላቶ።</b>	<i>He has a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውዎ።</b>	<i>He has oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኦ።</b>	<i>He has cows.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለዋ።</b>	<i>She has a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላታ።</b>	<i>She has a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውዋ።</b>	<i>She has oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኦ።</b>	<i>She has cows.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለዎም።</b>	<i>They (m.) have a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላቶም።</b>	<i>They (m.) have a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውዎም።</b>	<i>They (m.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኦም።</b>	<i>They (m.) have cows.</i>
<b>መጽሐፍ አለወን።</b>	<i>They (f.) have a book.</i>
<b>ላም አላተን።</b>	<i>They (f.) have a cow.</i>
<b>አብዑር አለውወን።</b>	<i>They (f.) have oxen.</i>
<b>አሳ አለዋኦን።</b>	<i>They (f.) have cows.</i>

## LESSON 27

### Negative of the Verb "to have"

The negative of the verb "to have" is inflected for the person or persons that has or does not have, by changing the pronominal suffixes. But it is not inflected for the grammatical subject, the things possessed. The same verb would be used in "I don't have cows" and "I don't have oxen." But the verb would change in its suffix if "I" were to become "we."

The conjugation of "not to have" is as follows:

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	<b>የብሉን</b>	<i>he doesn't have</i>	<b>የብሉምን</b>	<i>they don't have</i>
f.	<b>የብላን</b>	<i>she doesn't have</i>	<b>የብላንን</b>	<i>they don't have</i>
2 m.	<b>የብልካን</b>	<i>you don't have</i>	<b>የብልኩምን</b>	<i>you don't have</i>
f.	<b>የብልክን</b>	<i>you don't have</i>	<b>የብልክንን</b>	<i>you don't have</i>
1 c.	<b>የብለይን</b>	<i>I don't have</i>	<b>የብልናን</b>	<i>we don't have</i>

## LESSON 28

### Object Suffixes in Simple Perfect

The Tigrinya object suffixes are personal pronouns suffixed to verbs. The use of object pronouns in Tigrinya is not exactly like that of English, although translation is usually not difficult. As in English, a verb can have both a direct and an indirect object. Thus, "Show me the pen" has an indirect object "me" and a direct object "pen." In Tigrinya, the pronoun "me" becomes part of the verb and is not written separately: **ኣርእየኒ** *Show me*.

The object suffixes in the following charts, used with a verb like **ሓገዘ** *help*, would be equivalent to an English direct object:

**ሓገዘኒ** *Help me*. The same suffix occurs in **ኣርእየኒ** *Show me*. In English grammar, this "me" could be called an indirect object, as in "Show me the book," although the Tigrinya construction is the same. In other words, the object suffixes in Tigrinya are not always the same as "direct objects" in English. Other kinds of objects in Tigrinya, which correspond more closely to the English indirect object, will be studied later.

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	7th form	<i>him</i>	7th + <b>ም</b>	<i>them</i>
f.	4th form	<i>her</i>	1st + <b>ን</b>	<i>them</i>
2 m.	<b>ካ</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ኩም</b>	<i>you</i>
f.	<b>ኪ</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ክን</b>	<i>you</i>
1 c.	<b>ኒ</b>	<i>me</i>	<b>ና</b>	<i>us</i>

The suffixes are added to the verbs with some adjustments:

Verbs feminine in **ን** change to **ና** before adding the suffix.

All 3rd forms change to 6th before adding the suffix.

In the gerundive 3 fem. sg., **ት** is added before the suffix.

Before the 1st or 2d person suffix, a final radical 6th form changes to a 1st form.

Addition of the suffixes for the 3rd person is more involved. The following general rules should be interpreted with the help of the charts, and vice-versa.

1st and 6th forms of the stem change to the required vowel.

Exception: some gerundives add **ሉ**.

2d of stem plus 6th – add **ው** with the proper vowel.

3rd of stem plus 6th – add **የ** with the proper vowel.

