



A JOURNEY ETHCED IN TIME



I was born on October 11/1963 G.C and raised in Addis Ababa, spending my early childhood time walking between Abinet and Merkato, places that deeply shaped my outlook and values. Some of my most vivid memories are from those early years, learning from Fidel to Dawit at St. Raguel Church Kes Timiht Bet. I still remember running beside my father in the early mornings and late afternoons/evenings on our roving between his work place and our home.

Alongside my elementary and high school studies, I often spent my time by my father's side, learning the craft of tailoring and assisting him at his workplace near St. Raguel Church and the Grand Mosque. Those experiences taught me the values of simplicity, hard work, fairness, togetherness, and pride in one's craft. I sometimes smile thinking that, had I not joined Alemaya, I might have become a tailor instead of a water engineer—and truthfully, I would have worn that title with pride. Perhaps I would have sewn Eje Tebab and Sarian for Asse, who admires cultural dresses. Who knows—maybe there's still a chance, as I haven't completely forgotten the art of tailoring.

After completing my high school education at Kolfe Comprehensive, I joined Alemaya along with Jemal Hassen, Etagegn Bekele as well as Betre Tsadik Mezgebu, and one lady (sorry, forgot her name) who were enrolled in the STTP program. My memories of Alemaya remain deeply etched in my heart.

After graduation, I joined the Coffee Plantation Development Corporation together with Dr. Keju, Kumsa, Yishak Beredo (a special student) and others. That chapter of my life was truly special. Jimma became my second home—a place where I met genuine, lifelong friends who became like family.

Among many blessings, I always thank God for the privilege of sharing a home with Jemal Hassen—my schoolmate since seventh grade, whom we fondly call **Arebu** and Kebede Mengistu during our bachelor days in Jimma. Those were some of the best years of my life, filled with laughter, challenges, and endless dreams.

It was also in Jimma that I met my beloved wife, Mullu Guluma. Arebu stood by my side as one of my best men at our wedding, and I had the honor of doing the same for him when he married Jemilla. Life has a beautifully poetic way of weaving such moments, doesn't it?

I pursued two M.Sc. studies in Germany, specializing in Water Resource Management and Economics for Engineers. During this time, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Melaku Ayele and Zeru Zegeye at different occasions. After returning home, I served in various Ministries and Development Organizations in different capacities, primarily within the Agriculture and Rural WaSH sectors. One of the major milestones in my professional journey has been my involvement in the rural WaSH sector through my current role as Water and Agricultural Growth Advisor at the Embassy of Finland. In close collaboration with the Regional States, we have reached more than five million rural residents through the "Community-Led Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (COWASH)" Programme.

This joint initiative empowers communities to construct and manage their own WaSH schemes. The project is now concluding its fourth phase and preparing for the fifth, with implementation across eight Regional States and 104 woredas. My key contribution has been in strengthening the partnership between the Governments of Ethiopia and Finland, as well as providing strategic guidance and oversight on the programme's core activities at the macro level.

Dear my Alemayans, looking back, my journey feels like a mosaic woven with faith, friendship, love, and service. From Kolfe to Alemaya, from Jimma to Germany and back again — each place, each person, each memory has shaped who I am. And through it all, I remain grateful — for the roads I've traveled, the people I've met, and the life that continues to unfold, beautifully and poetically, in God's own time.



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Gezahegn Alemu Tadesse

Links for further amusement:

[Poem Merkato by the late Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin.flv - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uXWzXWzXWz)

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www.cowash.org

