



ሰዋሰው ትግርኛ
TIGRINYA GRAMMAR



Edited by
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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 vowelled.

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.

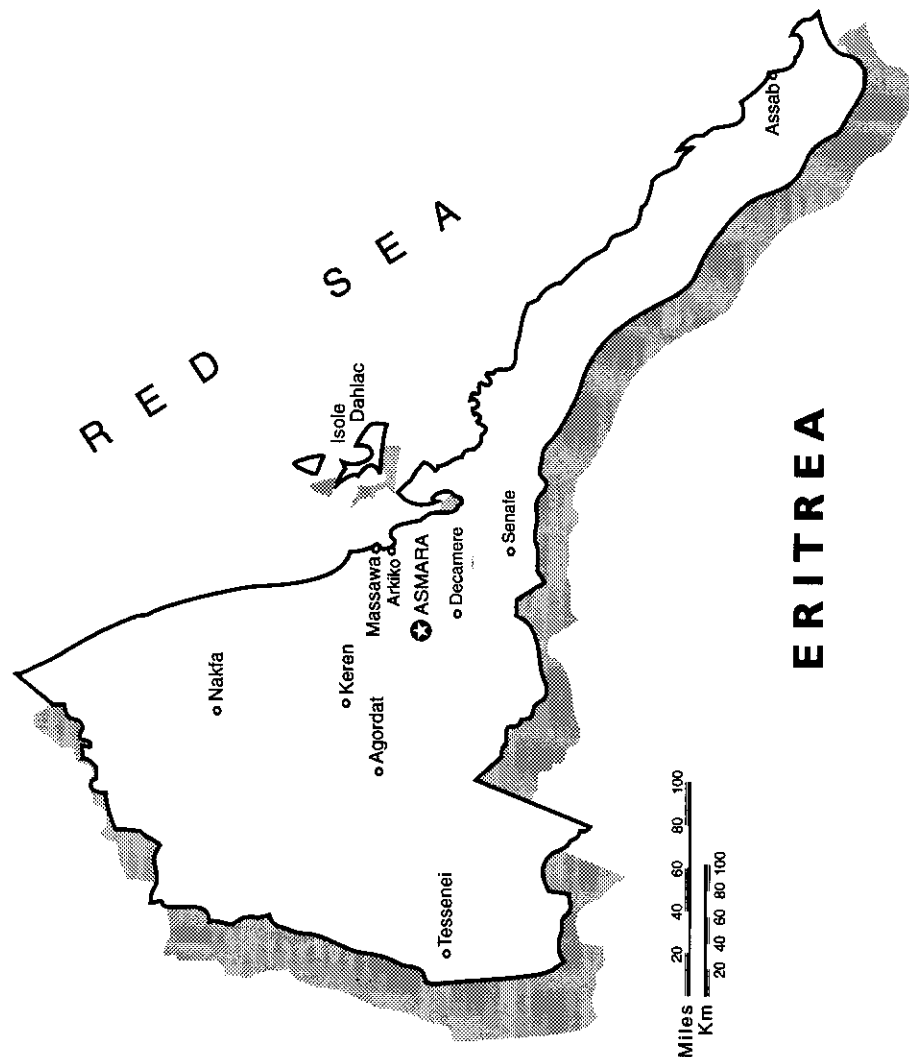
name	order	sound	transliteration	example
ግዕዝ	1st	ě as in <i>den</i> (or <i>ã</i>)	e (or a)	ሀ ha/he
ካዕብ	2nd	ū as in <i>lute</i>	u	ሁ hu
ሣልስ	3rd	ē as in <i>sea</i>	i	ሂ hi
ራብዕ	4th	ã as in <i>father</i>	a	ሃ ha
ሓምስ	5th	ie as in <i>Vietnam</i>	ie	ሄ hie
ሳድስ	6th	(neutral or null)	(not fixed)	ሀ h
ሳብዕ	7th	ō as in <i>vote</i>	o	ሆ 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 ã, the same as the 4th vowel. These exceptions were notably ሀ, ሁ, and ሃ. 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 ሁ is now being displaced by the 4th form ሃ in many words. The pronunciation of the words is the same in the old spelling and in the new. For example, ሁሎ and ሃሎ are the same word pronounced the same way, but the spelling with ሃ 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.



The Tigrinya Alphabet

ሀ	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ህ	ሆ	ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ	ሗ	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ሜ	ሞ	ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ	ሧ	ረ	ሰ	ሸ	ቀ	ቐ	በ	ተ	ቸ	ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	ኆ	ኇ	ኈ	ኑ	ነ	ና	ኔ	ን	ኖ	ኗ	ኘ	ኙ	ዐ	ዑ	ዒ	ዓ	ዔ	ዕ	ዖ	዗	ዘ	የ	ደ	ደ	ገ
ሀ	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ህ	ሆ	ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ	ሗ	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ሜ	ሞ	ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ	ሧ	ረ	ሰ	ሸ	ቀ	ቐ	በ	ተ	ቸ	ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	ኆ	ኇ	ኈ	ኑ	ነ	ና	ኔ	ን	ኖ	ኗ	ኘ	ኙ	ዐ	ዑ	ዒ	ዓ	ዔ	ዕ	ዖ	዗	ዘ	የ	ደ	ደ	ገ

ጠ	ጡ	ጢ	ጣ	ጤ	ጥ	ጦ	t plosive
ጨ	ጩ	ጪ	ጫ	ጬ	ጭ	ጮ	ch plosive
ጸ	ጹ	ጺ	ጻ	ጼ	ጽ	ጿ	p
ፀ	ፁ	ፊ	ፋ	ፎ	ፇ	ፈ	ts plosive
ፒ	ፓ	ፔ	ፕ	ፖ	ፘ	ፙ	ጸ old style
ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ	f
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	p
ኪ	ካ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	኷	ኸ	v
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	kw
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	kh ^w
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	q ^w
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	q ^w laryngeal
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	g ^w
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	h ^w
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ኵ	኶	other forms
፩	፪	፫	፬	፭	፮	፯	
፩	፪	፫	፬	፭	፮	፯	numerals
፩	፪	፫	፬	፭	፮	፯	
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	
፩	፪	፫	፬	፭	፮	፯	punctuation

ዎ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ዐ ዘ ዐ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ዐ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ዐ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ

ቸ ዘ ጎ ዐ ሄ ገ

ሆ ሉ ጠ ዐ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ያ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ጸ ጎ

ሆ ሰ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ዘ ዐ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ

ሂ ሉ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ዐ ያ ያ ዘ ያ ደ ደ ጸ ጎ

ሃ ሰ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ዐ ያ ያ ያ ያ ያ ጸ ጎ

ሂ ሉ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ዐ ያ ያ ያ ያ ያ ጸ ጎ

ሁ ሉ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ዐ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ዐ ያ ያ ያ ያ ያ ጸ ጎ

ሀ ሰ ጠ ዐ ራ ጎ ጠ ጠ ቅ ቅ ጎ ተ ና ና ስ ጎ ጠ ጠ ጠ ዐ ዐ ያ ያ ያ ያ ያ ጸ ጎ

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 **ሽምግ** candle (f.), **ኩዕሶ** ball (f.), **ኮኾብ** 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 **ፍልግ** child and **አንበሳ** animal have their gender according to the context.

The demonstrative pronouns are inflected for gender.

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

The corresponding polite forms are

እዚኦም	እዚኤን	<i>these persons</i>	(m., f.)
እቲኦም	እቲኤን	<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 ኩዕሶ እያ። *That is a ball.*

ንሰኽ 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 ደብዳቤ እዩ፤ አወ። *Is this a pen? Yes.*
እዚ አንስታል 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 ደ መጽሐፍ እዩ፤ አይኮነን። *Is this a book? No, it isn't.*
እዚ አዳሪ 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.	እዚ <i>this</i>	እዚ አቶም <i>these</i>	እዚ እም
fem.	እዚ አ <i>this</i>	እዚ አተን <i>these</i>	እዚ ኤን
masc.	እቲ <i>that</i>	እቲ አቶም <i>those</i>	እቲ እም
fem.	እቲ አ <i>that</i>	እቲ አተን <i>those</i>	እቲ ኤን

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. **ክፍሊ** *room*, the last letter must be changed to 6th form before adding **ታት**.

ክፍሊ *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.

ሰም *name* አሰማት *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*, ኣሓ *cattle*
 ሰበአይ *man*, ሰብኡት *men*

3. Some nouns have two plural forms.

ጌል *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>

እዚ ኣቶም አወዳት አይኮኑን። *These are not boys.*

እቲ ኣተን 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 ኣሰብኡት 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 ፉ 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.

አጸር አጸር *short*

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

አያል አያል *strong*

ለባም ለባም *wise*

2. Some adjectives form the femine irregularly.

ዓብይ 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 ዓብይ'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.

አጸር አጸርቲ *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.

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

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

ዓሻ (sing, c.), ዓያሹ or ዓሻታት (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 ... እዚላ (f.s.) *this*

እዞም ... እዚእም (m.pl.) *these*

እዞን ... እዚኤን (f.pl.) *these*

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

እታ ... እቲላ (f.s.) *that*

እቶም ... እቲእም (m.pl.) *those*

እቶን ... እቲኤን (f.pl.) *those*

The noun comes between the two adjectives.

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

እቶን ኣንሱቲ እቲኤን ኩናማ እዮን። *Those women are Kunama.*

Less formally, the demonstrative adjective may not be repeated.

እዚ ወዲ ንፉዕ እዩ። *This boy is clever.*

እቶን ኣንሱቲ ኩናማ እዮን። *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 ኣይከህንን።
(adj.) *This chair is not mine.*

እዚ መንበር ኣይከህንን።
(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	<i>he is</i>	ኢዮም	<i>they are</i>
f.	ኢያ	<i>she is</i>	ኢየን	<i>they are</i>
2 m.	ኢኻ	<i>you are</i>	ኢኹም	<i>you are</i>
f.	ኢኸ	<i>you are</i>	ኢኸን	<i>you are</i>
1 c.	እየ	<i>I am</i>	ኢና	<i>we are</i>

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 ኰዕሶ ከባብ ኢያ። *The ball is round.*

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

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

The independent personal subject pronouns are as follows.

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

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

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

እዚ ዶ ርሳስ እዩ፣ አይኩነን፣ ብርዲ 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	አርእዮኒ	you (m.s.)
ሀብኒ	አርእይኒ	you (f.s.)
ሀቡኒ	አርእዩኒ	you (m. pl. or polite)
ሀባኒ	አርእዮኒ	you (f. pl. or polite)

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

መጽሐፍ አርእዮኒ። *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 ሸውዓተ
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 ሸውዓተ
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

40	፵	አርብዓ
50	፶	አምሳ
60	፷	ስሳ
70	፸	ሰብዓ
80	፹	ሰማንያ
90	፺	ተስዓ
100	፻	ሚእቲ
140	፻፵	ሚእትን አርብዓን
141	፻፵፩	ሚእትን አርብዓን አደን
358	፫፻፶፰	ሰለስተ ሚእትን አምሳን ሸሞንትን
1,000	፲፫	ሺሕ
1,273	፲፪፻፸፫	ሺሕን ክልተ ሚእትን ሰብዓን ሰለስተን

LESSON 10

The Calendar

The days of the week are:

Sunday	ሰንበት	from Hebrew שַׁבָּת , <i>sabbath</i>
Monday	ሰኑይ	Semitic root for "two"
Tuesday	ሰሉስ	cf. ሰለስተ <i>three</i>
Wednesday	ረቡዕ	cf. አርባዕተ <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	ነካሰ	August
መጋቢት	March	መስከረም	September
ሚያዝያ	April	ጥቅምቲ	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 ἐπιπρόμενα, *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.

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 ምሕረት 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 | ምሕራር ናቕፋ
Nakfa's Liberation |
| 24 | ግንቦት: 1991 | መዓልቲ ሓርነት ኤርትራ
Eritrean Liberation Day |
| 20 | ሰኔ | መዓልቲ ሰው-አት ኤርትራ
Eritrean Martyrs' Day |
| 1 | መስከረም: 1961 | ባሕቲ መስከረም <i>First of September</i>
በዓል ሰው-ራ <i>Revolution Day</i>
Beginning of the Eritrean Armed
Struggle for Self-determination |
| 11 | መስከረም | ርእሰ ዓመት ብአቋጻጽራ 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 |
| ግግሆ | - from sunrise to midmorning |
| ረፍዲ ቅድሚ ቀትሪ | - from mid-morning to noon |
| ፍርቂ መዓልቲ | - midday, noon |
| ቀትሪ | - from noon to early afternoon |
| ኢጋ 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 ከንደይ ከይይ፡ | <i>What time is it?</i> |
| or ሰዓት ከንደይ አሎ፡ | |
| ሰዓት ክልተ ከይይ። | <i>It is two o'clock.</i> |
| ሰዓት ሰለስተን ፈረቓን ከይይ። | <i>It is three-thirty.</i> |
| ንሰዓት ሸውዓተ ሓሙሽተ
ደቂቕ ጎደል። | <i>It is five minutes to seven.</i> |
| ሰዓት ሸዱሽተን ርብዕን ከይይ። | <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 ገደል (*it remains*). More literal translations for the last two sentences above would be:

ንሰዓት ሸውዓተ ሓመሽተ ደቂቕ ገደል። *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.	አሎኻ	you are	አሎኹም	you are
f.	አሎኸ	you are	አሎኸን	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.	የሎኸን	you are not	የሎኹምን	you are not
f.	የሎኸን	you are not	የሎኸንን	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 ሓረሰታይ እዩ። *He is a farmer*
 እቲ ገዛ 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 የልቦኝ, which is not conjugated.