4th of stem – add **አ**, except in the gerundive 3 fem. sg., which adds **ት** with the proper vowel.

Personal 4th endings **ካ** and **ና** – add **የ** with proper vowel.

Personal masc. **ም** – add **ው** with proper vowel.

Personal fem. **ን** – add **አ** with proper vowel.

# Simple Perfect Tense, with Singular Object Suffixes

singular suffixes:	me	you, m.sg.	you, f.sg.	him	her
I -1 sing.		ገደፍኩኝ	ገደፍኩሽ	ገደፍኩዎ	ገደፍኩዋ
we -1 pl.		ገደፍናኝ	ገደፍናህ	ገደፍናዮ	ገደፍናያ
you -2 m.sg.	ገደፍኩህ			ገደፍኩዎ	ገደፍኩዋ
you -2 f.sg.	ገደፍኩህ			ገደፍኩዎ	ገደፍኩዋ
you -2 m.pl.	ገደፍኩምህ			ገደፍኩምዎ	ገደፍኩምዋ
you -2 f.pl.	ገደፍኩናህ			ገደፍኩናህ	ገደፍኩናህ
he -3 m.sg.	ገደፈህ	ገደፈካ	ገደፈኩ	ገደፈ	ገደፋ
she -3 f.sg.	ገደፈትህ	ገደፈትካ	ገደፈትኩ	ገደፈቶ	ገደፈታ
they -3 m.pl.	ገደፉህ	ገደፉካ	ገደፉኝ	ገደፉዎ	ገደፉዋ
they -3 f.pl.	ገደፉህ	ገደፉካ	ገደፉኝ	ገደፉህ	ገደፉህ

# Simple Perfect Tense, with Plural Object Suffixes

plural suffixes:	<i>us</i>	<i>you, m.pl.</i>	<i>you, f.pl.</i>	<i>them, m.pl.</i>	<i>them, f.pl.</i>
I -1 sing.		ገደፍኩሽም	ገደፍኩኸን	ገደፍኩዎም	ገደፍኩውን
we -1 pl.		ገደፍናኩም	ገደፍናከን	ገደፍናዮም	ገደፍናዮን
you -2 m.sg.	ገደፍካና			ገደፍካዮም	ገደፍካዮን
you -2 f.sg.	ገደፍካና			ገደፍካዮም	ገደፍካዮን
you -2 m.pl.	ገደፍኩሙና			ገደፍኩምዎም	ገደፍኩምውን
you -2 f.pl.	ገደፍካናና			ገደፍካናእም	ገደፍካናኡን
he -3 m.sg.	ገደፈና	ገደፈኩም	ገደፈከን	ገደፎም	ገደፈን
she -3 f.sg.	ገደፈትና	ገደፈትኩም	ገደፈትከን	ገደፈቶም	ገደፈተን
they -3 m.pl.	ገደፉና	ገደፉሽም	ገደፉኸን	ገደፍዎም	ገደፉውን
they -3 f.pl.	ገደፉና	ገደፉሽም	ገደፉኸን	ገደፉእም	ገደፉኡን

## Imperfect Tense, with Singular Object Suffixes

subject	obj.	3m <i>him, them</i>	3f <i>her, them</i>	2m <i>you, m.</i>	2f <i>you, f.</i>	1c <i>me, us</i>
he	sg.	ይገድፎ	ይገድፋ	ይገድፈካ	ይገድፈኪ	ይገድፈኒ
	pl.	ይገድፎም	ይገድፈን	ይገድፈኩም	ይገድፈከን	ይገድፈና
she	sg.	ትገድፎ	ትገድፋ	ትገድፈካ	ትገድፈኪ	ትገድፈኒ
	pl.	ትገድፎም	ትገድፈን	ትገድፈኩም	ትገድፈከን	ትገድፈና
you, m. sg.	sg.	ትገድፎ	ትገድፋ			ትገድፈኒ
	pl.	ትገድፎም	ትገድፈን			ይገድፈና
you, f. sg.	sg.	ትገድፍዮ	ትገድፍዮ			ትገድፍኒ
	pl.	ትገድፍዮም	ትገድፍዮን			ይገድፍና
I	sg.	እገድፎ	እገድፋ	እገድፈካ	እገድፈኪ	
	pl.	እገድፎም	እገድፈን	እገድፈኩም	እገድፈከን	

