

Primer

This document contains examples to illustrate the grammar of Sim-Arabian and to demonstrate the process of translation. A detailed description of the grammar is contained in the Reference Grammar document, and a brief “dictionary” is contained in the Vocabulary document.

Grammar Examples

(Note: The underlining is not part of the spelling – it is used to call attention to the part of the word being discussed.)

I. Basic Sentence Word Order

The basic sentence structure is first the verb, then the subject, then the object.

ya[^]aDiD alkalb alrajul.

(bite) (dog) (man)

The dog bites the man.

II. Nouns

A. Definiteness (“the”)

To make a noun “definite,” prefix it with al.

kalb

a dog

alkalb

the dog

B. Gender and Number

The “base” noun is masculine singular.

To form the feminine singular, add the suffix: e

To form the masculine plural, add the suffix: Un

To form the feminine plural, add the suffix: At

yadaras alTAlib aldars.

(study) (student) (lesson)

The (male) student studies the lesson.

tadaras alTAlibe aldars.

The (female) student studies the lesson.

yadarasUn alTAlibUn aldars.

The (male) students study the lesson.

yadarasna alTAlibAt aldars.

The (female) students study the lesson.

III. Adjectives

Adjectives follow the nouns they modify. If the noun is definite, then the adjective is definite too (it is prefixed with al). Adjectives also must agree in gender and number.

ya[^]aDid kalb SaRIr rajul kabIr.

(bite) (dog) (small) (man) (big)

A small dog bites a big man.

ya[^]aDid al**kalb** al**SaRIr** al**rajul** al**kabIr**.

The small dog bites the big man.

IV. Pronouns

Subject pronouns (he, she) are separate words. They are optional, because the information is contained in the inflection of the verb, but if they are present they precede the verb. Object pronouns (him, her) are suffixes which follow the verb (underlined in the examples below).

yaHababha.

(he-loves) (her)

He loves her.

huwa yaHababha.

(he) (loves) (her)

He loves her.

hiya taHababhu.

She loves him.

*anA *aHababki.

I love you.

hum yaHababUnI.

They love me.

V. Possessives

There is no exact equivalent for the word “of.” The possessive is shown by the suffix: i (somewhat like the English: ’s). This suffix is the final suffix added to the noun. The possessor always follows the thing possessed. If the thing possessed is definite (as indicated by the prefix: al) then the al is moved to the possessor.

albait
the house

bait alrajuli
the man’s house (the house of the man)

bait alrajulUNi
the men’s house

TAwile baiti alrajuli
the man’s house’s table

(note that al- prefixes only the last noun in the string.)

TAwile alrajuli alkabIre
The man’s big table.

TAwile alrajuli alkabIri
The big man’s table.

An adjective (if present) follows the entire string of possessors. It agrees with the gender, number and definiteness of the noun it modifies.

VI. Verbs

A. Conjugations

The list below illustrates the conjugations with the verb: to eat.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>*a</u> *akal | *akalt <u>u</u> |
| I am eating | I ate |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <u>t</u> <u>a</u> *akal <u>In</u> | *akalt <u>i</u> |
| You are eating | You ate |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| <u>ya</u> *akal | *akala <u>a</u> |
| He is eating | He ate |
| <u>ta</u> *akal | *akala <u>t</u> |
| She is eating | She ate |
| <u>ya</u> *akal <u>An</u> | *akala <u>A</u> |
| They (both) are eating | They (both) ate |
| <u>na</u> *akal | *akal <u>nA</u> |
| We are eating | We ate |
| <u>ta</u> *akal <u>Un</u> | *akal <u>tum</u> |
| You (all) are eating | You (all) ate |
| <u>ya</u> *akal <u>Un</u> | *akal <u>U</u> |
| They (men) are eating | They (men) ate |
| <u>ya</u> *akal <u>na</u> | *akal <u>na</u> |
| They (women) are eating | They (women) ate |

B. Tenses

The list below illustrates the compound tenses with the verb: to eat.

ya*akal = he eats (*present*)

qad ya*akal = he has eaten (*perfect*)

*akala = he ate (*past*)

qad *akala = he had eaten (*past perfect*)

kAna ya*akal = he was eating (*past imperfective*)

saUf ya*akal = he will eat (*future*)

C. Negation (“To be or not to be”)

There are multiple ways to show negation in Sim-Arabic. They are demonstrated in the examples below.

yakaWun alrajul jaU^An.
 (to be) (man) (hungry)
 The man is hungry.

yalaYis alrajul jaU^An.
 (not to be)
 The man is not hungry.

*akala alrajul alKubz.
 (ate) (man) (bread)
 The man ate the bread.

lA *akala alrajul alKubz.
 The man did not eat the bread.

*akala alrajul Rair alKubz.
 The man ate something other than bread (literally: “non-bread”).

VII. Questions

Here are a few examples of how to express questions in Sim-Arabian.

caribat al*imra*ae alHalIb.
 (drink) (woman) (milk)
 The woman drank the milk.

hal caribat al*imra*ae alHalIb?
 Did the woman drink the milk?

matY caribat al*imra*ae alHalIb?
 When did the woman drink the milk?

man caribat alHalIb?
 Who drank the milk?

