

Lesson 8: Imperative, Infinitive, and Numerals

Part 1:

All the stems and conjugations have imperatives, whose function is largely analogous to the imperative's function in our language, that is, commands.

The forms of the imperatives usually are based on the 2nd-person forms of the imperfect verb. Essentially, they are shortened versions of these forms; the prefixes and suffixes are usually truncated. Thus, from the G-2fs imperfect form תִּכְתְּבִי we get the G-f.s. imperative כְּתֹבִי. The *taw* prefix has been eliminated and the final *nun* has also been eliminated. Furthermore, because the stress falls on the second syllable, the original /u/ vowel has been preserved.

	G-stem	D-stem	H-stem(Haphel) and (Aphel)
m.s.	כְּתֹב	כְּתֹב	הִכְתֵּב / אִכְתֵּב
f.s.	כְּתֹבִי	כְּתֹבִי	הִכְתֵּבִי / אִכְתֵּבִי
m.p.	כְּתֹבוּ	כְּתֹבוּ	הִכְתֵּבוּ / אִכְתֵּבוּ
f.p.	כְּתֹבְהוּ	כְּתֹבְהוּ	הִכְתֵּבְהוּ / אִכְתֵּבְהוּ

Notice that the m.s., m.p., and f.p. imperatives in the D- and H/A-stems are identical to the respective perfect forms of the D- and H/A-stems.

Part 2.

All the stems and conjugations also have infinitives which function in a manner similar to English infinitives.

Their forms are slightly different. In the G-stem, the infinitives have a *mem* prefix, while in the other stems they do not.

G-stem	D-stem	H-stem / A-stem
מִכְתֵּב	כְּתֹבָה	הִכְתֵּבָה / אִכְתֵּבָה

Notice, now, that the G-stem is the only stem that has a *mem* prefix on the infinitive. Contrast this to the way participles are formed in each of these stems, where the D- and H/A-stems are the ones that carry a *mem* prefix. Thus, if a verbal form has a *mem* prefix it is either a G-stem infinitive or a D-, H/A-stem participle.

Part 3:
Numbers
Cardinal Numbers 1-10

	Used with masc. nouns	Used with fem. nouns
1	חַד	חַדָּה
2	תְּרִין / cstr. תְּרִי	תְּרִתִּין / cstr. תְּרִתִּי
3	תְּלָתָה	תְּלָת
4	אַרְבַּעָה	אַרְבַּע
5	חַמְּשָׁה	חַמֵּשׁ
6	שִׁתָּה	שִׁת or שֵׁת
7	שִׁבְעָה	שִׁבַּע
8	תְּמַנְיָה	תְּמַנָּה
9	תְּשַׁעָה	תְּשַׁע
10	עֶשְׂרָה	עֶשֶׂר

One curiosity that Aramaic shares with other Semitic languages is that the numbers 3-10 that are masculine *in form* modify feminine nouns and numbers that are feminine *in form*, modify masculine nouns. Thus, to express “seven kings” one would write: מַלְכִין שִׁבְעָה or מַלְכִין שִׁבְעָה (the numeral can come either before or after the noun it modifies). But, to express “seven queens” one would write: מַלְכִין שִׁבַּע or מַלְכִין שִׁבַּע. Although the cardinal numbers are like adjectives, in that they modify nouns, they do not occur in the emphatic/determined state and only rarely appear in the construct state before the noun.

The “teens” do not occur in Biblical Aramaic, but we may conjecture the following forms, together with the multiples of ten, which have only a single form for both masculine and feminine nouns.

Cardinal Numbers 11-70

	Used with masc. nouns	Used with fem. nouns
11	חַד עֶשֶׂר	חַדַּת עֶשְׂרָה
12	תְּרִי עֶשֶׂר	תְּרִתִּי עֶשְׂרָה
13	תְּלָתַת עֶשֶׂר	תְּלָת עֶשְׂרָה
20		עֶשְׂרִין
23 (literally, 20 and 3)	עֶשְׂרִין וְתְּלָתָה	עֶשְׂרִין וְתְּלָת
30		תְּלָתִין
40		אַרְבַּעִין
50		חַמְּשִׁין
60		שִׁתִּין