ማይደ አሎ፣ የልቦኝ። *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 ጥቓ *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 ንኣው 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 መጸኢ። *My brother came two hours ago.*

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

ካብ from

ካብ ከተማ መጸኢ። *She came from the town.*

አብ in, at

አብ ቤት ጽሕፈት አሎ። *He's at the office.*

ብዘይ without

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

ብዘይ ገንዘብ ዕዳጋ ከይደም። *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:

አብ ቅድሚያ in front of

አብቲ ቅድሚያ ገዛ ኦም አሎ። *In front of the house is a tree.*

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

አብ ውሽጢ inside

እቲ መንበር አብ ውሽጢ ገዛ አሎ። *The chair is inside the house.*

አብ ጥቅ beside, near

እቲ ብርዲ አብ ጥቅ እቲ መጽሐፍ አሎ። *The pen is beside the book.*

አብ ልዕሊ above, over, on, upon

በራድ አብ ልዕሊ እቶን አሎ። *The kettle is on the stove.*

አብ ትሕቲ under, beneath, below

እቲ ቜልዓ አብ ትሕቲ ዓራት አሎ። *The child is under the bed.*

አብ ድሕሪ behind, outside

እቲ ዒላ አብ ድሕሪ ገዛ አሎ። *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.	ገዛኡ	<i>his house</i>	ገዛእም	<i>their house</i>
f.	ገዛአ	<i>her house</i>	ገዛኤን	<i>their house</i>
2 m.	ገዛኻ	<i>your house</i>	ገዛኹም	<i>your house</i>
f.	ገዛኺ	<i>your house</i>	ገዛኸን	<i>your house</i>
1 c.	ገዛይ	<i>my house</i>	ገዛና	<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.	ገዛውቱ	<i>his houses</i>	ገዛውቶም	<i>their houses</i>
f.	ገዛውታ	<i>her houses</i>	ገዛውተን	<i>their houses</i>
2 m.	ገዛውትኻ	<i>your houses</i>	ገዛውትኹም	<i>your houses</i>
f.	ገዛውትኺ	<i>your houses</i>	ገዛውትኸን	<i>your houses</i>
1 c.	ገዛውተይ	<i>my houses</i>	ገዛውተና	<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 ደብዳቤ	ይ	ና	ኻ	ኺ	ኹም	ኸን	ኡ	አ	እም	ኤን
7th ማዕጸ	ይ	ና	ኻ	ኺ	ኹም	ኸን	ኡ	አ	እም	ኤን
2nd ሐሙ	7th + ይ	ና	ኻ	ኺ	ኹም	ኸን	ኡ	አ	እም	ኤን
4th ገዝ	ይ	ና	ኻ	ኺ	ኹም	ኸን	ኡ	አ	እም	ኤን
1st አደ	ይ	5th + ና	5th + ኻ	5th + ኺ	5th + ኹም	5th + ኸን	6th + ኡ	6th + አ	6th + እም	6th + ኤን
3rd ዓዲ, ደ	ይ	6th + ና	6th + ኻ	6th + ኺ	6th + ኹም	6th + ኸን	3rd + ኡ	3rd + አ	3rd + እም	3rd + ኤን
6th መጽሐፍ	1st + ይ	ና	ካ	ኪ	ኩም	ኸን	2nd	4th	7th + ም	1st + ን
	1st + ይ	ና	ካ	ኪ	ኩም	ኸን	2nd	4th	7th + ም	1st + ን

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>	ናታትክን	<i>your, yours</i>	ናትክን
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 ኣብዚ ኣሎ። *My book is here.*

መጽሐፈይ ኣብዚ ኣሎ። *My book is here.*

The pronoun can be made negative with the prefix **ኣይ** 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 ኣይከነን። *Is it yours? —It isn't mine.*

or **ኣይናተይን 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 **ጽሒፉ** *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. **ደሰብር** *he breaks.*)

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

I, type B

The second radical is doubled.

ፈጸመ *complete*, **መረኾ** *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

በልዩ *eat*, **ሰርሐ** *work*, **በጽሐ** *arrive*

II-1, type B

ወርሐ *spend the month*, **ረስዩ** *forget*, **ተከአ** *substitute*,
ጸወዐ *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

ፈኒወ *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, **ጠዐዐ** 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.

ገገጸለ unfold, **ደገገጸ** 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	ጸረገ <i>clear, clean</i>
	B	3 radicals	ፈጸመ <i>complete</i>
II	1 A	final laryngeal	በልዐ <i>eat</i>
		final laryngeal	ረሰዐ <i>forget</i>
	2 A	final ʔ	ሰተየ <i>drink</i>
		final ʔ	ቀኝየ <i>spend some days</i>
	3 A	final ወ	ዐጸወ <i>close</i>
		final ወ	ፈኝወ <i>loosen</i>
III	1	middle laryngeal	ጸሐፈ <i>write</i>
		middle ʔ	ከደ <i>go</i>
	2 A	middle ʔ	ቀየረ <i>change</i>
		middle ወ	ሞተ <i>die</i>
	3 A	middle ወ	ዘወረ <i>drive</i>
		middle ወ	ገንጸለ <i>unfold</i>
V	1	4 radicals, final ʔ	ደርበየ <i>throw away</i>
		4 radicals, final ወ	ሰንደወ <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 ናፈቸ *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.	ጸረገ	<i>he cleared</i>	ጸረጉ	<i>they cleared</i>
f.	ጸረገት	<i>she cleared</i>	ጸረጋ	<i>they cleared</i>
2 m.	ጸረግካ	<i>you cleared</i>	ጸረግኩም	<i>you cleared</i>
f.	ጸረግኪ	<i>you cleared</i>	ጸረግኩን	<i>you cleared</i>
1 c.	ጸረግኩ	<i>I cleared</i>	ጸረግና	<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 ንሰኺ ንሰኻትኩም ንሰኻትኩን	ጸረግኩ	ፈጸምኩ	በላዕኩ	ረላዕኩ	ሰቴኸ	ቀኔኸ	ግጸኸ	ፈኖኸ
	ጸረግና	ፈጸምና	በላዕና	ረላዕና	ሰቴና	ቀኔና	ግጸና	ፈኖና
ንሰኻ ንሰኻትኩም ንሰኻትኩን	ጸረግካ	ፈጸምካ	በላዕካ	ረላዕካ	ሰቴኻ	ቀኔኻ	ግጸኻ	ፈኖኻ
	ጸረግኪ	ፈጸምኪ	በላዕኪ	ረላዕኪ	ሰቴኺ	ቀኔኺ	ግጸኺ	ፈኖኺ
ንሰኻትኩም ንሰኻትኩን	ጸረግኩም	ፈጸምኩም	በላዕኩም	ረላዕኩም	ሰቴኸም	ቀኔኸም	ግጸኸም	ፈኖኸም
	ጸረግኩን	ፈጸምኩን	በላዕኩን	ረላዕኩን	ሰቴኸን	ቀኔኸን	ግጸኸን	ፈኖኸን
ንሰ ንሰ	ጸረገ	ፈጸመ	በልዔ	ረሰዔ	ሰተዮ	ቀነዮ	ግጸወ	ፈነወ
	ጸረገት	ፈጸመት	በልዔት	ረሰዔት	ሰተዮት	ቀነዮት	ግጸወት	ፈነወት
ንሰቶም ንሰተን	ጸረጉ	ፈጸሙ	በልዐ	ረሰዐ	ሰተዮ	ቀነዮ	ግጸዐ	ፈነዐ
	ጸረጋ	ፈጸማ	በልዓ	ረሰዓ	ሰተዮ	ቀነዮ	ግጸዮ	ፈነዮ

Simple Perfect Tense – Families III, IV, and V

Family	III	III	III	III	III	IV	V	V
Group – Type	1-A	2-A	2-B	3-A	3-B		1	2
አነ	ጸሐፍኩ	ከድኩ	ቀየርኩ	ሞትኩ	ዘወርኩ	ገንጸልኩ	ደርቤኹ	ሰንዶኹ
ንሕና	ጸሐፍና	ከድና	ቀየርና	ሞትና	ዘወርና	ገንጸልና	ደርቤና	ሰንዶና
ንሰኻ	ጸሐፍካ	ከድካ	ቀየርካ	ሞትካ	ዘወርካ	ገንጸልካ	ደርቤኻ	ሰንዶኻ
ንሰኺ	ጸሐፍኼ	ከድኼ	ቀየርኼ	ሞትኼ	ዘወርኼ	ገንጸልኼ	ደርቤኼ	ሰንዶኼ
ንሰኻትኩም	ጸሐፍኩም	ከድኩም	ቀየርኩም	ሞትኩም	ዘወርኩም	ገንጸልኩም	ደርቤኹም	ሰንዶኹም
ንሰኻትኩን	ጸሐፍኩን	ከድኩን	ቀየርኩን	ሞትኩን	ዘወርኩን	ገንጸልኩን	ደርቤኹን	ሰንዶኹን
ንሰ	ጸሐፊ	ከደ	ቀየረ	ሞተ	ዘወረ	ገንጸለ	ደርቦ	ሰንደወ
ንሳ	ጸሐፊት	ከደት	ቀየረት	ሞተት	ዘወረት	ገንጸለት	ደርቦት	ሰንደወት
ንሳቶም	ጸሐፊት	ከደት	ቀየሩ	ሞቱ	ዘወሩ	ገንጸሉ	ደርቦዩ	ሰንደወዱ
ንሳተን	ጸሐፊት	ከደት	ቀየራ	ሞታ	ዘወራ	ገንጸላ	ደርቦያ	ሰንደወያ

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፡ እዝጊ 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	I		II		II		II	
	1-A	1-B	1-A	1-B	2-A	2-B	3-A	3-B
አነ	እጸርግ	እፍጽም	እበልፅ	እርስፅ	እሰቲ	እቕኒ	እፃጽ	እፍት
ንሐና	ንጸርግ	ንፍጽም	ንበልፅ	ንርስፅ	ንሰቲ	ንቕኒ	ንፃጽ	ንፍት
ንሰኻ	ትጸርግ	ትፍጽም	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰቲ	ትቕኒ	ትፃጽ	ትፍት
ንሰኺ	ትጸርጊ	ትፍጽሚ	ትበልኒ	ትርስኒ	ትሰቲዪ	ትቕንዪ	ትፃጽዪ	ትፍንዪ
ንሰኻትኩም	ትጸርጉ	ትፍጽሙ	ትበልዑ	ትርስዑ	ትሰቲዩ	ትቕንዩ	ትፃጽዉ	ትፍንዉ
ንሰኻትክን	ትጸርጋ	ትፍጽማ	ትበልዓ	ትርስዓ	ትሰቲያ	ትቕንያ	ትፃጽዎ	ትፍንዎ
ንሱ	ይጸርግ	ይፍጽም	ይበልፅ	ይርስፅ	ይሰቲ	ይቕኒ	ይፃጽ	ይፍት
ንሳ	ትጸርግ	ትፍጽም	ትበልፅ	ትርስፅ	ትሰቲ	ትቕኒ	ትፃጽ	ትፍት
ንሳቶም	ይጸርጉ	ይፍጽሙ	ይበልዑ	ይርስዑ	ይሰቲዩ	ይቕንዩ	ይፃጽዉ	ይፍንዉ
ንሳተን	ይጸርጋ	ይፍጽማ	ይበልዓ	ይርስዓ	ይሰቲያ	ይቕንያ	ይፃጽዎ	ይፍንዎ

Imperfect Tense – Families III, IV, and V

Family Group – Type	III		III		III		IV		V	
	1-A	2-A	2-B	3-A	3-B	3-B	3-B	1	1	2
አነ	እጽሕፍ	እኸይድ	እቕይር	እመውት	እዘውር	እዘውር	እግንጽል	እድርቢ	እድርቢ	እሰንዱ
ንሐና	ንጽሕፍ	ንኸይድ	ንቕይር	ንመውት	ንዘውር	ንዘውር	ንግንጽል	ንድርቢ	ንድርቢ	ንሰንዱ
ንሰኻ	ትጽሕፍ	ትኸይድ	ትቕይር	ትመውት	ትዘውር	ትዘውር	ትግንጽል	ትድርቢ	ትድርቢ	ትሰንዱ
ንሰኺ	ትጽሕፊ	ትኸዲ	ትቕይሪ	ትሞቲ	ትዞሪ	ትዞሪ	ትግንጽሊ	ትድርብዪ	ትድርብዪ	ትሰንድዉ
ንሰኻትኩም	ትጽሕፋ	ትኸዱ	ትቕይሩ	ትሞቱ	ትዞሩ	ትዞሩ	ትግንጽሉ	ትድርብዩ	ትድርብዩ	ትሰንድዉ
ንሰኻትክን	ትጽሕፋ	ትኸዳ	ትቕይሩ	ትሞታ	ትዞሩ	ትዞሩ	ትግንጽላ	ትድርብያ	ትድርብያ	ትሰንድዎ
ንሱ	ይጽሕፍ	ይኸይድ	ይቕይር	ይመውት	ይዘውር	ይዘውር	ይግንጽል	ይድርቢ	ይድርቢ	ይሰንዱ
ንሳ	ትጽሕፍ	ትኸይድ	ትቕይር	ትመውት	ትዘውር	ትዘውር	ትግንጽል	ትድርቢ	ትድርቢ	ትሰንዱ
ንሳቶም	ይጽሕፋ	ይኸዱ	ይቕይሩ	ይሞቱ	ይዞሩ	ይዞሩ	ይግንጽሉ	ይድርብዩ	ይድርብዩ	ይሰንድዉ
ንሳተን	ይጽሕፋ	ይኸዳ	ይቕይሩ	ይሞታ	ይዞሩ	ይዞሩ	ይግንጽላ	ይድርብያ	ይድርብያ	ይሰንድዎ

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.	ነገሩ	<i>he said</i>	ነገሮም	<i>they said</i>
f.	ነገራ	<i>she said</i>	ነገረን	<i>they said</i>
2 m.	ነገርካ	<i>you said</i>	ነገርኩም	<i>you said</i>
f.	ነገርኪ	<i>you said</i>	ነገርካን	<i>you said</i>
1 c.	ነገረ	<i>I said</i>	ነገርና	<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)*

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

መጽሓፍካ ከፊትካ 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.

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 ፋባ ኬድኪ ማይ እምጽኢ። *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 ንኸድ። *Let's go outside.*

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

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

ነቲ ፈረስ አብቲ 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>

Future Tense

The future tense is formed from the simple imperfect by adding the prefix **h** 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	ኢኸ	<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.	ኪገበራ	እየን	<i>they will do</i>
2 m.	ክትገበሩ	ኢኹም	<i>you will do</i>
f.	ክትገበሪ	ኢኸን	<i>you will do</i>
1 c.	ክንገበር	ኢና	<i>we will do</i>

The prefix **h** 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 **አ**, the resulting ***አአይ** 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 **ክ** 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.*
ምሕያኸ 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 አሎ with an object suffix attached to it. That is, "I have the book" would be መጽሐፍ አሎኒ (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 አሎ, 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."

