

SUFFICIENCY PROJECT TITLE PAGE

Title: Parallel Development of Language and Religion
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HU 1100	English AP Credit	N/A
RE 2722	The Problem of Evil	B98
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Abstract

In the development and growth of language and religion, often times each will have an influence on the other. Through looking at the language and religion pairs of Hebrew and Judaism, and Latin and Christianity, the effects of parallel development of language and religion on the forms of these influences can be seen. In parallel development, a religion has stronger influence on the language; when the language and religion develop independently, the language has a stronger influence.

Language and religion each have an influence on the other during the ongoing course of development. With the varied forms of language, and the many different religions of the world, this influence does not always take the same form. One case of the many that can be focused on is when the religion and the language develop in parallel. Religions that develop parallel to a language are more likely to influence the development and growth of the language, than the language is to influence the religion. When a language is adopted by a religion, the religion will be influenced more strongly by the language, until the point of where the two are held together so strongly that the development is parallel.

In a world as fragmented and diverse as that which we live in, aspects of human life and civilization that bring people together can be considered a rarity. Perhaps one of the first unifying factors that come to mind is that of religion, shared beliefs that can bring a sense of unity and community to a very large and diverse group. Although the unity is not the primary focus of a religion, it still does exist, often times so strongly that people choose to die in order to protect their religious community. Taking a closer look at such a unifying force, it is obvious that some common medium of communication needs to be established, for its presence to be seen so far and wide. This sort of presence can be either for the purpose of recruiting new members, or for establishing the presence of the group. Human communication takes place through language of some sort, whether it is spoken or written. This language is not usually seen in and of itself as a unifying force, while it has the same potential: although it

does not guarantee similarity of ideas, it does allow for mutually understandable expression of any ideas or beliefs that may be presented. Religion needs to use language for presentation of ideas, and a language can be spread in the same manner as religion, perhaps even with it. Language strongly influences the development and growth of religions that the language comes in contact with. Likewise, when a religion focuses on a language, that language will inevitably be changed based upon the needs of the religion.

An idea or a belief does not carry any force behind it (unifying or otherwise) if it cannot be understood. A religion is much more than simple sets of information, but basic beliefs, concepts, rules, and other aspects of the religion can be translated into information conforming to the rules of an appropriate language, whether it is spoken or written. The power of belief can be invoked and spread through language, and the very beliefs themselves can be altered, through simple communication between people. The level of relation between language and religion, however, is not as obvious as it may seem. Language and religion are both information and understanding of the world, as Pattison writes: "Language is the medium by which we register and exercise our knowledge of the world" (Pattison, 67). Whether language is just a carrier for the more spiritual concepts and beliefs of a religion, or the manner of presentation alters the content, is not certain from casual observation. To understand the specifics of the relation between language and religion, the different forms of language need to be identified first.

Communication between people can be achieved in a number of ways. Primitive communication usually begins with a form of participation: active involvement in the world around oneself, sometimes referred to as the "lifeworld" (Ong, 42). Formal language, whether spoken or written, is an extension of this primitive yet complex interaction, being descended from it. Each progressive layer of complexity, from body language to an oral tradition based upon the spoken word, to the invention of writing and high technology such as computers, allows for wider use of the language (Abram, 90). Language can then have extra information incorporated to it, naturally or artificially, and that meta-information can be used for the purpose of integrating it fully and inseparably with a given religion: Hebrew's system of Gematria, being a good example.

Not all forms of language are the same. One of the largest differences between forms of communication can be seen in the split between spoken and written language. The primary difference between the two levels of language (aside from the implementation itself) is permanence. Speech is only permanent for the short duration that words are actually being spoken out loud; as soon as an idea is finished being expressed, it no longer exists in the world. Written language extends the lifetime of the information to the lifetime of the medium. Today, written materials that were created thousands of years ago still exist. With this longevity comes permanency; if an idea is still capable of being expressed (through reading of the material), then it can not be changed or modified as easily as in the retelling of stories passed on through an oral tradition (Ong, 32).

Parallels to religion are already forming, here: codification of a set of beliefs can make them last for a longer time, and make them stronger.

Spoken language is more likely to be based upon the world in which one lives; with the sound of another person being the only medium for information transfer, one would have to meet with another person in order to learn something new. Long-distance communication is not possible, in most cases of strictly oral cultures. Formal written language is an invention, a creation, external by nature. Written language is thus abstracted from the "lifeworld" that people live in; a person can learn something new without direct interaction with another human being, or with the lifeworld itself (Ong, 42). With written language, information can be presented in ways that are easier to learn, even with no direct contact or exposure to the information. Information being solid and tangible, with the capability of being distributed easily and the potential for being accessed at any time without change to the information itself, allows for a greater audience for the information.