64	שְׁתִּין וְאַרְבַּעַה	שְׁתִּין וְאַרְבַּע
70		שְׁבַעִין
80		תְּמַנִּין
90		תְּשַׁעִין
100		מֵאָה
200		מֵאֲתִין (This is a dual form.)
277 (200 and 70 and 7)	מֵאֲתִין וְשַׁבְּעִין וְשִׁבְעָה	מֵאֲתִין וְשַׁבְּעִין וְשִׁבְעָה
300		תְּלַת מֵאָה
1000		אַלְפִי

To express what corresponds to English “first”, “second”, “third”, “fourth”, “fifth”, etc., one uses ordinal numbers. In Aramaic these have the “gentilic ending” /-āy/, except the word for “second”. Like for the cardinal numbers, there are different forms for masculine and feminine nouns. Usually these appear after the noun they modify, like ordinary adjectives. Also like adjectives, the ordinal numbers appear in an absolute and emphatic/determined state. Furthermore, like other adjectives, these can be used alone as nouns and can appear in plural forms, to mean “the first ones”, “the second ones”, etc. (Due to the lack of evidence, many of these forms are educated guesses.)

Ordinal Numbers 1-5

	Used with masc. nouns	Used with fem. nouns
1	קְדָמִי / קְדָמְיָא / pl det.: קְדָמְיָא	קְדָמְיָהּ / קְדָמִיתָהּ
2	תְּנַנִּין / תְּנַנְיָא	תְּנַנְיָהּ / תְּנַנִּיתָהּ
3	תְּלִיתִי / תְּלִיתְיָא or תְּלִיתִיָּא	תְּלִיתְיָהּ / תְּלִיתִיתָהּ
4	רְבִיעִי / רְבִיעְיָא or רְבִיעִיָּא	רְבִיעְיָהּ / רְבִיעִיתָהּ
5	חֲמִישִׁי / חֲמִישְיָא or חֲמִישִׁיָּא	חֲמִישְיָהּ / חֲמִישִׁיתָהּ

Notice that like gentilic nouns, there are cases where the original *yodh* of the form has been replaced by *'aleph*.

Exercise 8a.

Write in Aramaic the following phrases. (Remember that the shorter form of of the numbers 3-10 modifies masculine nouns, the longer form modifies feminine nouns):

one book

two letters from two kings

three records from four scribes

five years in six countries (i.e., lands)
seven palaces for eight kingdoms
these nine slaves for ten cities
eleven men from twelve nations
thirteen houses

the first son
the first kingdom
the second city
the third man
the fourth animal

Exercise 8b.

Read the following augmented version of Daniel 7:1-7. (The text is augmented in several ways. It includes in parentheses words that are not in the original biblical manuscripts, but which help make sense of the Aramaic. Some confusing words have been eliminated, which are indicated with ellipses. Furthermore, graphic inconsistencies in the representation are corrected.) Consult the glossary at the end of the lessons for words you do not know. There you will find verbs listed under the G-3ms perfect form and adjectives listed in the m.s. abs. state.

1.

בְּשֵׁנַת חֲדָה לְבַלְאֲשַׁצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל דְּנִיֵּאל חֵלֶם חֲזוֹה
וְחֲזוֹי רֵאֲשֵׁה עַל־מִשְׁכָּבָה (יְדַחֲלֵנָה)
בְּאֲדִיִן חֵלְמָא כְּתַב . . .

2.

עָנָה דְּנִיֵּאל וְאָמַר חֲזוֹה הוּיִת בְּחֲזוֹי עַם־לִילְיָא
וְאָרוּ אַרְבַּע רוּחֵי שָׁמַיָא מְגִיחִין לְיָמָא רַבָּא

3.

וְאַרְבַּע חֵיוֹן רַבְרָבִין סֶלְקִין מִן־יָמָא שְׁגִיִן דָּא מִן־דָּא

4.

קְדָמָתָא כְּאֲרִיָּה וְגַפִּיִן דִּי־נִשְׂר לָהּ
חֲזוֹה הוּיִת עַד דִּי־מָרִיטוּ גַפִּיָּה
וְנִטְיִלַת מִן־אַרְעָא וְעַל־רִגְלֵיִן כְּאֲנָשׁ הִקְיַמַת וְלִבָּב אָנָּשׁ יְהִיב לָהּ

5.