አብዑር አለውኒ።	<i>I have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኒ።	<i>I have cows.</i>
አጣል አለዋና።	<i>We have goats.</i>
አሽላላት አለውሽን።	<i>You (f.p.) have dogs.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎኒ።	<i>I have a book.</i>
ላም አላትኒ።	<i>I have a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውኒ።	<i>I have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኒ።	<i>I have cows.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎካ።	<i>You (m.s.) have a book.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎኪ።	<i>You (f.s.) have a book.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎኩም።	<i>You (m.pl.) have a book.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎክን።	<i>You (f.pl.) have a book.</i>
መጽሐፍ አሎና።	<i>We have a book.</i>
ላም አላትና።	<i>We have a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውና።	<i>We have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋና።	<i>We have cows.</i>

ላም አላትካ።	<i>You (m.s.) have a cow.</i>
ላም አላትኪ።	<i>You (f.s.) have a cow.</i>
ላም አላትኩም።	<i>You (m.pl.) have a cow.</i>
ላም አላትክን።	<i>You (f.pl.) have a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውኻ።	<i>You (m.s.) have oxen.</i>
አብዑር አለውኺ።	<i>You (f.s.) have oxen.</i>
አብዑር አለውኹም።	<i>You (m.pl.) have oxen.</i>
አብዑር አለውክን።	<i>You (f.pl.) have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኻ።	<i>You (m.s.) have cows.</i>
አሓ አለዋኺ።	<i>You (f.s.) have cows.</i>
አሓ አለዋኹም።	<i>You (m.pl.) have cows.</i>
አሓ አለዋክን።	<i>You (f.pl.) have cows.</i>
መጽሐፍ አለዎ።	<i>He has a book.</i>
ላም አላቶ።	<i>He has a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውዎ።	<i>He has oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኦ።	<i>He has cows.</i>
መጽሐፍ አለዋ።	<i>She has a book.</i>
ላም አላታ።	<i>She has a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውዋ።	<i>She has oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኦ።	<i>She has cows.</i>
መጽሐፍ አለዎም።	<i>They (m.) have a book.</i>
ላም አላቶም።	<i>They (m.) have a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውዎም።	<i>They (m.) have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኦም።	<i>They (m.) have cows.</i>
መጽሐፍ አለወን።	<i>They (f.) have a book.</i>
ላም አላተን።	<i>They (f.) have a cow.</i>
አብዑር አለውወን።	<i>They (f.) have oxen.</i>
አሓ አለዋኦን።	<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.	የብሉን	<i>he doesn't have</i>	የብሉዎን	<i>they don't have</i>
f.	የብላን	<i>she doesn't have</i>	የብላንን	<i>they don't have</i>
2 m.	የብልካን	<i>you don't have</i>	የብልኩዎን	<i>you don't have</i>
f.	የብልክን	<i>you don't have</i>	የብልክንን	<i>you don't have</i>
1 c.	የብሉይን	<i>I don't have</i>	የብልናን	<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 + ዎ	<i>them</i>
f.	4th form	<i>her</i>	1st + ን	<i>them</i>
2 m.	ካ	<i>you</i>	ኩዎ	<i>you</i>
f.	ኪ	<i>you</i>	ክን	<i>you</i>
1 c.	ኒ	<i>me</i>	ና	<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 **ቶ**.

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:	<i>me</i>	<i>you, m.sg.</i>	<i>you, f.sg.</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>her</i>
I -1 sing.		ገደፍኩኝ	ገደፍኩሽ	ገደፍኩዎ	ገደፍኩዋ
we -1 pl.		ገደፍናካ	ገደፍናኪ	ገደፍናዮ	ገደፍናያ
you -2 m.sg.	ገደፍኩህ			ገደፍኩዎ	ገደፍኩዋ
you -2 f.sg.	ገደፍኩህ			ገደፍኩዋ	
you -2 m.pl.	ገደፍኩምኒ			ገደፍኩምዎ	ገደፍኩምዋ
you -2 f.pl.	ገደፍኩናኒ			ገደፍኩናኦ	ገደፍኩናኦ
he -3 m.sg.	ገደፈኒ	ገደፈካ	ገደፈኪ	ገደፎ	ገደፋ
she -3 f.sg.	ገደፈትኒ	ገደፈትካ	ገደፈትኪ	ገደፈቶ	ገደፈታ
they -3 m.pl.	ገደፋኒ	ገደፋካ	ገደፋኪ	ገደፋዎ	ገደፋዋ
they -3 f.pl.	ገደፋኒ	ገደፋካ	ገደፋኪ	ገደፋኦ	ገደፋኦ

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	ገደፍኩወን
we -1 pl.		ገደፍናኩም	ገደፍናከን	ገደፍናዮም	ገደፍናዮን
you -2 m.sg.	ገደፍካና			ገደፍካዮም	ገደፍካዮን
you -2 f.sg.	ገደፍክና			ገደፍክዮም	ገደፍክዮን
you -2 m.pl.	ገደፍኩሙና			ገደፍኩምዎም	ገደፍኩምወን
you -2 f.pl.	ገደፍካናና			ገደፍካናኦም	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	ገደፉወን
they -3 f.pl.	ገደፉናና	ገደፉሽም	ገደፉኸን	ገደፉኦም	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	ይገድፈኩን	ይገድፈና
she	sg.	ትገድፎ	ትገድፋ	ትገድፈካ	ትገድፈኪ	ትገድፈኒ
	pl.	ትገድፎም	ትገድፈን	ትገድፈኩም	ትገድፈኩን	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	እገድፈኩን	

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>
they, m.	sg.	ይገድፍዎ	ይገድፍዋ	ይገድፉኝ	ይገድፉኺ	ይገድፉኒ
	pl.	ይገድፍዎም	ይገድፍወን	ይገድፉኸም	ይገድፉኸን	ይገድፉና
they, f.	sg.	ይገድፋለ	ይገድፍለ	ይገድፋኝ	ይገድፋኺ	ይገድፋኒ
	pl.	ይገድፋለም	ይገድፍሉን	ይገድፋኸም	ይገድፋኸን	ይገድፋና
you, m. pl.	sg.	ትገድፍዎ	ትገድፍዋ	ትገድፋኝ	ትገድፋኺ	ትገድፋኒ
	pl.	ትገድፍዎም	ትገድፍወን	ትገድፋኸም	ትገድፋኸን	ትገድፋና
you, f. pl.	sg.	ትገድፋለ	ትገድፋለ	ትገድፋኝ	ትገድፋኺ	ትገድፋኒ
	pl.	ትገድፋለም	ትገድፋሉን	ትገድፋኸም	ትገድፋኸን	ትገድፋና
we	sg.	ገገድፎ	ገገድፋ	ገገድፈኝ	ገገድፈኺ	ገገድፈኒ
	pl.	ገገድፎም	ገገድፈን	ገገድፈኸም	ገገድፈኸን	ገገድፈና

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 ክንዲ *instead of, in exchange for*

አብ ክንዲ 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* (**ክሳፅ** also occurs)

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

ሳላ *thanks to*

ሳላኹም ስራሕ ረኺብ። *Thanks to you, I found work.*

ብሰሪ *by fault of or* **ብሰንኪ**

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

ብሰንኪ ንቐጽ 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	ንዕሎም to them	
f.	ንዕላ to her	ንዕሎን to them	
2 m.	ንዓኻ to you	ንዓኹም to you	
f.	ንዓኺ to you	ንዓኸን to you	
1 c.	ንዓይ to me	ንዓና to us	

Singular		Plural	
3 m.	ብዛዕብሉ about him	ብዛዕብሎም about them	
f.	ብዛዕብላ about her	ብዛዕብሎን about them	
2 m.	ብዛዕባኻ about you	ብዛዕባኹም about you	
f.	ብዛዕባኺ about you	ብዛዕባኸን about you	
1 c.	ብዛዕባይ about me	ብዛዕባና about us	

Singular		Plural	
3 m.	ምስሉ with him	ምስሎም with them	
f.	ምስላ with her	ምስሎን with them	
2 m.	ምሳኻ with you	ምሳኹም with you	
f.	ምሳኺ with you	ምሳኸን with you	
1 c.	ምሳይ with me	ምሳና with us	

Singular		Plural	
3 m.	ባዕሉ by himself	ባዕሎም by themselves	
f.	ባላ by herself	ባላን by themselves	
2 m.	ባልኻ by yourself	ባልኹም by yourselves	
f.	ባልኺ 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 ንንዘብ ሕጂ ክህበካ 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.*

ድካር *later, then*

ድካር 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 አሎኻ፣ *Where are you?*

ካበይ *from where?*

ካበይ መጸእካ፣ *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 ቁልፍ 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 ወሪዶ። *The water came from above.*

አብ ታሕቲ *below*

ከፋእ ዝገብር አብ ታሕቲ ይነበር። *Those who do evil live in an inferior way.*

ንዮው *far*

እተን አሓ ንዮው በለን። *Drive the cattle away.*

ነጀው *near*

ነቲ መሓስእ ነጀው አብሎ። *Bring the kid to me.*

ንዮው ...ንጀው *here and there*

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

ካብ ንዮው *beyond (also ካብ ኔው)*

ከነጀው *this side*

ጽቡቕ *well*

ጽቡቕ ገይሩ። *He did well.*

ከፋእ *poorly, badly*

ከፋእ ሰሪሑ። *He worked badly.*

ብፍጹም *truly, completely, surely*

ብፍጹም አይተዛረብን። *He said nothing at all.*

ብሐቂ *in truth*

ብሐቂ ንገረኒ። *Tell me truly.*

ጥራይ *only*

ሓንቲ ደርሀ ጥራይ ረኸቦም። *They found only one hen.*

በይነ *alone*

በይነ መጸአ። *He came alone.*

ምናዳ *particularly, especially*

እዞም ተምሃሮ ንፋዓት እዩም፡ ምናዳ ጴጥሮስ። *Those students are clever, especially Peter.*

አስታት *about, approximately*

ዕድሜኡ አስታት ሓምሳ ዓመት ይኸውን። *His age is about fifty.*

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

ዕድሜኡ ሓምሳ ዓመት አቢሉ ይኸውን። *His age is about fifty.*

ከመይ *how?*

ከመይ ውዲልኩም፡ *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.

አጸቢቆም ይጽሕፉ። *They are writing neatly.*

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

ቀልጠፎም 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*

አቤት *at your service*

እምቢ *no! (strong refusal)*

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

ምናልባት *maybe*

ይኸውን *it could be*

አይከውንን 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>
መኣስ <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>	ንዮው <i>far</i>
ቅድሚ ትማሊ <i>day before yesterday</i>	ነጀው <i>near</i>
ትማሊ ሓሙስ <i>last Thursday</i>	ንዮው...ንጀው <i>here and there</i>
ዓሚ <i>last year</i>	ካብ ንዮው <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>	ከፋ-እ <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>
ኩሉ ሳዕ <i>always</i>	ጥራይ <i>only</i>
ወትሩ <i>always</i>	በይኑ <i>alone</i>
ወርቶግ <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 ከግ

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 እዩ 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>	ነበራ	<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 ከዕድገ 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 ከኑ 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 ከኑ (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.

መጸኡ ይኸውን። *He may have come.*

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

መጸኡዎ ሹን ይኸውን፤ *Might he have come, possibly?*

LESSON 32

Verbal Adjectives and Nouns

Many adjectives and nouns are derived from verbs. That is, they are part of a system of words sharing the same root. The root is thought of as a set of radicals with a certain meaning.

For example, the word **ግዕጾ** *door*, like **ዕጽዑ** *closed*, is from the root **ዓጸዐ** *close*. In this case the final **ዐ** has been dropped or assimilated, as often happens with “weak” letters, but the common root can still be seen. There is some regularity in the way words are formed from the roots, and it is helpful to see this especially when learning vocabulary.

1. Verbal adjectives are passive participles, generally formed with the vowels 6-2-6. Thus from **ሰበረ** *break* is formed the adjective **ሰበረ** *broken*, with its feminine **ሰበረቲ** and plural **ሰበራት**. The form **ሰበረ** has the vowels 6th form, 2d form, and 6th form, or 6-2-6. So also **ከፋት** *open*; **ዕጽዑ** *closed*; **ግሩም** *wonderful*.

2. Verbal nouns are formed in various ways. Two more or less regular patterns are:

a. Nouns signifying the agent or the name of a profession are usually formed with the vowels 1-4-3, or sometimes 1-4-4 plus **ይ**.

ሰባሪ	ሰባሪት (f.)	ሰበረቲ (pl.)	<i>breaker</i>
ፈራዲ			<i>judge</i>
ሐራዲ			<i>butcher</i>
ዘዋሪ			<i>driver</i>
ጽሐፊ or ጽሐፋይ			<i>writer</i> or <i>secretary</i>
አላማ or አላማይ			<i>weaver</i>

b. Nouns signifying tools or instrumentality are often formed with **መ** plus 6-1-3, or **መ** plus 6-1-3 plus **ት**.

መጽረቢ	<i>plane</i> (carpenter's tool)
መድኃኒት	<i>medicine</i> (lit. <i>that saves</i> from disease)
መፈንቀለ	<i>sledge-hammer</i> or <i>wedge</i>

Some of these nouns are formed with the vowels 6-1-6.

መንበር	<i>chair</i>
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LESSON 33

Ordinal Numbers

The ordinal numbers are inflected for gender, and agree with the noun they modify.

masc.	fem.	
ቀዳማይ	ቀዳመይቲ	first
ካልኦይ	ካልኦይቲ	second
ሳልሳይ	ሳልሳይቲ	third
ራብዓይ	ራብዓይቲ	fourth
ሐምሻይ	ሐምሻይቲ	fifth
ሻድሻይ	ሻድሻይቲ	sixth
ሻብዓይ	ሻብዓይቲ	seventh
ሻምናይ	ሻምናይቲ	eighth
ታሽዓይ	ታሽዓይቲ	ninth
ዓስራይ	ዓስራይቲ	tenth

The ordinal numbers *eleventh* and higher are made by using the word መበል with the cardinal number.

መበል ዓስርተው ሓደ	eleventh
መበል ዓስርተው ክልተ	twelfth

Some common fractions are as follows.

ፍርቂ	one-half
ሲሶ	one-third
ርብዓ	one-fourth
ሕምሲት	one-fifth
ሐምሻይ አፍ	
or ሐምሻይ አድ	a fifth portion
ስምንት	one-eighth
ዕስራት	one-tenth

LESSON 34

Direct and Indirect Objects

The grammatical direct object of a verb can often be identified as the person or thing that receives the action of the verb. In some languages, like Latin and Greek, it is in a distinctive case (the accusative). In Tigrinya, it comes before the verb.

ካህን ጸሎት ወዲኡ። *The priest ended the prayer.*

እምብልታኦም እናወቕዑ እቶም ሰብኡት ናብቲ ዝ

አተዉ። *Playing their flutes, the men entered the house.*

The direct object of the verb may be introduced by ን prefixed, although this prefixed ን is not obligatory. When it is used, the verb will have a pronoun suffix that corresponds to the object. In the first sentence below, the suffixed የ is masculine singular, corresponding to the noun phrase, "his good friend." In effect, the object is expressed twice, once as noun and once as pronoun.

1. In any one nominal group, ን occurs only once.

ነቲ ሕያዋይ ዓርኩ ርእየዮ። *I have seen his good friend.*

2. When there are several objects, ን can appear before each object, or it can appear only one time.

ነቲ ሐለቓን ነቶም ወተሃደራትን ሐገዎ። *He helped the chief and the soldiers.*

ንሐለቓን ወተሃደራትን ሐገዎ። (the same)

3. If the direct object is a pronoun, the verbal suffix alone can express it. However, a pronominal suffix can be added with ን, in the form ንኦ. But the verb will still have its suffix. In effect, the object is expressed twice, both times as a pronoun.

እቶም ቁልዑ ረአዩኒ። *Those children saw me.*

እቶም ቁልዑ ንኦ ረአዩኒ። (the same)

The indirect object is expressed by **ን** prefixed to the noun.

እቲ ጭቃ ንወተሃደራት ገንዘብ ሂብዎም። *The chief of the village gave money to the soldiers.*

If there are several indirect objects, **ን** may be used with each one, or only once.

ነቶም አወዳቱን ነተን አዋልዱን ገዛ ይህቡም። *He is giving the house to his sons and his daughters.*

ንአባይን አደይን ተዛራብዎም። *He spoke to my father and mother.*

In the second sentence, if the parents are addressed individually, it is better to use **ን** with each: **ንአባይን ንአደይን**.