Sample Translations

A few sample translations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh are given below. The step-by-step process shows how one might translate them from Sim-Arabic.

The first Hidden Word

Original Arabic

يَا ابْنَ الرُّوحِ

فِي أَوَّلِ الْقَوْلِ اْمَلِكِ قَلْبًا جَيِّدًا حَسَنًا مُنِيرًا لِتَمَلِّكَ مُلْكًا دَائِمًا بَاقِيًا أَزَلًا قَدِيمًا.

Sim-Arabic

yA *ibn alrUhi!

fI *awwal alqaul malak qalb jayyid Hasan munIr litamalakIn mulk
dA*imAN bAqI *azal qadIm.

Step 1: Break out prefixes and suffixes and inflections

yA *ibn al-rUh-i!

fI *awwal al-qaul malak qalb jayyid Hasan munIr li-ta-malak-In
mulk dA*imAN bAqI *azal qadIm.

Step 2: Gloss English meanings (look the words up in dictionary)

yA *ibn al-rUh-i!

O son the spirit of
DEF.

fI *awwal al- qaul malak qalb jayyid Hasan munIr
in first the utterance possess heart good kindly radiant
DEF. IMPERATIVE

li-ta-malak-In mulk dA*imAN bAqI *azal qadIm.
for possess dominion always unending eternal old.
2ND PERS.-SING.- PRESENT (YOU)

Step 3: Modify the word order (Sim-Arabic to English)

O son of the spirit!

In the first utterance: Possess a good, kindly, radiant heart, for you to possess an unending, eternal, old dominion, always.

Step 4: Revise into beautiful English

O son of spirit!

This is the first utterance: Possess a good, kindly and radiant heart, so that you may always possess an unending, eternal and ancient dominion.

(As you can see, if compared to the authorized translation, this is not as good, but it comes close, and it allows you to appreciate the original.)

Authorized Translation

O Son of Spirit!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

The Short Obligatory Prayer

Original Arabic

أَشْهَدُ يَا إِلَهِي بِأَنَّكَ خَلَقْتَنِي لِعِرْفَانِكَ وَعِبَادَتِكَ، أَشْهَدُ فِي هَذَا الْحِينِ بِعَجْزِي وَقُوَّتِكَ وَضَعْفِي وَأَقْتِدَارِكَ
وَقَفْرِي وَعَنَائِكَ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْقَيُّومُ.

Sim-Arabic

*acahid yA *ilhI bi*anna KalaqtinI li^irfAnka wa^abAdka, *acahid
fI haXA alHIn bi^ajzI waquwweka waDa^fI wa*iqtidArka wafaqrI
waRanA*ka, lA yakaWun *ilh *illa *anta almuhaimin alqayyUm.

Step 1: Break out prefixes and suffixes and inflections

*a-cahid yA *ilh-I bi-*anna Kalaq-ti-nI li-^irfAn-ka
wa-^abAd-ka, *a-cahid fI haXA al-HIn bi-^ajz-I wa-quwwe-ka
wa-Da^f-I wa-*iqtidAr-ka wa-faqr-I wa-RanA*-ka, lA ya-kaWun *ilh
*illa *anta al-muhaimin al-qayyUm.

Step 2: Gloss English meanings (look the words up in dictionary)

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------|
| *a-cahid | yA *ilh-I | bi- | *anna |
| testify | O God | my | that |
| 1 ST PERS.-SING.-PRESENT (I) | | PREP. FOR | cahid |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------|-------------------|
| Kalaq-ti- | nI li-^irfAn- | ka | wa-^abAd-ka, |
| create | me for knowledge | your | and worship your, |
| 2 ND PERS.-SING-PAST (YOU) | | | |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| *a-cahid | fI haXA al-HIn bi- | ^ajz- I |
| testify | in this the time (to) | weakness my |
| 1 ST PERS.-SING.-PRESENT (I) | DEF. | PREP. FOR |

wa-quwwe-ka wa-Da^f-I wa-*iqtidAr-ka wa-faqr- I wa-RanA*-ka,
and strength your and frailty my and power your and poverty my and wealth your,

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| lA ya-kaWun | *ilh *illa *anta |
| no/not be/exist | God except you |
| 3 RD PERS.MASC-SING.-PRESENT (HE) | 2 ND PERS.MASC.-SING. |

al-muhaimin al-qayyUm.
the protector the everlasting.
DEF. DEF.

Step 3: Modify the word order (Sim-Arabic to English)

I testify - O my God - that you created me for your knowledge and your worship, I testify - in this time - (to) my weakness and your strength and my frailty and your power and my poverty and your wealth, no God exists except you the protector the everlasting.

Step 4: Revise into beautiful English

I testify, O my God, that Thou created me for knowing and worshipping Thee; I testify, at this moment, to my weakness and to Thy might, to my frailty and to Thy power, and to my poverty and to Thy wealth; there is no God except Thee, the Protector, the Everlasting.

(As you can see, once again, if compared to the authorized translation, this is not as good, but it comes close, and it allows you to appreciate the original.)

Authorized Translation

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth.

There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.