subject	obj.	3m him, them	3f her, them	2m you, m.	2f you, f.	1c me, us
they, m.	sg.	ይገድፍዎ	ይገድፍዋ	ይገድፋኝ	ይገድፋኽ	ይገድፋኒ
	pl.	ይገድፍዎም	ይገድፍወን	ይገድፋኹም	ይገድፋኹን	ይገድፋና
they, f.	sg.	ይገድፋለ	ይገድፍለ	ይገድፋኝ	ይገድፋኽ	ይገድፋኒ
	pl.	ይገድፋለም	ይገድፍሉን	ይገድፋኹም	ይገድፋኹን	ይገድፋና
you, m. pl.	sg.	ትገድፍዎ	ትገድፍዋ			ትገድፋኒ
	pl.	ትገድፍዎም	ትገድፍወን			ትገድፋና
you, f. pl.	sg.	ትገድፋለ	ትገድፋለ			ትገድፋኒ
	pl.	ትገድፋለም	ትገድፋሉን			ይገድፋና
we	sg.	ንገድፎ	ንገድፋ	ንገድፈካ	ንገድፈክ	
	pl.	ንገድፎም	ንገድፈን	ንገድፈኩም	ንገድፈኩን	

## LESSON 29

### More Prepositions and Pronoun Objects

Some more prepositions (continuing Lesson 14):

**ከም** like

**እዮብ ከም አቡኡ ሓያል እዩ።** *Job is strong like his father.*

**አብ ከንዲ** instead of, in exchange for

**አብ ከንዲ ፈረሰይ እዚ ብዕራይ ሃበኒ።** *Give me this ox in exchange for my horse.*

**ምእንቲ** for the sake of, for

**ምእንቲ አደይ መጸኤ።** *I have come for my mother's sake.*

**ስለ** for the sake of

**ክርስቶስ ስለና ሞተ።** *Christ died for our sakes.*

**ብዛዕባ** concerning, about

**ብዛዕባ ዛንታ ኤርትራ ተዛራሪብና።** *We spoke about the history of Eritrea.*

**ስጋብ** as far as, until (**ከላዕ** also occurs)

**ስጋብ ጽባሕ ከንጸንሕ ኢና።** *We will stay until tomorrow.*

**ሳላ** thanks to

**ሳላኹም ሰራሕ ረኽብ።** *Thanks to you, I found work.*

**ብሰሪ** by fault of or **ብሰንኪ**

**ብሰሪ ሓጢአት ጠፈእና።** *Because of sin, we are lost.*

**ብሰንኪ ንቹጽ ይነድድ ርሑስ።** *Because [some of it is] dry, the wet will burn.*

Prepositions are often used with personal pronoun suffixes. Thus "to, or toward, me" is ናብ + ኣነ, that is, ናብይ. Below are declensions of preposition and suffix for ን to or for; ብዛዕባ about; ምስ with; and ባዕሉ alone, by oneself.

Singular			Plural		
3 m.	ንዕሉ	to him	ንዕሉም	to them	
f.	ንዕላ	to her	ንዕሌን	to them	
2 m.	ንዓኻ	to you	ንዓኹም	to you	
f.	ንዓኼ	to you	ንዓኸን	to you	
1 c.	ንዓይ	to me	ንዓና	to us	

Singular			Plural		
3 m.	ብዛዕብሉ	about him	ብዛዕብሉም	about them	
f.	ብዛዕብላ	about her	ብዛዕብሌን	about them	
2 m.	ብዛዕባኻ	about you	ብዛዕባኹም	about you	
f.	ብዛዕባኼ	about you	ብዛዕባኸን	about you	
1 c.	ብዛዕባይ	about me	ብዛዕባና	about us	