The direct object may be placed before the indirect, or vice-versa.

እዚ መጽሐፍ ንመምህር ሃቦ። *Give this book to the teacher.*

ንመምህር እዚ መጽሐፍ ሃቦ። (the same)

If the indirect object is a pronoun, the pronoun object suffixes of the verb may be employed. When **ን** is used with a pronoun, pronoun suffixes of the type used with nouns are attached to the particle **ንአ**.

አሉኒ *He said to me.*

ንዓይ ሂቡኒ *He gave to me.*

The preposition **ለ** or **ል**

The preposition **ለ** or **ል** with a pronoun object suffix attached is used with verbs. It cannot introduce a noun. Its usual meaning is *on behalf of, for the benefit of*. With some verbs, it introduces an ordinary indirect object. In effect, this preposition **ለ** with its

pronoun is like a Latin or Greek dative, which can be a “dative of advantage,” a “dative of reference,” or a “dative indirect object.”

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	-ሉ	for him	-ሎም	for them
f.	-ላ	for her	-ላን	for them
2 m.	-ልካ	for you	-ልኩም	for you
f.	-ልኪ	for you	-ልክን	for you
1 c.	-ለይ	for me	-ልና	for us

ማዕጸ ኸፈትዎ። *He opened the door.*

ማዕጸ ኸፈቱሉ። *He opened the door for him.*

ነቲ መጽሐፍ ባዕሉ ጸሐፍዎ። *He wrote that book himself.*

መጽሐፍ ጸሐፉልና። *He wrote a book for us.*

መስኪሩልካ። *He testified on your behalf.*

ነቲ ኸልቢ አሰሮ። *He tied the dog.*

ነቲ ኸልቢ አሰሩለይ። *He tied the dog for me.*

ተፈቺዱልና። *It is permitted for us. (Latin licet nobis)*

አምጽአለይ። *Bring [it] to me.*

መሊሱሎም። *He gave them back*

መሊሱሎም። *He answered them.*

Some verbs, such as **መለሰ** *answer*, **ሰገደ** *worship*, **ደንገጸ** *pity*, use **ን** with the object expressed independently and **ል** with the corresponding object pronoun as it is suffixed to the verb.

ንአምላኽ ሰገደሉ። *He worshiped God.*

ፈራዲ ነቲ ሰራቺ ደንገጸሉ። *The judge pitied the thief.*

In compound tenses, the suffixes are always joined to the main verb and not to the auxiliary.

ነቲ ኸልቢ ይአሰሮ ነበረ። *He was tying the dog.*

LESSON 35

Interrogatives

Questions can be asked with interrogative pronouns and adverbs.

እንታይ	what?
አበይ	where?
ካበይ	from where?
ናበይ	to where?
መኣስ	when?
መን	who?
ምስ መን	with whom?
ናይ መን	of whom, whose?
ንመን	to whom?
አየናይ	which?
ከንደይ	how many?
ከመይ	how?
ብምንታይ	how, by what means?
ንምንታይ	why, for what?
ስለምንታይ	why, for what reason?

If an interrogative word is not used, questions are formed with a special particle, **ዶ**. This is attached as a suffix to the appropriate word. But when it is attached to **እዩ** or **አሎ**, it is prefixed rather than suffixed, and does not have the 7th form vowel.

	with እዩ		with አሎ	
3 m.	ድዩ	ድዮም	ደሎ	ደሎው
f.	ድያ	ድያን	ደላ	ደለዋ
2 m.	ዲኻ	ዲኹም	ደሎኻ	ደሎኹም
f.	ዲኺ	ዲኸን	ደሎኺ	ደሎኸን
1 c.	ድዮ	ዲና	ደሎኹ	ደሎና

The particle **ዶ** is used only once in a question.

ጽቡቅ ድዩ፣ ወይስ ሕማቅ እዩ፣ *Is it good or bad?*

When the answer expected is positive, **ዶ** is used with a negative verb (cf. Latin *nonne*).

ከልብን ተኹላን መብቆሎም ካብ ሓደ እዩ፣ አይኮነን፣ *The dog and the wolf are from the same species, aren't they?*

ከልብን ተኹላን መብቆሎም ሓደ ዶ አይኮነን፣ *Aren't the dog and the wolf from the same species?*

ዕባይ ከተማ ዶ ማሕረስ ይኸእል፣ *Do city boys know how to plow?*

ብዕራይ ዶ ይወልድ፣ *Can an ox have a calf?*

Questions are marked in speech by a rising intonation. The traditional written question mark **፤** (**ስለሱት ነጥቢ**, *three dots*) has now largely been replaced by the mark “?” especially in handwriting.

LESSON 36

Causatives

The different stems of a verb, or themes (this is the term used by W. Leslau) are conjugations of the verb in which a regular transformation is applied through all the inflections of person, number, and so on. These transformations imply a regular effect on the meaning of the verb. For example, when a verb is systematically altered by prefixing the radical **አ**, the whole collection of new forms is the conjugation of the “causative stem” of the verb. The common meaning of these forms is generally the meaning of the root verb with the idea of causation added to it. Thus from **ገበረ** *do* is derived **አገበረ** *cause to do*.

The radical **አ** is a “weak” radical, and when it is added to another word its presence is not always obvious.

When **አ** is prefixed to a verb like **ገደፈ** *leave off*, which begins with a 6th form radical, the prefix and the radical make a single syllable that ends with the 6th form silent: **አገደፈ** *cause to leave off* (pronounced **አግ - ደፈ**).

When **አ** is prefixed to an inflected form of the verb beginning with a person marker like **ይ** or **ት**, the prefix causes the 6th form radical to become 1st form, and the radical **አ** of the prefix does not itself appear. **ትባርኸ** *she blesses* plus **አ** becomes **ተባርኸ** *she causes to bless*.

In type A verbs, and in family III.1, the first radical of the root remains in the 6th form.

Simple perfect	Imperfect	Gerundive	Jussive-imperative
አስበረ	የስብር	አስቢሩ	የስብር
አጽሐፈ	የጽሕፍ	አጽሐፉ	የጽሕፍ

In type B and C verbs, the first radical keeps its original vowel.

Simple perfect	Imperfect	Gerundive	Jussive-imperative
አበደለ	የበድል	አበዲሉ	የበድል
አባረኸ	የባርኸ	አባረኹ	የባርኸ

In all verbs, in the imperfect and jussive-imperative, the second and following radicals become 6th form.

In some verbs a letter, **ን** or **ም**, is added for the sake of pronunciation, between the causative prefix and the first radical of the root.

ቀጥቀጠ *pound*, **አንቀጥቀጠ** *tremble*

Notice the uses of the causative in the following examples.

ወደሉ።	<i>He went out.</i>
ነታ ዱሙ አውደለዋ።	<i>He caused the cat to go out.</i>
ትማሊ መደሉ።	<i>He came yesterday.</i>
ትማሊ ነቲ ገንዘብ አምደለዋ።	<i>He brought the money yesterday (lit caused the money to come)</i>
ነቲ ገንዘብ የምጽኦ አሎ።	<i>He is bringing the money.</i>
ጽባሕ ነቲ ገንዘብ ኬምጽኦ እዩ።	<i>He will bring the money tomorrow.</i>
ነቲ መጽሐፍ አብ ሰደቻ አቆመጠ።	<i>Put the book on the table.</i>

Some verbs are causative in form, but not causative in meaning.

አመሰገነ	<i>give thanks</i>
አምለጠ	<i>escape</i>
አለለየ	<i>recognize</i>

LESSON 37

Passives

To form the passive stem, the letter ተ is prefixed. However, in the imperfect, jussive, and infinitive, the ተ is assimilated by the first radical of the root and does not appear.

	Singular		Plural	
3 m.	ተሀረመ	he was struck	ተሀረሙ	they were struck
f.	ተሀረመት	she was struck	ተሀረማ	they were struck
2 m.	ተሀረምካ	you were struck	ተሀረምኩም	you were struck
f.	ተሀረምኪ	you were struck	ተሀረምክን	you were struck
1 c.	ተሀረምኩ	I was struck	ተሀረምና	we were struck

There is a relatively wide range of pronunciation of some forms of the passive.

In the simple perfect of type A verbs, when the third radical is a form other than 6th, the second radical usually becomes a 6th form. But sometimes an alternate spelling with the 1st form exists. Thus ተሰብረ and ተሰበረ are equivalent. The meaning is *it was broken*, a passive from ሰበረ *break*.

In type A and B verbs, in the imperfect, the first radical becomes 6th form, and the second remains 1st form. For example, the simple imperfect እምኒ ገለ ይሰበር *the stone was breaking something*, becomes in the passive እምኒ ይሰበር *the stone was being broken*. The ሰ becomes ስ but በ remains በ.

When the passive is formed of the simple perfect of family III.1, the first radical becomes 4th form and the second radical becomes 6th form. Thus the simple perfect ጽሐፈ *he wrote* becomes ተጻሕፈ *it was written*. For the imperfect passive of family III.1, the second radical becomes 1st form. Thus ይጽሕፍ *he was writing* when made passive is ይጻሕፍ *it was being written*. For the jussive-imperative passive of family III.1, the first radical becomes 1st form. Thus ይጽሓፍ *let him write* becomes the passive ይጻሓፍ *let it be written*.

The passive is used as a regular passive, as a reflexive (the Greek “middle”), and as a deponent. A deponent verb is one that is “passive in form but active in meaning,” like Latin *hortor* “I exhort,” not “I am exhorted.” Tigrinya examples are:

እቲ ወዲ ተሀረመ። *The boy was hit. (passive)*
 እቲ ሸሓኒ ተሐጸቡ። *The plate has been washed. (passive)*
 ተሐጸባ። *She washed herself. (reflexive, or “middle”)*

ተዛረበ *speak (deponent)*
 ተጻወተ *play (deponent)*
 ተመነየ *desire, covet (deponent)*

LESSON 38

Relatives

Introduction

Relative clauses in English are usually introduced by the relative pronouns, *who*, *which*, *that*, and so on. "The letter you wrote," and "the letter that you wrote," amount to the same thing, but the second uses the relative pronoun "that" to introduce the clause "you wrote." Tigrinya does not use a separate word for this function. Instead, the simple perfect or imperfect of the verb is inflected by prefixing **ዝ** or **እ** to it.

መልእኸቲ ጽሒፍካ *You wrote a letter.*
ዝጽሒፍካያ መልእኸቲ *the letter [that] you wrote [it]*

The second phrase might be translated *the you-wrote-it letter*, in order to display the fact that the modifying or defining clause in Tigrinya is one word, not several words as in English. It also illustrates how the Tigrinya word is something like a participle. It can be made into a substantive by using an article.

ዚመጽእ ሰሙን *the coming week*
እቲ ዚመጽእ መን እዩ፤ *That person coming, who is it?*

Formation of the Relative

In general, the relative prefix is **ዝ**. Its vowel can be modified by the radicals that follow it. However, when the verb begins with the personal markers **ት** or **ን**, the prefix is **እ** rather than **ዝ**. Further details about these prefixes follow.

ዝ is prefixed to the simple perfect or imperfect.

ገበረ *he did* **ዝገበረ** *that did*
ይገብር *he is doing* **ዚገብር** *that is doing*

እ is used in front of the personal markers **ት** and **ን**. The person markers are doubled when the relative is prefixed.

እንገብር *we who are doing*
እትገብር *you who are doing*

እ (rarely **ዝ**) is used in front of the passive prefix **ተ**.

እተገብረ *that was done*
እተዳለወ *that was made ready; prepared*
እተጻሕፈ መልእኸቲ *a letter that was written*

When **ዝ** precedes **እ**, the first person singular marker, the marker is dropped and only **ዝ** appears.

እሰምዕ *I am listening* **ዝሰምዕ** *I who listen*

When **ዝ** precedes **ይ**, the combination becomes **ዚ**.

ይገብር *he is doing* **ዚገብር** *that is doing*

ዝ with **አሎ** makes **ዘሎ**, and so forth.

እምነት ዘላቶ *the one who has faith*

A negative verb in the indicative begins with **አይ** and ends with **ን**. With the relative, the verb begins with **ዘይ** and the suffix **ን** is not used.

እቲ ዘይገበር ወዲ *the boy who did not do it*

When **ዝ** precedes **አ**, from the causative, the combination becomes **ዘ**.

Usage

When the relative clause is an adjective clause, it comes before the noun. For example,

እታ ዝመጸት ጓል ሳራ እያ። *The girl who came is Sarah.*
ነታ ትማሊ ዝመጸት ጓል ጸውዓያ። *Call the girl who came yesterday (lit To the yesterday arrived girl, call her. This sentence would also be correct without the preposition ን, that is, with እታ instead of ነታ.)*

When the relative clause is a noun clause, it replaces the noun in the sentence order.

ናብ ከረን ደይቡ ድማ፣ ንዝደለዮም ጸውዒ፣ ናብኡ ኸአ መጹ። *He went up into a mountain and called whom he would, and they came to him.*

Points of construction

The verb in the relative clause has the usual object suffixes, direct and indirect.

እቲ እትርእዮ ዘሎኻ ሰብ ኩናማ እዩ። *The man whom you see is from Kunama.*
እቲ ዝገበርካለይ ብዙሕ እዩ። *What you have done for me is much.*

When the semantic relationship of the verb in a relative clause to the noun it modifies is indirect, the preposition **ል** and the third person pronouns may be used for the suffixes of the verb. (The suffixes would be -ሎ -ላ -ሎም -ለን)

እታ እትጻወተላ ዘሎኻ ኩዕሶ ከባብ ኣይኩነተን። *The ball you are playing with isn't round.* The instrumental "with" accounts for the preposition **ል** in **እትጻወተላ**.
እቲ ዝሓደርናሉ ሆተል ናይ ተስፋይ እዩ። *The hotel in which we spent the night belongs to Tesfai.*
በታ እተወለድኩላ ዓመት ብርቱዕ ዝናም ዘነመ። *There were heavy rains in the year that I was born.*

There are some verbs, such as **ሰፈረ** *stay a while*, and **አሎ** *be present*, that might seem to require the preposition **ል** but which do not use it. They use the direct object suffix.

እቲ ዝሰፈርናዮ ዓዲ ሃሩር እዩ። *The village we stopped in is hot.*
እቲ ዘሎናዮ ገዛ ገፊሕ እዩ። *The house we are in is large.*

If the verb in the relative clause has a direct object marked with the prefix **ን**, the verb does not take an object suffix.

እታ ንዋና-ጸሓፊ ዝረአየት ሰበይቲ ሓብተይ እያ። *The woman who has seen the First Secretary is my sister.* (Note that the form **ዝረአየት** is used, rather than **ዝረአየቶ**.)

The relative construction is used often with the verb "to be." Depending on the emphasis, either the relative or the verb can be last.

እቲ ዝሸደ ሓወይ እዩ። *The person who just left is my brother.*
ሓወይ እዩ ዝሸደ። *My brother is the one that went.*

In a question, the word order is often the relative, the interrogative, and then the verb "to be."

