

## **LANGUAGE:**

The Armenian language is very difficult to learn well, mainly because it includes a number of sounds that are not used in English and are hard for English speakers to either hear or say. Sentence structure is also a little different. However, a number of useful phrases are not difficult to learn, and Armenian hosts are generally pleased when you make some effort to learn a few words of the local language.

**Barev** is an all-purpose greeting, equivalent to “hello”, useful at any time of day.

**Bari luys** (pronounced lo-ees) means “Good morning”.

**Bari yereko** (yeh-RE-ko) means “Good afternoon/evening”.

On departing in the evening, **bari gisher** (gi-SHER) means “Good night”.

The formal word for “yes” is **ayo** (ah-yo), though in casual conversation people say **ha**, much as we would say “yeah” or “uh-huh”.

The formal word for “no” is **voch** (pronounced “vutch”, as in “Butch”), but in casual conversation, Armenians are more likely to say **che**, literally, “it is not.”

**Ch** – is a negating prefix. For example, “I am” is **em**, “I am not” is **chem**.

**Vontses?** (Voonces) and **inchpeses?** Can both mean “how are you”.

An appropriate answer is **lav em** (run together as “lahvem”), which means “I am well” or **shat lav**, “very well”. (**lav**, a useful word, can mean “good” or “well”).

The formal word for “thank you” is **schnorakalutyun**, but even Armenians tire of saying all that, so they mostly say **mersi** (not like mercy, but mersee, as in French).

The formal word for “goodbye” is **tsetesutyun** (tsuh-tay-suit-yoon), but most folks say something like **hajokh**.

**Inch** means “what”, and it’s not impolite to use it.

**Inch e sa?** Means “what’s that?”

**Inch ka ch’ka?** (more commonly just **inch ch’ka**) means “what’s up” (literally, what is there and isn’t there?).

**Inchpes e ko annune?** (a-noon.eh) is useful for “what is your name?”.

And you can say **‘Im annune e ...** for “My name is....”

The word for “I” is **yes**, which is rather confusing. Fortunately, it’s rarely used in casual conversation. You could say **yes uzum em...** (oo-ZOOM-em) for “I want” (literally, I am wanting”), but **uzum em** is the normal expression.

A few other helpful words or expressions:

**Neretzek indz** (eents) – “Excuse me” or **kenerek** (k’nerek) – Sorry!

**Khentrem** – (l’nTREM) “please” – is also used for “you’re welcome.”

**Khentir che ka** (formal) or **harts che ka** (informal, pronounced “hots ch’ka”).- “no problem”.

**Ays** (pronounced “ice”) can mean “this” or “these.”

**Ayn** can mean “that” or “Those”.

**Uzum em genel ays...** “I want to buy this...” (Pointing works just as well).

**Unek...**? “Do you have?”

At some point you will be **shat hok’nats** (shot hoke-nahts) – very tired.”

If you’re stuffed with food and can’t eat any more, you can say **kusht!** (koosht).

And, it’s always helpful to know the terms **zuk’aran** (toilet) and **logaran** (Bathroom).

Learning to count in Armenian isn’t very difficult, but shop owners always have a calculator on hand, and will punch in the number for you to see.

Contributed by Tony Cartledge.