Singular			Plural		
3 m.	ምስሉ	with him	ምስሉም	with them	
f.	ምስላ	with her	ምስሌን	with them	
2 m.	ምሳኻ	with you	ምሳኹም	with you	
f.	ምሳኼ	with you	ምሳኸን	with you	
1 c.	ምሳይ	with me	ምሳና	with us	

Singular			Plural		
3 m.	ባዕሉ	by himself	ባዕሉም	by themselves	
f.	ባላ	by herself	ባለን	by themselves	
2 m.	ባልኻ	by yourself	ባልኹም	by yourselves	
f.	ባልኼ	by yourself	ባልኸን	by yourselves	
1 c.	ባለይ	by myself	ባልና	by ourselves	

## LESSON 30

### Adverbs

Some commonly used adverbs:

ሎም ቅን very recently, soon

ሎም ቅን ማይ ሀሪሙ። It rained very recently.

ሎም ዘበን this year

ሎም ዘበን ሐዉ ተመርዕዩ። His brother married this year.

መላስ when (or መላዝ)

መላዝ መጸእኻ፤ When did you come?

ሎሚ today

ሎሚ ክዳውንቲ ሓጸበ። I washed clothes today.

ጽባሕ tomorrow

ጽባሕ ዕዳጋ ክወርድ እየ። Tomorrow I will go to market.

ድሕሪ ጽባሕ day after tomorrow

ትማሊ yesterday

ቅድሚ ትማሊ day before yesterday (also ብቕድሚ ትማሊ)

ትማሊ ሓሙስ last Thursday

ዓሚ last year

ሕጂ now

እቲ ገንዘብ ሕጂ ከህበካ እየ። I'll give you that money now.

ገና not yet (or ጌና)

እታ አውቶቡስ ገና አይመጽትን። Still the bus hasn't arrived.

ሽዑ then, next

ሽዑ ናብ በረኻ ወጸኡ። Next he went into the field.

ቅድም before, earlier

ነቲ ስራሕ ቅድም ፈጸሙ። He finished the work before.

ድሓር later, then

ድሓር ከንራኸብ ኢና። We'll get together later.

ኩሉ ሳዕ always (the usual word; also ኩሉ ሻዕ)

ኩሉ ሳዕ የንብብ። Always he is reading.

ወትሩ always (less commonly; also ወርትግ)

ወትሩ ዕውት። He is always victorious.

ከቶ never, absolutely not

ከቶ አይንምብርከኸን። We never kneel down.

አበይ where?

አበይ አሎኸ፤ Where are you?

ካበይ from where?

ካበይ መጸእከ፤ From where did you come?

አብዚ here

ብዙሐት መካይን አብዚ አለዋ። There are a lot of cars here.

አብኡ there

ጥንታዊ ሀንጻ አብኡ አሎ። An ancient building is there.

አብ ውሽጢ inside

አብ ውሽጢ እቲ አጉዶ ቈልዓ አሎ። Inside that hut is a child.

አብ ላዕሊ above (the spelling differs when used alone and when followed by a noun)

አብ ልዕሊ ነፋሲት ቢዘን ትረክብ። Above Nefasit you find Bizen.

እቲ ማይ ካብ ላዕሊ ወሪዱ። The water came from above.

አብ ታሕቲ below

ከፉእ ዝገብር አብ ታሕቲ ይነብር። Those who do evil live in an inferior way.

ንዩው far

እተን አሓ ንዩው በለን። Drive the cattle away.

ነጀው near

ነቲ መሓስእ ነጀው አብሎ። Bring the kid to me.

ንዩው ...ንጀው here and there

እቲ ጽሉል ንዩው ነጀው ይብል አሎ። The insane person is going here and there.