እዚ ዝገበረ መን እዩ፤ *The one who did this is who?*

The relative with a negative verb and the word **እኳ** is used to mean "not even" in a defensive sense.

ንሱኻ ሰቢርካዮ። እዋይ ዘይሓዝክዎ እኳ። *You broke it!*
—What! I haven't even touched it!

Comparatives and Superlatives

The comparative is expressed by using the verb in the imperfect with ካብ.

ጸጋ ካብ ሐብታ ትነውሓ። *Tsega is taller than her sister.*

ካብታ ናይ ትማሊ እቲ ሎሚ ዝኸፍትናዮ ይበዝሕ። *We have dug more ground today than yesterday (lit From that of yesterday what today we have dug is more).*

ምድሪ ካብ ጸሐይ ትንእስ። *The earth is smaller than the sun.*

Question sentences and negative sentences using the comparative follow the rule except in such sentences as: "Which is smaller, the sun or the earth?"

አየናይ ይንእስ፣ ጸሐይ'ዶ ወይስ ምድሪ፣ *Which is smaller, the sun or the earth?*

Note that there is no ካብ ; only the verb is used.

The superlative in Tigrinya is expressed by the use of a relative clause.

እዚ እቲ ዝነውሐ ገመድ እዩ። *This is the longest rope.*

እቲ ዝበለጸ ወዲ እዚ እዩ። *This is the best boy.*

እዚአ እታ ዝበለጸት ዓል እያ። *This is the best girl.*

Coordinate Conjunctions and Interjections

A coordinate conjunction is a word that like "and," connects two words, phrases, or clauses, that are grammatically or logically parallel. By way of comparison, a subordinate conjunction is a word like "since," which connects two clauses but represents one of them as an explanation or cause of the other. The main clause is stated and the other clause is subordinated to it. Subordinate conjunctions are treated in the next lesson.

1. ን and is the most common coordinate conjunction. It is placed at the end of each word that is to be joined. Thus in any use it must occur two or more times.

ሰደቓን ወንበርን አምጽእ። *Bring a table and chair.*

መጽሐፍካን ጥራዝካን ውሰድ። *Take your book and your exercise book.*

2. ውን and (እውን after a word ending in a vowel)

a. ውን and is used to bind two clauses together, and is placed after the word which is to be emphasized.

ናብ ቤት ትምህርቲ ከይዱ ኣብኡ እውን ከዕሶ ተጻዊቲ።
He went to school and there he played ball.

ናብ ቤት ትምህርቲ ከይዱ ከዕሶ እውን ተጻዊቲ። *He went to school and played ball.*

b. It is sometimes used to mean "then."

ንጽብሒቱ እውን ናብ ገዛ ዋና እተን ከብቲ ከይዱ።
Then, the next day, he went to the house of the owner of the cattle.

c. It is used to mean "also"

ፈረሰይ'ውን ሞይቲ *My horse also is dead.*

3. ከአ or ኸአ and, also

እነ ኸአ ጉይታይ፡ ከሳዕ መአዝ፤ And I said, "Lord, until when?"

4. ድማ and, also

ንሱ ድማ ከተማታት ከሳዕ ዝባድማ በለ። And he said, "Until the cities are wasted." (Isaiah 6:11)

When used together in a compound sentence, ከአ and ድማ mean and. Usually ከአ precedes and ድማ follows.

5. ስጋብ until (also ከሳዕ). This word is used only with the simple imperfect tense.

6. ወይ or

ብእግሪ ወይ ብባቕሊ ከትከዱ ትኸእሉ ኢኹም። You can go by foot or by mule.

7. ኩነ either (ኩነ . . . ኩነ whether . . . or). Often in speech only the initial ኩነ is used.

ንያዕቆብ ጽቡቕ ኩነ ክፉእ ከይትዛረቦ ተጠንቀቕ በሎ። Take care you speak not either good or bad to Jacob. (Genesis 31:24)

ጳውሎስ ወይ አጵሎስ፡ ኪፋ ኹነ ዓለም ኩነት፡ ህይወት ኩነት ሞት ኩነ፡ Whether Paul or Apollos, Cephas, the world, or life, or death (1 Cor 3:22).

8. አሽንኳይ'ዶ . . . ውን not only . . . but also

አሽንኳይ አራዊት ሰብ'ውን ጨካን እዩ። Not only wild animals but people also are cruel.

9. ጌና or ግን but (adversative)

እዚ ወደይ እዩ፡ እቲ ግን ወዲ ሐወይ እዩ። This is my son, but that is my brother's son.

10. እምበር but

a. እምበር is used mainly with a negative comparison. The word order of the sentence is typically (1) the positive statement, (2) እምበር, and (3) the negative statement. The verb is not used in the positive statement if it is the same as the verb of the negative statement.

እቶም ፈሪሳውያን ክብሪ ሰብ እምበር፡ ንኸብረ አምላኽ አይደለዩን። The Pharisees (desired) the glory of men, but did not desire the glory of God.

b. It is used as a mild adversative, as in a resumptive sense.

እምበር'ዶ ገንዘብ አለዎ፤ But does he have money?

c. It is used to express something unexpected.

ንሱ እምበር መጸኡ። But instead he came (although he was not expected to come).

11. እምበኣር therefore, so. The rhetorical particle ሲ is often used with እምበኣር.

እምበኣርሲ፡ አብርሃም አባና፡ ብስጋ እንታይ ረኺቡ፡ ክንብል ኢና፤ What shall we say that Abraham our father in the flesh has found? (Romans 4:1)

12. ደአ better, rather, in preference to, sooner

ነዚ ፈረስ እዚ እሰሮ ደአ። Better tie this horse. እዚ ደአ ክወስድ። I had rather take this one.

13. ግዳ please (also, but rarely, ከታ)

ምሃረና ግዳ። Please teach us.

14. እሞ therefore, in consequence (always postpositive—i.e. not the first word in its phrase)

ሎሚ ክኸይድ እየ እሞ፡ ነዚ ሰራሕ ባዕልኻ ግበር። *I will go today, therefore you do this work yourself.*

15. እኳ *not even, even*

ሐንቲ ሳንቲም እኳ የብለይን። *I don't have even one cent.*

እቲ ካብ ከተማኹም ዝለገበና ተጎን እኳ ንነግፈልኩም አሎና። *We are wiping off against you even the dust of your cities that sticks to us. (Luke 10:11)*

16. ደጊም *therefore*

ካብ ንግሆ ክሳዕ ምሸት ስሪሕና እሞ፡ ደጊም ንዕረፍ። *We worked from morning till evening, so let us rest.*

17. ስለምንታይ *why?*

ስለምንታይ ናብ አሥመራ ኬድካ፤ *Why have you gone to Asmara?*

18. ብዝተረፈ *finally* (lit for *what remains.*). This word signals the conclusion of a discourse).

ብዝተረፈ ዋጋ እዚ መጽሐፍ'ዚ ሕሱር እዩ። *And finally, the price of this book is cheap.*

ብዝተረፈስ አጎዋተይ፡ ብጎይታ ተሓጎሱ። *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. (Philippians 3:1)*

19. ማለት *that is to say, that means*

እቶም ደቂ፡ ማለት ተኸለን አብርሃምን ናብ ሩባ ወረዱ። *The children, that is Tekle and Abraham, went down to the river.*

List of coordinate conjunctions and interjections

1. ን ን *and*
2. ውን *and* (እውን after a word ending in a vowel)
3. ከአ *and, also*
4. ድማ *and, also*
5. ስጋብ *until* (also ክሳዕ) only with s.impf. tense.
6. ወይ *or*
7. ኩነ *either* (ኩነ... ኩነ *whether... or*)
8. አሽንኳይ'ዶ... ውን *not only... but also*
9. ጌና or ግን *but* (adversative)
10. እምበር *but*
 - a. mainly with a negative comparison.
 - b. as a mild adversative, as in a resumptive sense—returning to a topic in the course of discussion.
 - c. to express something unexpected.
11. እምበአር *therefore, so.*
12. ደአ *better, rather, in preference to, sooner*
13. ግዳ *please* (also, but rarely, ኩታ)
14. እሞ *therefore, in consequence* (always post-positive, that is, occurring after the first word of a phrase)
15. እኳ *not even, even*
16. ደጊም *therefore*
17. ስለምንታይ *why?*
18. ብዝተረፈ *finally* (lit for *what remains.*).
19. ማለት *that is to say, that means*

Subordinate Conjunctions

Subordinate conjunctions join two elements, but not in parallel. The two elements that are joined may differ grammatically to a greater or lesser extent, along with the logical and syntactic subordination. This is true in English and in other languages. For example, in “She *went* to the river and *washed* her clothes,” the verbs “went” and “washed” are parallel and are joined by means of the coordinate conjunction “and.” But when a relation of time, purpose, or result is expressed, the verbs may no longer be grammatically parallel. Thus, “She *went* to the river *to wash* her clothes,” or, “After *going* to the river, she *washed* her clothes” no longer use the two simple past tenses “went” and “washed.” The following paragraphs give examples of such constructions in Tigrinya.

1. ስጋብ *until, up to, as far as* (also spelled ስጋዕ. An equivalent word less widely used is ከላዕ or ከላብ). The conjunction is followed by ዝ with the simple imperfect.

ከጻወት መሰል የብሉን ስጋብ ስርሑ ዝውድእ። *He has no right to amuse himself until he has finished his work.*

- 2.a. ካብ or እንካብ *than*. With ዝ and the simple imperfect.

ከዛወር እፈቱ ካብ ንስራሕ ምኻድ። *I like to go for a walk better than to work.*

- 2.b. ካብ *since, because*. With the simple perfect, or with ዝ and the simple imperfect.

ካብ በልካንስ አያአምነካን እየ። *Since you said that to me, I don't believe you.* The suffix ስ of በልካን is a rhetorical addition.

እዚ ካብ በልካን አይአምኖን እየ። *Since you said this to me, I don't believe him.* The conjunctions እኖ and ስለ

are more common than ካብ in this type of construction.

እዚ ስለ ዝብሉኒ *because he says this to me ...*

እዚ ኢሉኒ እየኖ፣ ስለዚ *well, he said this to me, and so ...*

3. ከ... ከ... with the simple imperfect and አሎ። *while*. The simple imperfect with አሎ is conjugated normally, but the particle ከ is prefixed to both verb elements. This construction is for an action that is simultaneous with the main verb.

ከበልዕ ከለኹ ርእየኒ። *While I was eating he saw me.*

- 4.a. ከይ with the simple imperfect is a negative purpose construction : *lest*. The construction is also used with the verbs ፈርህ *fear* and ጠርጠረ *doubt*.

ከይስበር ተጠንቀኝ *Be careful that it doesn't break.*
ከይወድኝ እፈርህ *I'm afraid that he might fall.*

- 4.b. ከይ with the simple perfect expresses an unfulfilled circumstance.

ከይነገረኒ መጸኡ *He came without letting me know.*
ከይኸደ ጽውዓዮ *Before he goes, call him.*

5. ምእንቲ *in order to, for the purpose of*.

ምሕረት ከዳውንታ ምእንቲ ከትሐጽብ ናብቲ ሩባ ወራዳ። *Meheret went to the river to wash her clothes.*

6. ስለ *because* (answers a question “why”), with ዝ and the simple perfect.

በሊዑ ስለ ዝነበረ *because he had eaten*

7. ከም that, with ዝ and the simple perfect or imperfect, is a form for indirect speech. It is used after verbs of perception.

ከም ዝመጸ እፈልጥ። I know that he came.

ከም ዝመጽእ እፈልጥ። I know that he will come.

8. ምንም እኳ ... እንተ, or ሽሕ እኳ ... እንተ, with the simple perfect : even if, although. እንተ comes before the verb.

ምንም እኳ ሃብታም እንተ ኩንኩ even if I were rich

ምንም እኳ ዕዳኻ እንተከፈልካ even if you pay your debts

9. እንተ with ዝ and the simple imperfect is used to express a wish. A wish can also be expressed with the jussive.

ዝእክል ገንዘብ እንተዝህልወኒ If I only had enough money!

አየ ንሱ እንተ ዚመጽእ If he could only come!

የምጽአለይ I wish he would come (the jussive; lit may he (God) make him come for me)

10. አብ ክንዲ instead of can be followed by a relative clause.

አብ ክንዲ ዚሃረብ ትም ይበል። Instead of speaking, let him keep silent.

11. ምስ with. Used with the simple perfect.

ንሱ ምስ መጸ፡ ኩሉ ኺነግረና እዩ። When he comes, he will tell us all things.

ንሱ ምስ መጸ ኩሉ ነገሮም። When he came he told them everything.

12. እና with the simple perfect is used when two actions take place at the same time and have the same subject : while.

እናሰሐቾ ወጸሉ He went out laughing.

Summary chart of subordinate conjunctions

	conjunction	translation	construction
1.	ስጋብ or ክሳዕ	until	ዝ + s.impf.
2.a.	ካብ or እንካብ	than	ዝ + s.impf.
2.b.	ካብ	since, because	ዝ + s.impf. or pf.
3.	ከ, ከ	while	ከ with verb and አሎ
4.a.	ከይ	lest	s.impf.
4.b.	ከይ	without, before	s.pf.
5.	ምእንቲ	in order to	ከ + s.impf.
6.	ስለ	because	ዝ + s.pf.
7.	ከም	that	ዝ + s.impf. or pf.
8.	ምንም እኳ ... እንተ or ሽሕ እኳ ... እንተ	even if	s.pf.
9.	እንተ	expresses a wish	ዝ + s.impf.
10.	አብ ክንዲ	instead of	ዝ + s.impf.
11.	ምስ	when	s.pf.
12.	እና	while	s.pf.

LESSON 42

Reciprocals and Frequentatives

The reciprocal and frequentative systems or themes are formed by making an internal change to the verb instead of by adding a prefix or suffix.

The *reciprocal* system can be made from the passive system, as well as from the causative system, by giving the third-to-last radical of the verb a 4th form vowel. For a typical three-radical verb, this would be the first radical, and the root will start with a 4th form vowel.

የሃንሰን ተስፋይን ንሐድሕዶም ትሳሐቹ። *Yohannes and Tesfai laughed at each other.*

ንሐድሕና እንተ ተፈቅርና፣ አምላኸ አባና ይነብር።
If we love one another, God remains in us.

Some verbs, such as ባረኸ *bless*, ናፈቅ *long for*, and ላጸዖ *shave*, have their normal conjugation in this form, except for the nounal infinitive, which is plain, and the frequentative, which is explained below. A chart gives the conjugation of ናፈቅ.

The *frequentative* system is formed by repeating the second-to-last radical of the verb. The first of the two repeated radicals is written with the 4th form vowel. The frequentatives can be formed from the active, the passive, and the causative stems. The basic meaning of the frequentative is repeated or continuous action.

እንዳ ጸፃርና ድርቁ ግን ይመላለሰና አሎ። *Despite our efforts, famine keeps coming back.*

እዚ አቁጽልቲ ኩሉ ጊዜ ይንቀሳቅስ ዋላ ንፋስ እንተ ዘሐለ።
The leaves keep waving even when the wind is low.

