

R&W - Does the language of scripture matter?

commentary	Explanations or opinions given to help people understand or interpret something.	oral tradition	A method of sharing history, beliefs and stories through spoken words.
cultural language	A collection of texts that are considered to be the authoritative scriptures of a religion.	religious language	Language used in prayers, religious practices or scripture, believed to connect religious people to God, gods or enlightened beings.
diaspora	A group of people who leave their country of origin and settle in different parts of the world, where they keep their religion and culture.	translation	The result of rewriting or speaking words in a different language so that people can understand.
first language	The first language a person learns at home in childhood which they know best and use most often.	written scripture	Writings that are considered holy to a worldview, containing important teachings, stories and laws that guide the beliefs and practices of many followers.
language	A system of spoken, written or signed words and the rules for combining them, which people use to communicate.		



Oral tradition

- ▶ Before writing, many ancient societies shared their histories and beliefs through oral tradition. This involved storytelling, recitation and the use of gestures and symbols.

- ▶ The movement from oral to written traditions happened when communities wanted more permanent and reliable ways to record and share knowledge. Writing helped preserve the details that might otherwise have been lost or changed.
- ▶ Early writing materials included the use of hieroglyphs, clay tablets, walls, papyrus, palm leaves, animal skins, codices and later, paper.



Ancient languages

- ▶ For some religious people, praying in the ancient language of their scriptures helps them feel more connected with God, gods or enlightened beings and their community. These languages are often believed to be holy.
- ▶ Many Muslims pray in Classical Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. Similarly, Biblical Hebrew, the language of the Torah, is used in Jewish prayers.
- ▶ Prayers in the Sikh worldview are performed in Gurmukhi, the script introduced by Guru Angad Dev and used to write the Guru Granth Sahib.



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Translations and commentaries

Translations and commentaries help religious people to understand and connect with their religious teachings and practices. For many Muslims and Jewish people, these are not considered holy or given the same value as the original language of the Qur'an and Torah.

Additional vocabulary

Diaspora

The movement of people through conquests, trade and migration led to mixing ancient languages with the local languages of some places. This contributed to the development of languages, such as Yiddish, Ivrit and Modern Standard Arabic. These cultural and national languages are often used in many communities' daily life and communication.