וְאָרוּ חֵיוָה אַחֲרֵי תִנְיָנָה דְמִיָּה לְדָב
וְלִשְׁטֵר-חַד הַקִּימַת וְתִלַּת עַלְעִין בְּפִמָּה בֵּין שְׁנֵיָה
וְכֵן אֲמַרִין לָהּ קוּמִי אֲכָלִי בְּשָׂר שְׁנֵיָה

6.

בְּאַתֵּר דְּנָה חֲזָה הוּיַת וְאָרוּ אַחֲרֵי בְנִמֵּר
וְלָהּ גַּפִּין אַרְבַּע דִּי-עוּף עַל-גַּבִּיָּה
וְאַרְבַּעָה רֵאשִׁין לְחֵיוָתָא וְשִׁלְטָן יְהִיב לָהּ

7.

בְּאַתֵּר דְּנָה חֲזָה הוּיַת בְּחֻזִּי לִילְיָא
וְאָרוּ חֵיוָה רְבִיעֵיָה דְחִילָהּ וְאִימְתָנִי וְתַקִּיפָא יְתִירָא
וְשִׁנִּין דִּי-פְרוּז לָהּ רַבְרָבִין אֲכָלָהּ וּמְדַקָּה
וְשִׁאָרָא בְּרִגְלֵיָה רַפְסָה וְהִיא מְשַׁנְיָה מִן-כָּל-חֵיוָתָא
דִּי קְדָמֶיהָ וְקַרְנִין עֶשֶׂר לָהּ

Consider the following:

In the first line of verse 1, the last word, חֲזָה, is the G-3ms perfect from the root חזזה (“to see”) and is translated “he saw.”

In the second line of verse 1, the last word, (יְדַחֵל לָהּ), is a D-3mp imperfect, from the root דחל (“to frighten”). The final letter is a pronoun suffix, indicating the object of the verb; here it is a 3ms pronoun, “him”, referring to Daniel.

In the first line of verse 2, the predicate is made up of a participle (חֲזָה) and a G-1cs perfect form of “to be” (הוּיַת), resulting in the translation “I saw” or, “I was watching.” This combination of participle plus a perfect form of “to be” is rather common in this passage and indicates a continuous action in the past.

In the second line of verse 2, note the vowel under the *waw* conjunction.

In the first line of verse 4, there are two clauses, both lack a verbal predicate. The predicate is, in each case, a prepositional phrase.

In the second line of verse 4, the verb מְרִיטוּ is a G-stem passive perfect, 3mp.

In the third line of verse 4, the verb נְטִילַת is a G-stem passive perfect, 3fs, while the verb יְהִיב is a G-stem passive perfect, 3ms. The noun רִגְלִין is “dual” in form. In other words, it is not a singular noun, nor a plural, but indicates something that appears as a pair. This form is used with several nouns that come in pairs.

Originally every noun would have had a dual form, though this was no longer the

case by the time the Book of Daniel was written. Only certain nouns had a dual form, mostly body parts.

In the third line of verse 5, the plural form of the active participle **ܘܢܘܩܪܝܢ** is here used in an impersonal way, and translated as if it were a passive verb: “It was told . . .” This is a relatively common feature of Biblical Aramaic syntax. When you find a m.p. participle or a 3mp perfect or imperfect verb with no clear subject, then you can assume an impersonal subject, and translate the verb as a passive in English. Often, in these cases, whatever is the grammatical object of the verb in Biblical Aramaic will become the subject in your translation.

In the fifth line of verse 7, the word for “horns,” **ܩܪܢܝܢ**, is in the dual.

Verbs:

ܠܗܘܐ = H-stem “to stir up” (H-part., f.s., **ܡܘܩܪܝܢ**)

ܕܩܪܩ = G-stem: “to be shattered”, H-stem “to crush” (H-part. **ܩܪܩܝܢ**)

ܗܘܐ = “to be” (“I was” = **ܗܘܝܐ**)

ܚܘܐ = “to see”

Note how a participle is used together with a perfect form of the **ܗܘܐ**.

ܩܘܡ = G-stem “to arise”, H-stem “to set up,” “to install”, Hp-stem “to be set up”
(**ܩܘܡܝܢ**)

Particles:

ܠ = “to”, but also ownership, “belonging to”