Lesson 42 – Internal Stem Change

to long for	perfect	imperfect	imperative-jussive	gerundive	future
I -1 sing.	ናፈቅኩ	እናፍቅ አሎኸ	እናፍቅ	ናፈቅ ነይረ	ክናፍቅ
we -1 pl.	ናፈቅና	ንናፍቅ አሎና	ንናፍቅ	ናፈቅና ኔርና	ክንናፍቅ
you -2 m.sg.	ናፈቅካ	ትናፍቅ አሎኸ	ናፍቅ	ናፈቅካ ኔርካ	ክትናፍቅ
you -2 f.sg.	ናፈቅኪ	ትናፍቅ አሎኺ	ናፍቅ	ናፈቅኪ ኔርኪ	ክትናፍቅ
you -2 m.pl.	ናፈቅኩም	ትናፍቁ አሎኸም	ናፍቁ	ናፈቅኩም ኔርኩም	ክትናፍቁ
you -2 f.pl.	ናፈቅኩን	ትናፍቅ አሎኸን	ናፍቅ	ናፈቅኩን ኔርኩን	ክትናፍቅ
he -3 m.sg.	ናፈቅ	ይናፍቅ አሎ	ይናፍቅ	ናፈቅ ነይሩ	ክናፍቅ
she -3 f.sg.	ናፈቅት	ትናፍቅ አላ	ትናፍቅ	ናፈቅ ነይራ	ክትናፍቅ
they -3 m.pl.	ናፈቁ	ይናፍቁ አሎው	ይናፍቁ	ናፈቁም ነይሮም	ክናፍቁ
they -3 f.pl.	ናፈቋ	ይናፍቋ አለዋ	ይናፍቋ	ናፈቋን ነይረን	ክናፍቋ
negatives	አይናፈቅን	አይናፈቅን	አይናፈቅ	አይናፈቅ	አይናፈቅን
		አይናፍቅን	አይናፍቅ		አይናፍቅን

LESSON 43

በለ Verb

The verb **በለ** was originally **በሀለ**. Its basic meaning is “say,” but it has many idiomatic uses. Some of its tenses are given below, followed by a number of uses. In many of these uses, **በለ** means something like *to act* in a way determined by the context. It resembles an English “helping verb” like “to do,” whose meaning comes from the verb it accompanies. Note paragraphs 3, 4, and 6 below.

በለ	perfect
ቢሉ or ኢሉ	gerundive
ይብል	imperfect
በል	imperative

1. **በለ** can be added before or after the imperative of another verb, as an exclamation. This use is similar to the use of “Well, then,” in English.

በል ኪድ *Well then, go.*
ንዐናይ በል *Let's go (i.e. accompany me).*

2. The gerundive form **ኢሉ**, or less commonly **ቢሉ**, is used at the end of a direct quotation. The main verb follows, specifying the kind of speech act that has just been related: speaking, asking, commanding, and so forth.

የሱስ ንደቀ መዛሙርቱ ሰዓቡኒ ኢሉ አዘዘም። lit *Jesus said to his disciples “Follow me”— he commanded them.*

This example could be translated, *Jesus commanded his disciples to follow him,* or, *Jesus commanded his disciples, “Follow me.”*

3. It can express purpose.

ከዳውንቲ ከትዕድግ ኢላ፡ ናብ ድኳን አትያ። *She went into the shop to buy clothes.*

4. It may be conjugated and used adverbially.

ተሎ ኢሉ መጸ። *He came quickly.*

5. It is used like English “say,” “oh,” to get attention.

በል ሓብትይ *Oh, Sister . . .*

6. In the form of the causative gerundive **አቢሉ**, it means *by, across, near, through, about, approximately,* etc.

ብከረን አቢሉ መጸኡ። *He came, passing through Keren.*
ሰዓት ሰለሰተ አቢሉ ከመጽአካ ላይ። *I'll come to you about three o'clock.*

7. It is used alone as an exclamation, meaning *to act on something*. What specific action is in mind varies according to context. Thus it is used to encourage someone playing soccer, with the ball as a feminine singular object suffix: **በላ** *kick it!*

8. **በለ** is commonly used with certain invariable forms that are not conjugated. Prepositions if any come between **በለ** and the invariable. Prefixes and suffixes are attached to **በለ**. In this usage, **በለ** is fully conjugated in its active and causative forms. It does not use the passive.

ሐፍ በል	<i>Stand up</i>
ኮፍ በል	<i>Sit down</i>
ሱቕ በል	<i>Be quiet</i>
ጸው በል	<i>Get lost</i>
ቀስ በል	<i>Slow down, Be careful</i>

ጽን በል	<i>Listen carefully</i>
ዓው በል	<i>Be loud</i>
ደው በል	<i>Stop</i>
ፋሕ በል	<i>Spread out, Scatter</i>
ጠፃም በል	<i>Taste it</i>

9. An intensive force may be given to some verbs by putting all radicals in the 6th form, and using በል in a manner similar to the manner just noted (paragraph 8).

ግልጽ ኢሉ	<i>He looked around</i>
ፍግም ኢሉ	<i>He bowed down</i>
ሀዲሙ	<i>He ran away</i>
ሀድም ኢሉ	<i>He ran away as fast as he could</i>
ቀሪቡ	<i>He came near, is near to finishing</i>
ቅርብ ኢሉ	<i>He sneaked up</i>

Often in Tigrinya direct speech is used where English uses indirect speech. Thus *Jesus told his disciples to follow him*, would be said in Tigrinya: የሱስ ንደቂ መዛሙርቱ፤ ስዓቡኒ፡ በሎም።

The direct quotation is closed with the verb በል. Following it, another verb such as ጨደሩ *he shouted* or መለሰሉ *he answered* will make the action more specific. In this case the general act of saying is conveyed by በል, and the content or purpose of what is said is conveyed by the second verb. The two verbs can occur together with no conjunction: ኢሉ መለሰሉ *he said he answered*. The effect in English is one of repetition. One might compare the language of the Authorized Version, "answered and said," "called and said," and so forth. Such phrases occur because the Hebrew uses two verbs where only one is necessary in English, but the translators imitated the Hebrew syntax and included both verbs.

In written Tigrinya, the quotation can be marked off with punctuation. Preceding is ፤ and following is ፡. The usual word order is: first the subject; then the preposition ን and the person spoken to; next the words quoted, with the marks of punctuation; finally the verb phrase. In the verb phrase, በል comes first; next, any modifiers to the second verb; last, the second verb. In the following example (John 3:3), the translation follows this word order rather than what English requires.

የሱስ ንኒቀዲሞስ፤ ካብ ላዕሊ እንተ ዘይተወልደ ንመንግስቲ ኣምላኽ ክርእዩ ዚኸእል ከም ዘየሎ፡ ብሐቂ ብሐቂ እብለካ ኣሎኹ፡ ኢሉ መለሰሉ።

Jesus to Nicodemus: "If you are not born from above, that you will not be able to see the kingdom of God, in all truth I am telling you," he said, he answered him.

LESSON 45

Indirect Discourse

Verbs of saying, telling, reporting, commanding, and so on, that are not followed by a direct quotation, are generally followed by a subordinate clause specifying what was said. In English, the relative pronoun of the subordinate clause is often omitted. The following are grammatical examples in English:

1. Direct quotation. *She says, "Cactuses won't grow in Italy."*
2. Indirect. *She says that cactuses won't grow in Italy.*
3. Indirect, omitting the relative pronoun "that": *She says cactuses won't grow in Italy.*

The form of an English sentence may not correspond exactly to the form of a Tigrinya sentence that expresses the same idea. The following examples cover subordinate constructions with verbs of saying, telling, knowing, thinking, and the like.

Statements in indirect discourse

A. In the present.

ቶማስ እኹል ጨው ከምዘሎ እናፈለጠ ንምንታይ ዝያዳ ደልዩ፤ *Tom knows we have enough salt, why is he asking about more?*

B. Action in the future. The adverbial infinitive (ክ + imperfect) is used.

ሽዑ የሱስ ከይበኸዩ እዘዘም። *Then Jesus commanded them not to cry.*

C. Relative clause construction for the thing said.

ንጉስ አከአብ፣ እቲ ኢልያስ ዝገበሮ ኩሉ ንኢዛቤል ነገራ።
King Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done.

D. Past tense. ከም ዝ + simple perfect is used.

ሳሙኤል ኣብ ክንዲ ሸኮር ጨው ናብ ሻሂኡ ከምዝገበረሉ ንሓብቲ ነገራ። *Samuel told his sister how he had put salt instead of sugar in the tea.*

E. For the English construction “of” with a possessive and a gerund, use the nounal infinitive.

ምምጽኡ ኣይሰማዕኩን። *I didn't hear of his coming.*

Questions in indirect discourse

A. Indirect questions introduced by “if” or “whether,” and thus admitting possibility or doubt, are expressed as follows.

1. For present or incomplete action, use ዝ with the simple imperfect እንተኹነ.

ጸባሕ ምሳይ ዝኸይድ እንተኹነ ጠይቆ፣ *Ask him whether he will accompany me tomorrow.*

2. For past or complete action, use the gerundive and እንተኹነ.

ትማሊ መጺኡ እንተኹነ ጠይቆ፣ *Ask him if he came yesterday.*

B. Indirect questions introduced by an interrogative word are expressed as follows.

1. For present or incomplete action, use the interrogative, ከምዝ , and the simple imperfect.

ጸባሕ ኣበይ ከምዝምስሉ ተፈልጥዶ፣ *Do you know where they will take lunch tomorrow?*

ንግስቲ ቀመም ኣበይ ከምዝረኸቡኦ ኣይፈልጥን። *I don't know where Negisty found the spice.*

2. For past or complete action, use the interrogative, ከምዝ , and the simple perfect.

ኣበይ ከምዝሰርሉ ትፈልጥዶ፣ *Do you know where they worked?*

ኣበይ ከምዝተወልደት ኣይፈልጥን። *I don't know where she was born.*

LESSON 46

Defective and Irregular Verbs

Defective

The verbs **እዩ** and **አሎ** are called defective verbs because they do not have forms in all tenses. The forms they lack are supplied from other verbs.

እዩ	<i>forms</i>	<i>comments</i>
simple imperfect	እዩ	
simple impf. negative	አይከኑን	negative of ከኑን
simple perfect	ነበረ	
gerundive	ነበሩ or ነይሩ	
future	ኪኸውን	future of ከኑን
imperative-jussive	ኩን , ይኸኑን	imprt-juss. of ከኑን
nounal infinitive	ምክን	from ከኑን

አሎ		
simple imperfect	አሎ	
simple impf. negative	የሎን	or የልዩን (unconjugated)
simple perfect	ነበረ	
gerundive	ነበሩ or ነይሩ	
future	ክህሉ እዩ	from ሀለወ
imperative-jussive	ይህሉ	expressing uncertainty
nounal infinitive	ምህላው	from ሀለወ

Example for the imperative-jussive of **እዩ** :

በእምሮ ሰብኡት ኩኑ፡ በከፍአት ደኣ ሕጻናት ኩኑ እምበር፡ በካዕባ ስነ ፍልጠት ግና፡ ቁልዑ አይትኹኑ። *In mind, be men; in evil, be infants; but in understanding do not be children* (1 Cor 14:20).

Irregular

Three important irregular verbs are **ሀበ**, **ሐዘ**, and **በለ**. In their conjugations, many forms can be explained as abbreviations of forms from the conjugation of a more regular, triconsonantal verb.

1. **ሀበ** means *give*. It is derived from **ወሃበ**, and in some forms the **ወ** appears.
2. **ሐዘ** means *hold*. It is probably derived from ***ተሐዘ**. The initial radical appears in some stems with an internal change.
3. **በለ** means *say*. It is derived from **በሀለ**, and in some forms the **ሀ** appears.

See the following chart for a synopsis of these verbs.

Repeated final radicals

In Type A verbs, that is, verbs without doubling of the second-to-last radical, a consonant may be dropped from the spelling under certain circumstances. This happens when a 6th form radical with its vowel silent or final comes before another radical of the same consonant. The 6th form radical is dropped, and the two consonants are written as one. However, in pronunciation there will still be some differentiation of such a consonant. This contraction of spelling does not apply to Type B verbs, where the middle radical is geminated (doubled).

type A		type B, geminated	
ሐተተ	<i>ask</i>	አዘዘ	<i>command</i>
ይሐቱ	<i>they are asking</i>	ይእዘቱ	<i>they are commanding</i>
ተሐተ	<i>he was asked</i>	ተእዘዘ	<i>he is commanded</i>

Irregular verbs	simple perfect	simple imperfect	gerundive	imperative-jussive	agent	nounal infinitive
give, active	ሀበ	ይህብ	ሂቡ	ሀብ - ይህብ	ወሃቢ	ምሃብ
be given, pass.	ተዋሀበ	ይወሃብ	ተዋሂቡ	ይወሃብ	ተወሃቢ	ምሃብ or ምወሃብ
hold, active	ወዘ	ይወዝ	ወዙ	ወዝ - ይወዝ	ወዘ	ምወዝ
be held, pass.	ተወዘ	ተወዝ	ይወዝ	ተወዙ	ተተወዘ	ምተወዝ
say, active	በለ	ይብል	ኢሉ	በል	በሃሊ	ምባል
be said, passive	ተባለ	ይባል	ተባሉ	ተባል	ተባላሊ	ምባላል

LESSON 47

Impersonal Verbs

Impersonal verbs are used in the 3d person singular, of whatever tense, like English “it is necessary,” “it was necessary,” “it will be necessary.” Tigrinya has no neuter (“it”), and uses a masculine singular instead. The person implicated in the action of the verb is shown by object suffixes. A corresponding English construction would be a prepositional phrase: “It’s necessary for me.” The word **ይግባኣኒ** can be translated literally into Latin as *mihī oportet*, *it’s necessary for me*; but in English it is usual to say “I must” or “I have to.”

ደስ ኢሉኒ	<i>It pleased me. lit It says gladness to me.</i>
ደስ ኢሉና	<i>It pleased us.</i>
ይመስለኒ	<i>It seems to me.</i>
ይግባኣኒ	<i>I must. lit It is fitting for me.</i>
ይአኸለኒ	<i>It is enough for me.</i>
ይሕሸኒ	<i>I am feeling better. or It’s better for me.</i>
ይጥዕመኒ	<i>It’s convenient for me.</i>
ይጠቐመኒ	<i>It is useful for me.</i>

These impersonal verbs are used in other tenses.

መሲሉኒ	<i>It seemed to me.</i>
ሒሸኒ	<i>I felt better.</i>
አኸሉኒ	<i>It was enough for me.</i>

Some other verbs are used either way, personal or impersonal, but in these verbs the personal form seems to predominate. Examples:

Impersonal	Personal	
የሐሙኒ	ሐሚመ	<i>I am sick.</i>
ጠምዩኒ	ጠምዩ	<i>I am hungry.</i>
ጸሚኡኒ	ጸምኤ	<i>I am thirsty.</i>
ደኸሙኒ	ደኸመ	<i>I am tired.</i>
ተረዲኡኒ	ተረዲኤ	<i>I understand.</i>
ይከላለኒ	እኸእል	<i>I can.</i>

These other verbs, except the last, are gerundive in form, although they describe a present circumstance. To describe a circumstance in the past, add the appropriate form of the verb ነይሩ .