ካብ ንዩው beyond (also ካብ ኔው)

ከነጀው this side

ጽቡቕ well

ጽቡቕ ገይሩ። He did well.

ከፉእ poorly, badly

ከፉእ ሰራሐ። He worked badly.

**ብፍጹም** *truly, completely, surely*

**ብፍጽም ኣይተዛረበን።** *He said nothing at all.*

**ብሐቂ** *in truth*

**ብሐቂ ንገረኒ።** *Tell me truly.*

**ጥራይ** *only*

**ሓንቲ ደርሆ ጥራይ ረኺቦም።** *They found only one hen.*

**በይኑ** *alone*

**በይኑ መጸኡ።** *He came alone.*

**ምናዳ** *particularly, especially*

**እዞም ተምሃሮ ንፋዓት እዮም፣ ምናዳ ጴጥሮስ።** *Those students are clever, especially Peter.*

**ኣስታት** *about, approximately*

**ዕድሚኡ ኣስታት ሓምሳ ዓመት ይኸውን።** *His age is about fifty.*

**ኣቢሉ** *about, approximately (the more usual expression)*

**ዕድሚኡ ሓምሳ ዓመት ኣቢሉ ይኸውን።** *His age is about fifty.*

**ከመይ** *how?*

**ከመይ ውዒልኩም፣** *How did you spend the day? (i.e. Good afternoon)*

Often adverbs of manner are constructed by using a noun with the prefix **ብ**.

**ብሕያውነት ተቐቢሉና።** *He received us warmly.*

There are verbs which may be used in the gerundive as finite verbs, but which would naturally be translated with adverbs.

**ኣጸቢቑም ይጽሕፉ።** *They are writing neatly.*

**ኣቐዲመ ከውርየልኩም።** *First I'll tell you the news.*

**ቀልጢፎም ገይሮሞ።** *They did it quickly.*

Some expressions of affirmation and negation are as follows.

**እወ** *yes*

**ሕራይ** *all right*

**እሺ** *yes, all right*

**ድሓን** *okay, fine*

**ኣቤት** *at your service*

**እምቢ** *no! (strong refusal)*

**እንድዒ** *I don't know (somewhat impolite)*

**ምናልባት** *maybe*

**ይኸውን** *it could be*

**ኣይከውንን እዩ።** *It's not possible.*

For the convenience of the reader, the adverbs in Lesson 30 are presented together below.

ሎም ቅን <i>very recently, soon</i>	አብዚ <i>here</i>
ሎም ዘበን <i>this year</i>	አብኡ <i>there</i>
መላስ <i>when</i>	አብ ውሽጢ <i>inside</i>
ጽባሕ <i>tomorrow</i>	አብ ላዕሊ <i>above</i>
ድሕሪ ጽባሕ <i>day after tomorrow</i>	አብ ታሕቲ <i>below</i>
ትማሊ <i>yesterday</i>	ንዩው <i>far</i>
ቅድሚ ትማሊ <i>day before yesterday</i>	ነጀው <i>near</i>
ትማሊ ሓሙስ <i>last Thursday</i>	ንዩው ... ንጀው <i>here and there</i>
ዓሚ <i>last year</i>	ካብ ንዩው <i>beyond</i>
ሕጂ <i>now</i>	ከነጀው <i>this side</i>
ገና <i>not yet</i>	ጽቡቕ <i>well</i>
ሽዑ <i>then, next</i>	ከፋኝ <i>poorly, badly</i>
ቅድም <i>before, earlier</i>	ብፍጹም <i>truly, completely, surely</i>
ድሓር <i>later, then</i>	ብሐቂ <i>in truth</i>
ዙሉ ሳዕ <i>always</i>	ጥራይ <i>only</i>
ወትሩ <i>always</i>	በይኑ <i>alone</i>
ወርቅግ <i>always</i>	ምናዳ <i>particularly, especially</i>
ከቶ <i>never</i>	አስታት <i>about, approximately</i>
አበይ <i>where?</i>	አቢሉ <i>about, approximately</i>
ካበይ <i>from where?</i>	ከመይ <i>how?</i>

## Compound Tenses, ነበረ and ነበሩ

The simple imperfect and the gerundive tenses are used with the verb **አሎ** *to be present*, to make compound tenses.