የሐሙኒ ነይረ	ሐሚመ ነይረ	<i>I was sick.</i>
የሐሙዎ ነይሩ	ሐሚሙ ነይሩ	<i>He was sick.</i>

LESSON 48

Stative Tenses

Like the English progressive tenses, stative tenses express a state of being. The Tigrinya verb is formed with the gerundive plus the appropriate form of አሎ or ነይሩ .

ኮፍ ኢለ አሎኹ።	<i>I am sitting.</i>
ኮፍ ኢለ ነይረ።	<i>I was sitting.</i>
ኮፍ ኢለ ሰሪሔ።	<i>I worked while sitting.</i>
ሕጂ እቲ ቁልዓ ደቂሱ አሎ።	<i>The child is sleeping now.</i>
ሕጂ እቲ ቁልዓ ኮፍ ኢሉ አሎ።	<i>The child is sitting now.</i>
እቲ መንበር ተሰቢሩ አሎ።	<i>The chair is (still) broken.</i>
ጸጊበ አሎኹ።	<i>I'm satisfied; I'm full.</i>
ዐጊበ አሎኹ።	<i>I'm satisfied.</i>

When the action is in mind, rather than the resulting state of being, the ordinary tenses are used.

እታ መርከብ ምስ ትንቀሳቅስ ኮፍ እብል።	<i>When the boat moves, I sit down.</i>
ጽባሕ አብ ልዕሊ ህድሞ ኮፍ ክብል ኢዩ።	<i>I'll sit on top of the hut tomorrow.</i>

LESSON 49

Conditionals

Conditional sentences can indicate possibility, impossibility, or improbability. The conditional clause comes before the principal clause.

A possible conditional clause is introduced by either

- (A) the simple imperfect and እንተኹነ, or
- (B) እንተ and the simple perfect; እንተ and ዝ and the simple imperfect; or እንተ and the gerundive.

A negative possible conditional is introduced by

- ዘይ and the simple imperfect and እንተኹይት; or እንተዘይ and the simple perfect.

The principal clause will be in either the future or the imperative-jussive tense.

An impossible or improbable conditional clause is introduced by either

- (A) the gerundive and እንተ and ዘ and the simple imperfect of ኩነ; or
- (B) እንተ and ዝ and the simple imperfect; or እንተ and the simple perfect or the gerundive.

A negative impossible or improbable conditional is formed by

- እንተ and ዘይ and the simple imperfect or simple perfect.

The principal clause is formed with ም and the simple perfect, or for the negative አይ and ም and the simple perfect. To represent the action as completed, the appropriate form of ነይሩ is added to the simple perfect.

In the examples, the sentences continue from the left column over to the right, under the corresponding grammatical descriptions.

subordinate clauses	principal clauses
1. POSSIBLE CONDITIONS	
1.(A) s-impf + እንተኹነ ትደልዮ እንተኹንካ: <i>If you like,</i>	future ውሰዶ። <i>take it.</i>
future (colloquial) ክትጽሕፍ እንተኹንካ <i>If you will write,</i>	future ርሳስ ክገዝአልካ እየ። <i>I'll buy you a pencil.</i>
NEGATIVE POSSIBLE CONDITIONS	
ዘይ + s-impf + እንተኹነ ዘይፈርህ እንተኹይት <i>If he isn't afraid,</i> ዘይመጽእ እንተኹይት <i>If he doesn't come,</i>	future or impvtv-juss ምላና ይኸድ። <i>let him go with us.</i> አነ ክኸይድ እየ። <i>I will go.</i>
1.(B) እንተ + s-pf እቲ ፈረስ እንተተረኸበ <i>If the horse is found,</i> ነቲ ፈረስ እንተረኸብካዮ <i>If you find that horse,</i>	future or impvtv-juss ክሸጠ እየ። <i>I will sell it.</i> ሳዕሪ አብልጻዮ። <i>feed him.</i>
እንተ + ዝ + s-impf + ኮይኑ እንተ ዚኸይድ ኮይኑ <i>If he is going,</i>	future or impvtv-juss ንገረኒ። <i>tell me.</i>

NEGATIVE POSSIBLE CONDITIONS (continued)

እንተ + gerundive

future or imptv-juss

እንተ በሊዕካዮ

ከትሐምም ኢኻ።

*If you eat it,**you will be sick.*

እንተዘይ + s-impf

future or imptv-juss

እንተዘይ መጸ

በይነይ ከኸይድ እየ።

*If he does not come,**I will go alone.*

2. IMPOSSIBLE OR IMPROBABLE CONDITIONS

2.(A) grndv + እንተ + ዘ
+ s-impf of ከኦኅ

ም + s-pf (+ ነይሩ)

ሐወይ መጸኢ እንተዘኸኸውን

ምተሐጎስኩ ነይረ።

*If my brother had come,**I would have been glad.*

2.(B) እንተ + ዝ + s-impf

ም + s-pf

እንተ ዝኸይድ

ዕረፍቲ ምረኽብኩ።

*If he would go,**I would find rest.*

እንተ + s-pf (or gerundive)

ም + s-pf

እንተጸሐፈ

አይምተሸገርኩን።

*If he had written,**I wouldn't be worried.*

NEGATIVE IMPOSSIBLE OR IMPROBABLE CONDITION

እንተ + ዘይ + s-impf or s-pf

ም + s-pf

ማይ እንተ ዘይሃርም

ትማሊ ምመጸ።

*If it had not rained,**he would've come yesterday.*

PART III

Common Expressions

These greetings and expressions can be used from the first days of study. There are both polite and familiar forms of address for speaking to both men and women. The familiar form of address is usually reserved for children, students, and young people. Unknown adults, adults older than oneself, and government officials regardless of age are spoken to with the polite form of address. When in doubt, the polite form is safe.

With few exceptions, the same verb form is used for "you" polite and "you" plural. The exceptions are found mainly in greetings and demonstratives. The pronoun "you" in the masculine polite singular is commonly used also for the masculine plural, although a specific plural form exists. The same is true for the pronoun "you" of the feminine polite singular and the feminine plural. The third person plural is often used as a polite form for the third person singular, e.g. መምህር መጸአም *The teacher has come.*

When speaking to or about groups of people that include both women and men, the masculine form is usual.

The following pages include greetings and other expressions which must be conjugated for person and number. Some examples are given to show what this typically involves, and others are left to the reader.

The abbreviations used are: *s. singular, p. plural, pol. polite, m. masculine, f. feminine, c. common.* The particle *ዶ* signifies a question. The traditional question mark consisting of three dots (⋮) is written here, but the familiar mark (?) is displacing it.

A. Greetings

1. ሰላም Hello; good-bye (lit. peace)
2. ደህንዶ ሓዲርካ፤ Good morning (lit. Did you pass the night safely? m.s. (addressing one man)
 ደህንዶ ሓዲርኪ፤ Good morning f.s. (addressing one woman)
 ደህንዶ ሓዲርኩም፤ m.pol. and m.p.
 ደህንዶ ሓዲርክን፤ f.pol. and f.p.
 ደህንዶ ሓዲራትኩም፤ m.polite, not commonly used
 ደህንዶ ሓዲራትክን፤ f.polite, not commonly used
3. ደህንዶ ውዲልካ፤ Good afternoon m.s.
 ደህንዶ ውዲልኪ፤ f.s.
 ደህንዶ ውዲልኩም፤ m.p. and m.pol.
 ደህንዶ ውዲልክን፤ f.p. and f.pol.
4. ደህንዶ አምሲኻ፤ Good evening m.s.
 ደህንዶ አምሲኪ፤ f.s.
 ደህንዶ አምሲኹም፤ m.p. and m.pol.
 ደህንዶ አምሲክን፤ f.p. and f.pol.
5. ደህን ውዓል Good-bye (in the morning);
 Have a nice day
 ደህን ውዓሊ f.s.
 ደህን ውዓሉ m.p. and m.pol.
 ደህን ውዓላ f.p. and f.pol.
6. ደህን አምሲ Good-bye (in the afternoon)
 Have a nice evening
 ደህን አምሲዪ f.s.
 ደህን አምሲዪ m.p. and m.pol.
 ደህን አምሲያ f.p. and f.pol.

7. ደህን ሕደር Good night m.s.
 ደህን ሕደሪ f.s.
 ደህን ሕደሩ m.p. and m.pol.
 ደህን ሕደራ f.p. and f.pol.
8. ደህንዶ አሎኻ፤ Are you well? m.s.
 ከመይ አሎኻ፤ How are you? m.s.
 (አሎኻ is conjugated)
9. ደህንዶ ቀኒኻ፤ How are you? (lit. How have you spent the week? This is used after a short time of not having seen someone.)
10. ይመስገን። ደህንዶ አሎኹም፤ I am fine. How are you? (lit. May he (God) be thanked; are you well?)
11. እግዚአብሔር ይመስገን። Let God be thanked (this reply is given in response to every greeting that asks about one's well-being, before the same greeting is repeated)
- መስገን Thank him (God)
 abbrev. of ይመስገን
 መስገኖ Thanks to him (God)
 abbrev. of ይመስገኖ
12. ስድራኻ ደህንዶ አለ።፤ Is your family well?
 Are your parents well?
13. ይመስገን፡ ደህን አለ።። Thank you, they are well.

B. Courteous Expressions

14. የቸንጥላይ *Thank you (lit, May God give to you for me)*
15. ንንዘብካ *You're welcome (lit, It is your possession.)*
16. ጽቡቕ *Good, fine*
17. እወ *Yes*
18. ሕራይ *All right, OK*
19. አይፋለይን *No (m.s.; conjugated)*
20. ይአክል *It is enough*
21. አቤት *Yes, sir (when called)*
22. በጃኻ *Please (conjugated)*
23. ይቕሬታ
ይቕረ በላለይ
ይቕረ በልላይ
ይቕረ በሉላይ
*I'm sorry; pardon me m.s.
pardon me f.s.
pardon me m.p.*
24. አይትሐዘለይ *Excuse me; forgive me (conjugated; lit, Don't hold it against me.)*

C. Expressions used in Visiting

25. መን እዩ ስምካ፤ *What is your name?*

26. ስመይ የሃንሰ እዩ። *My name is John.*
27. ከንደይ ቁልዑ አለዉኻ፤ *How many children do you have?*
28. ሐደ ቁልዓ አሎኒ።
ሐንቲ ቁልዓ አላትኒ። *I have one child (boy).
I have one child (girl).*
29. ክልተ ቁልዑ አለዉኒ። *I have two children.*
30. ቁልዑ የብለይን። *I don't have any children.*
31. ደቅኻ አበይ አለዉ፤ *Where are your children?*
32. ደቀይ ኣብ ገዛ አለዉ። *My children are at home.*
33. ደቀይ ናብ ቤት ትምህርቲ ከይደም። *My children went to school.*
34. ወደይ ኣብ ገዛ አሎ። *My son is at home.*
35. ከንደይ ዓመት ገይሩ፤ *How old is he?*
ከንደይ ዓመት ገይራ፤ *How old is she?*
36. ወዲ ከንደይ ዓመት እዩ፤ *How old is he? (polite)*
ጓል ከንደይ ዓመት እያ፤ *How old is she? (polite)*
37. ከንደይ ዓመት ጌርካ፤ *How old are you?*
38. እዚአቶምዶ ደቅኻ እዮም፤ *Are these your children?*
39. እወ ደቀይ እዮም። *Yes, they are my children.*
40. ደቀይ አይከኑኑን። *They are not my children.*
41. እቲ ወደይ እዩ። *That boy is my son.*

42. አቴላ፡ ጻል ጐረቤትና እያ። *That girl is our neighbor's daughter.*
43. ክንደይ አሕዋት አለዉኻ። *How many brothers do you have?*
44. ምሉእ ዕድሜኻዶ አብ አስመራ ተቐሚጥኻ። *Have you lived in Asmara all your life?*
45. ገዛ ተኸለ አበይ እዩ፤ እንዳ ተኸለ ገዛ አበይ እዩ፤ *Where does Tekle live?*
46. አቶ፡ ኮፍ በል
አተዊ፡ ኮፍ በሊ
አተዉ፡ ኮፍ በሉ
አተዋ፡ ኮፍ በላ
*Come in; sit down. m.s.
f.s.
m.pl. or m.pol.
f.pl. or f.pol.*
47. ጣይታዶ ትበልዕ አኻ። *Do you eat taita (a kind of bread)?*
48. አወ፡ ጣይታ እበልዕ እዩ። *Yes, I eat taita.*
49. ብላዕ
ብልዒ
ብልዑ
ብልዓ
*Eat. m.s. (used at table)
f.s.
m.pl. or m.pol.
f.pl. or f.pol.*
50. እበልዕ አሎኹ *I am eating.*
51. ጸጊበ *I'm satisfied. (food only)*
52. ሻሂ'ዶ ትሰቲ አኻ። *Do you drink tea?*
53. አወ፡ ሻሂ እሰቲ እዩ። *Yes, I drink tea.*
54. እቲ ማይ ፈሊሑ'ዶ፤ *Has the water boiled?*

55. ሻሂ አፍልሒ። *Boil the tea.*
56. ሻሂ ክነፍልሐልኩም። *We will make tea for you.*
57. ጥዑም *Very good! Delicious!
(should always be said)*
58. ጥዑም ይሃብኩም። *Thank you (the reply to ጥዑም; lit. May he (God) give you good things.*
59. ክጥዕም'ዶ ተፍቅደለይ፤ *May I taste it?*
60. እዚ ንምንታይ ይጠቅም፤ *What is this useful for?*
61. መጎጎ ንመሰንከቲ ይጠቅም። *The magogo is used for baking.*
62. ከመይ ከም ዚግበር አርእየኒ። *Show me how to do it.*
63. ገዛና ቀረባ እዩ። *Our house is nearby.*
64. ጐረባብቲ ኢና። *We are neighbors.*
65. ገዛኻ ቀረባ'ዶ እዩ፤ *Is your house near?*
66. ገዛይ ርሑቕ እዩ። *My house is far.*
67. ክኸይድ ፍቓድካ'ዶ እዩ፤ *May I go?*
68. ካልእ ምዓልቲ ክመጽእ እዩ። *I'll come another time.*
69. ዓርቢ'ዶ ናብ ገዛና ክትመጽእ ይጥዕመካ፤ *Would Friday be convenient for you to come to our house?*

70. ሎሚ ከመጽእ አይጥዕመንን እዩ። *It is not convenient for me to come today.*
71. ጽባሕ ከመጽእ ይጥዕመኒ እዩ። *It is convenient for me to come tomorrow*
- ጽባሕ ከኸይድ ይጥዕመኒ እዩ። *It is convenient for me to go tomorrow*
72. ሕጂ ናብ ገዛይ ክምለስ እዩ። *I will return to my house now.*
73. ትማሊ'ዶ ናብ ገለ ገዛ ኬድካ፤ *Did you go to any house yesterday?*
74. ምስ መን ኬድካ፤ *Whom did you go with?*
75. ምስ ዓርከይ ከይደ። *I went with my friend.*
76. አብቲ ገዛ እንታይ ጌርካ፤ *What did you do in the house?*
77. ምስቶም ሰብ ተላሊና። *We became acquainted with those people.*
78. ተረዲኡካ'ዶ፤ *Do you understand?*
79. ተረዲኡኒ
አስተውዒለ *I understand. (not conjugated)
I understand.*
80. አይተረድኣንን *I don't understand.
We don't understand.*
81. ትግርኛ'ዶ ትዛረብ ኢኻ፤ *Do you speak Tigrinya?*
82. ትግርኛ ብዙሕ አይዛረብን እዩ። *I don't speak much Tigrinya.*

83. ትግርኛ ክመሃር እደሊ አሎኹ። *I want to learn Tigrinya.*
84. እንግሊዝ እዛረብ እዩ። *I speak English.*
85. እንግሊዝ ክመሃር አይደልን እዩ። *I don't want to learn English.*
86. እንታይ ትብል አሎኻ፤ ድገሞ፤ *What are you saying? Repeat it.*
87. ቀስ በል። *Do it slowly.*
88. ቀስ ኢልካ ተዛረብ። *Speak slowly.*
89. እዚ እንታይ ይበሃል፤ *What is this called?*
90. ልክዕ ድዩ፤ *Is it correct?*
91. አንቢብካ'ዶ ትኸእል፤ *Can you read?*
92. አንቢብ አይክእልን እዩ። *I cannot read.*
93. እንግሊዝ ከንብብ እኸእል እዩ። *I can read English.*
94. ከንብብልካ'ዶ፤ *Shall I read to you?*
95. ረሲዔዮ። ድኣሪ ሕጂ ግና ክዝከር እዩ። *I forgot it, but after this I will remember it.*
96. መአስ መጸእካ፤ *When did you come?*
97. ቅድሚ ሰለስተ ሰሙን መጸኤ። *I came three weeks ago.*
98. ቅድሚ ክልተ ወርሒ መጸኤ። *I came two months ago.*

99. ዓድና ይሰማምዓኩም'ዶ አሎ። *Do you like our country?*
100. ካብ አየናይ ሃገር መጸእካ። *What country did you come from?*
101. ካብ አሜሪካ መጸኤ። *I came from America.*
102. ብባሕሪ መጸኤ። *I came by sea.*
103. ብነፋሪት መጸኤ። *I came by plane.*
104. ብሰለስተ ሰሙን አቲና። *It took three weeks for us to come.*
105. ተመርዲኻ'ዶ። *Are you married?*
106. እወ። ተመርዕዎ። *Yes, I am married.*
107. አይተመርዳኹን። *I am not married.*
108. እንታይ እዩ ስራሕካ። *What is your work?*
109. መምህር እዩ። *I'm a teacher.*
110. አላይት ሕሙማት እዩ። *I'm a nurse.*
111. ቃል እግዚአብሔር ክነግር መጸኤ። *I came to tell God's word.*
112. አባይ ምዉት እዩ። *My father is dead.*
113. ትማሊ *Yesterday.*
114. ሎሚ ንግሆ *This morning.*
115. ሎሚ ምሽት *This evening.*

116. ተጠንቀቅ *Be careful.*
117. ቀልጥፍ *Hurry up.*
118. ማኪና ደው አብላ። *Stop the car.*
119. ግደፍ *Leave it! Stop!*
120. አይትሐዞ *Don't take hold of it! Don't touch.*
121. ፈንዎ *Let it go. (an animal or moving object) m.s.*
ፈንዎ *Let it go. f.s.*
122. ስማዕ *Listen!*
123. ትሃዊኸ አሎኸ። *I'm in a hurry.*
124. በበይኑ እዩ *It's different. It's not the same.*
125. ምለሶ *Put it back.*
126. አቐምጦ *Put it down.*
127. አይተፈልጠን *It is not known.*
128. ተሰከመለይ ግዳ። *Carry this for me, please.*
129. ክሕግዘካ'ዶ። *May I help you?*
130. በጃኸ ሐግዘኒ *Please help me.*
131. ካብ አሥመራ መአስ ክትከይድ ኢኻ። *When will you leave from Asmara?*

132. ድሕሪ ሹዱሽተ ወርሐ ከኸይድ እዩ። *I will leave in six months.*
133. ናበይ ትኸይድ አሎኻ፤ *Where are you going?*
134. ከንደይ ወርሐ ከትጸንሕ ኢኻ፤ *How many months will you stay?*
135. ተማላኦ *Give me a ride.*
136. ሰፍራ የልቦን። *There is no room.*
137. ልማድና አይኮነን *It isn't our custom.*
138. እዚ ምግባር ሕማቕ እዩ። *To do this is bad.*
139. ስራሕ'ዶ ሒዝካ፤ *Are you busy? (lit. Is your work keeping you?)*
140. ጠምየ *I am hungry.*
ጠምየን *She is hungry. f.pol.*
ጠምዮም *They are hungry. m.p. or m.pol.*
141. ጠሚኻ'ዶ፤ *Are you hungry?*
142. ጸሚእካ'ዶ፤ *Are you thirsty?*
143. ጸሚኤ። ጸሚኡ። *I am thirsty. He is thirsty.*
144. ሐሚምካ ዲኻ፤ *Are you sick? m.s.*
ሐሚምኪ ዲኺ፤ *Are you sick? f.s.*
145. ሐሚመ *I am sick.*
146. ጉንፋዕ ሒዙኒ። *I have a cold.*

147. ይሕሸኒ *I am better.*
148. ተጸለእዎ *He is a little sick.*
149. ሐዊኻ'ዶ፤ *Are you better?*
150. ደኺምካ ዲኻ፤ *Are you tired? m.s.*
ደኺምኪ ዲኺ፤ *Are you tired? f.s.*
151. ደኺመ *I am tired.*
152. ቁሪሪ *I am cold.*
153. ሎሚ ሃሩር አሎ። *It is hot today.*
154. ሎሚ ቀራር አሎ። *It is cold today.*
155. ተሐጉሰ *I'm glad*
156. አብዩ *He refused.*
አብያ *She refused.*
አብዮም *They refused. m.p.*
አብዮን *They refused. f.p.*
157. ይመስለኒ። *It seems to me.*
158. “ሕራይ” ኢሉ። *He said “OK.”*
159. ሕጂ ኸይድ እሞ፤ *Go now, and return tomorrow.*
ጽባሕ ተመለስ። *(addressed to m.s.)*
160. ደሓር ግበሮ። *Do it later. m.s.*
ደሓር ግበርዮ። *Do it later. f.s.*
161. ደሓር ይሕሸኒ። *Later is better for me.*
162. ሐደሐደ ግዜ *Sometimes.*

163. ኩሉ ሳዕ *Always.*
164. ሐደ ጥራይ አሎ። *There is only one.*
165. ግዜ የብለይን። *I don't have time.*
166. ተስፋ እገብር።
ተስፋ አሎኝ። *I'm hopeful., I hope so.*
167. ክርእዮ'ዶ፤ *May I see it?*
168. ምስ'ቲ ሰብ አፋልጠኝ። *Introduce me to that person.*
169. ክስእለካ'ዶ፤
ክስእለኪ'ዶ፤ *May I take your picture? m.s.
May I take your picture? f.s.*
170. ናብ ዓደይ ክሰዶ ደልየ። *I want to send it to my
country.*
171. አብዚ ውሽጢ መካብብያ፤
ክንደይ ስድራ አለዉ፤ *How many families live
together in this compound?*
172. ክልተ ስድራ አለዉ። *There are two families.*
173. መገዲ አዲስ አበባ ክንደይ
መዓልቲ የኸይድ፤ *How many days does it take
to go to Addis Ababa?*
174. ዓድኻ ብእግሪ ክንደይ
ሰዓት የኸይድ፤ *How many hours does it take
to go to your village by foot?*
175. መዓስ ክትበጽሐና አኻ፤ *When will you visit us?*
176. ሰንበት ክበጽሓኩም እየ። *Sunday I will visit you.*

C. Household Expressions

177. ውዑይ ማይ አምጽእ። *Bring hot water.*
178. ዝሐሉል ማይ አምጽእ። *Bring cold water.*
179. ነቲ ቁልዓ ምስ ተንሰኤ
አምጽእዮ። *Bring the lad when he wakes
up. (addressed to f.s.)*
180. ምስ ተንሰኤት ጸውዕኝ። *When she wakes up, call me.*
181. ነቲ ሕጻን ሕጸብዮ። *Wash the baby.*
182. እግሪ'ዶ ተኸላ፤ *Can she walk?*
183. ክዳን ቀይርሉ። *Change the [child's] clothes.*
184. ክዳውንቲ ሕጸብዮ።
ክዳውንቲ ሰጥሕዮ። *Wash the clothes.
Let the clothes air dry.*
185. ክዳውንቲ አስታርር።
ክዳውንቲ አስታርሪ።
ክዳውንቲ አስታርሩ።
ክዳውንቲ አስታርራ። *Iron the clothes. m.s.
f.s.
m.p.
f.p.*
186. ማይ ሰኸትቲ። *Put the water on the fire. (the
verb is only for liquids)*
187. እቲ ማይ አውርዲዮ ካብ እቶን። *Take the water off
the fire.*
188. ድንሽ አብስሊ። *Cook the potatoes. (f.s.)*
189. ሰደቓ አዳልዉ። *Set the table. (m.s.)*
190. ሸሐውንቲ ሕጸቢ። *Wash the dishes. (f.s.)*

191. ገዛ አጽርዮ። *Clean the house.* (m.s.)
192. ምድሪ ቤት ኮሰትር። *Sweep the floor.* (m.s.)
193. ምድሪ ቤት ወልውሊ። *Wash the floor.* (f.s.)
194. ነቲ መናብር ንገፎ። *Dust the chairs.* (m.s.)
195. ወልዓዮ or ኣብርሃዮ። *Turn on [the light].* (m.s.)
196. እጎድዮ or ሐዊ እጎዲ። *Light the fire.* (f.s.)
197. አጥፍአዮ። *Turn off [light or fire].* (m.s.)
198. ማይ ዕጸውዮ። *Turn off the water.* (m.s.)
199. ማይ ክፈትዮ። *Turn on the water.* (f.s.)
200. ብምንታይ ተሰሪሑ፤ *How is it made?*
201. ባዕልኻ'ዶ ሰሪሕካዮ። *Have you made it yourself?*
202. ክዳውንተይ ብማኪና እዩ ተሰፍዶ። *My clothes are sewn by machine.*
203. እንታይ አብሊዖምኹም፤ *What did they give you to eat?*
204. ዝግኒ አብሊዖሙና። *They gave us zigeni.*
205. ሻሂ አስትዮሙና። *They gave us tea.*
206. እንታይ ዓይነት ጸብሒ ቀሪቦሙልካ፤ *What kind of sauce did they prepare for you?*
207. ሽሮ ቀሪቦሙለይ። *They prepared shiro for me.*

E. At the Market

208. እኸሊ አበይ እዩ ዝሸየጥ፤ *Where is grain sold?*
209. እቲ እንታይ ዕይነት እኸሊ እዩ፤ *What kind of grain is that?*
210. አብ ክረምቲ ክንደይ ወርሒ አሎ፤ *How many months is the rainy season?*
211. ክርቢት ግዝአለይ። *Buy matches for me.*
212. ጽባሕ ክኸፍለካ እዮ። *I will pay you tomorrow.*

F. In the School

213. ሰቕ በል or ትም በል። *Be quiet.*
214. ደው በል። *Stand up.*
215. አብ ሰሌዳ ጽሐፍ። *Write on the chalkboard.*
216. ሰሌዳ ወልውል። *Clean the chalkboard.*
217. አቃጭላ። *Ring it [the bell].*
218. ርሳሰይ'ዶ ክጸርብ፤ *May I sharpen my pencil?*
219. ተመሃሮ አብ ቤት ትምህርቲ ይመሃሩ። *The students learn in the school.*
220. ሰዓት ዐስርተው ሐደን ርብዕን ትምህርቲ አሎና። *At eleven-fifteen we have class.*
221. መን ምሂሩካ፤ *Who taught you?*

222. አቶ ገብረሀይወት ምሂሩኒ። *Ato Gebre-Hiwet taught me.*
223. አበይ ተማረርካ፤ *Where did you go to school?*
224. አብ አየናይ ክፍሊ ትምህር አሎኻ፤ *What grade are you in?*
225. ታስዓይ ክፍሊ ምስ ወዳእኩ መምህር ክኸውን እየ። *When I finish ninth grade, I'll become a teacher.*
226. ንጸሊ። *Let us pray.*
227. ነዚ ጥቕሲ አጽንፃዮ። *Memorize (m.s.) this verse.*
228. አየናይ መዝሙር ክንዝምር፤ *Which song shall we sing?*

G. At Clinic

229. እንታይ የሕመካ፤ *What's wrong with you?*
230. መአስ ጀሚሩካ፤ *When did it begin?*
231. አበይ የቕንዝወካ፤ *Where do you have pain?*
232. ረስኒ'ዶ አሎካ፤ *Do you have a fever?*
233. የውጽአካ'ዶ፤ *Do you have diarrhea?*
234. የምልሰካ'ዶ፤ *Do you have vomiting?*

H. Greetings for Special Occasions

235. ርሑስ በዓል ፈሲካ ይግበረልካ። *Happy Easter! (conjugated)*
236. ርሑስ በዓል ልደት ይግበረልካ። *Merry Christmas! (conjugated)*
237. ርሑስ አውደ ዓመት ይግበረልካ። *Happy New Year! (conjugated)*
238. አሕቢሩ። *The same to you. lit Be united in this wish. (Reply to nos. 235, 236, and 237)*
239. እግዚአብሔር ይምሐርካ። *Get well soon. lit May God have mercy on you.*
240. ምሕረት የውርደልካ። *Get well soon. lit May mercy descend on you.*
241. እግዚአብሔር የጽንዕካ
or እግዚአብሔር የበርተዕካ
or እግዚአብሔር ጽንዓት ይሃብኩም። *May God strengthen you (to someone in mourning; sg.). (the same, pl.)*
242. አይትሕሰሙ።
or ሕሰም አይትርከቡ። *(Reply to no. 241. lit May you not find evil.)*
243. መገዲ ደሐን ይውሰድካ። *Have a good trip. (m.s.) (can be conjugated)*
244. ብደሐን እቶ። *Bon voyage.*
245. እንቋዕ ብደሐን መጻእካ። *Welcome. lit Wonderful that you have arrived safely.*

246. እንቋዕ ብድሐን ጸናሕካ። *Glad to see you.* (Reply to no. 245. lit *Wonderful that you have stayed well.*)
247. እግዚአብሔር የዕብዮ። *May God make him grow* (to parents of a newborn or at baptism).
248. አሜን። *Amen.* This is used to reply to all expressions of good will.