For the imperfect tense plus **አሎ**, see Lesson 19. The negative of this tense is made by the negative of the imperfect together with the corresponding form of **አሎ**, e.g. **አይበልዕን አሎ** *he is not eating*.

The gerundive with **አሎ** is used as the equivalent of the English present perfect.

**መጸኡ አሎ።** *He has come*

**አብ በረኻ ዕንጨይቲ ቆሪጸ አሎኹ።** *I have cut wood in the wilderness.*

The verb **ነበረ** and its gerundive **ነይሩ** are used to express past time for both **እየ** and **አሎ**. The conjugations are as follows:

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	ነበረ <i>he was</i>	ነበሩ	<i>they were</i>
f.	ነበረት <i>she was</i>	ነበሩ	<i>they were</i>
2 m.	ነበርካ <i>you were</i>	ነበርኩም	<i>you were</i>
f.	ነበርኪ <i>you were</i>	ነበርኩን	<i>you were</i>
1 c.	ነበርኩ <i>I was</i>	ነበርና	<i>we were</i>

	Singular		Plural
3 m.	ነይሩ <i>he was</i>	ነይሮም	<i>they were</i>
f.	ነይራ <i>she was</i>	ነይረን	<i>they were</i>
2 m.	ኔርካ <i>you were</i>	ኔርኩም	<i>you were</i>
f.	ኔርኪ <i>you were</i>	ኔርኩን	<i>you were</i>
1 c.	ነይረ <i>I was</i>	ኔርና	<i>we were</i>

The gerundive plus the appropriate form of ነበረ or ነይሩ corresponds to the English past perfect. Literary usage may use the gerundive with ነበረ to form this tense, as in:

ደቂ መዛሙርቱ ግና ዚብላዕ ከዕድጉ ናብ ከተማ ኸይደም ነበሩ። *The disciples however had gone into the city to buy food.*

But the normal usage is ከይደም ነይሮም *they had gone.*

To form the negative of this tense, the negative of the simple perfect plus ነበረ or ነይሩ is used.

አይከዱን ነበሩ or ነይሮም *They had not gone.*  
 ዮሃንስ ጌና ናብ ቤት ማእሰርቲ አይተአሰረን ነበረ። *For John had not yet been imprisoned.*

The imperfect with the corresponding form of ነበረ corresponds to the English past progressive or past imperfect.

ይበልዑ ነበሩ *They were eating*  
 or ይበልዑ ነይሮም *They were eating*

To form the negative of this tense, the negative of the imperfect plus the corresponding form of ነበረ is used.

አይበልዑን ነበሩ *They were not eating*  
 አይበልዑን ነይሮም *They were not eating*

The verb ኩነ is used as follows:

1. To form the negative of the verb "to be" (see Lesson 7, አይኮንኩን etc.)
2. To form the future of the verb "to be," e.g. ሃብታም ኪኸውን እዩ *He will be rich.*

3.a. With the imperfect. The imperfect of ኩነ (ይኸውን) is used to express doubt or probability. Note that ይኸውን can be conjugated for person, gender, and number.

ናብ ዕዳጋ ይኸይድ ይኸውን። *He may be on his way to market.*

To express present doubt or probability in the negative, the negative of the imperfect plus the imperfect ይኸውን is used.

ናብ ገዛኡ አይመጽእን ይኸውን። *I am probably not coming to his house.*

3.b. With the gerundive.

i. The imperfect ይኸውን is used with the gerundive to express doubt in the past.

መጺኡ ይኸውን። *He may have come.*

ii. With the gerundive interrogative, the imperfect ይኸውን is used to ask a tactful question.

መጺኡዶ ኸን ይኸውን፤ *Might he have come, possibly?*