The category of written language can be broken down into smaller subgroups. Many different forms of written language exist, with varying levels of complexity and organization. Pictograms, graphical representations of objects, are a form of written language, but one that has not been completely removed from the lifeworld. If an object has never been seen before, then a pictogram for it would probably not exist: the language is still limited by the perceptions and the participation of the people who use it. Concepts or things abstract or intangible,

like those that would be necessary for a structured religion based upon law, would be hard (if not impossible) to express through simple pictograms, or even advanced pictographic representations such as rebuses (Abram, 97).

Movement to a symbolic based language would be the next logical step. Symbolic representation is a very good way to define a larger set of information, not necessarily of the same type, even without a personal relation to it or knowledge of it. Symbolic representation can be based upon pictographical representation, but it does not function in the same way: instead of having a picture of or representing the object being referenced, groups of symbols are strung together in a way that is known to reference a particular thing. The complexity of this is often overlooked, as it is how many languages in the world today function, including English. The words written here do not have any meaning without an external source to give them meaning. "Dog," when looked at by someone who does not know English, or has any familiarity with the Roman alphabet, will have no meaning whatsoever than a string of unknown symbols. A picture of the animal itself, used to represent a dog, will be understandable to everyone who has seen a dog before (Abram, 97).

These differences between forms of language are important, when looking at religions of the world. A large amount of information about a culture can be obtained by looking at its language tradition, including information about the religion. The language tradition will affect how the religion is spread, carried on, and developed over time. Likewise, specific aspects of the religion, such as splits

between the “priesthood” or equivalent, and general members of the religion, can give hints as to how the language tradition at the time functioned (Wright, 59). These are not the only relations between language tradition and religion. Not all relations can be listed or discussed here; each language, each religion, is unique, and will show different forms of relation for each given instance.

With thousands of religions and languages existing in the world today, it would be an impossible task to trace out a complete historical relation between the threads of developing religion and developing language. Specific instances can be focused on, however, and general concepts can be found and observed. Looking specifically at one language and religion pair can allow for a greater analysis of the correlation found within that pair, but still let relations to other languages and religions of the time be considered.

The language/religion pair that will be focused on for attention and analysis is that of Hebrew and Judaism. Some of the similarities and differences to other languages and religions of the time will be covered, specifically the parallels to the languages of Latin (and to a lesser extent, Greek) and the religion of Christianity. Hebrew and Judaism are a good choice for analysis, for a number of reasons. Both the culture that has developed into modern-day Judaism, and the language that has developed into modern-day Hebrew have existed for many thousands of years. Although Hebrew did not evolve to a point of where it was similar in form to where it is today until just over two thousand years ago, it was in use in earlier forms of development for another thousand years previous

to that. The development of the Hebrew people into the religion of Judaism has run a parallel course to that of the language. The fact that the culture and the language were originally known by the same name is significant, evidence of the parallel course of development.

Christianity and Latin are very similar to the pair of Judaism and Hebrew, and many similarities can be seen between the pairs. Both languages and religions coexisted (and continue to coexist) in a time period spanning roughly two millennia. Existing during the same time period implies that each were subject to the same external influence and forces present in the world, such as world politics. Each also worked (and still work) upon the same level of technology, making comparison much more effective. Christianity is descended from Judaism, so changes that were ongoing at the time of its creation can be observed, in terms of both religious beliefs and the methods of communication and language that were used for presentation of the religion. Judaism and Christianity of today are descendants of an interrelated historical path, and each continue to reference their past even as the religions continue to change. Even taking into account the fragmenting and branching each religion has taken in the past two thousand years, each still draw upon the same base set of information, what Christians refer to as "The Bible", composed of Old and New Testaments, in some way. Judaism focuses only on the Old Testament, but Christianity will reference the Hebrew Scriptures for emphasis and support while keeping the New Testament as the primary work of the religion. Like this, there are many

other differences between the two religions, that make comparison effective.

Analysis of the connections between Hebrew and Judaism requires that the background of each, over a time span of thousands of years, be looked at. No similarities will be found if the backgrounds of each are not known; it is in the development that the ties between the concepts of language and religion can be found. Development of languages and religions are ongoing, however, so all ties and differences will not just be found in the past. Looking back at observable trends is much easier to do than try to project future trends from present information, although it is possible to get some information on where a language or religion might be heading in terms of development from looking at present changes. The background of Judaism, and that of Hebrew, need to be understood before an effective comparison can be made to any other language and religion pair.

The Old Testament, Genesis in particular, tells the familiar story of how the world was created out of nothingness. The single God responsible for the world's creation and population is the same God that Judaism would acknowledge and follow. Judaism's initial form was in that of the early Hebrews, who followed the beliefs given to them by their accepted God. Adam and Eve, the first humans, were not considered Hebrews, following what is now called "Judaism;" being in direct contact with God at all times until their exile from the Garden of Eden, there was no such thing as religion, only truth. Recognizing the way of the Hebrews as a distinct set of beliefs dated to the later times of Abraham, when

Yahweh (one of a number of names for the God of Judaism) had it set apart from the rest of the world through travel to a new land. The system of beliefs was not formally organized (other than by Yahweh's direct command), or seen as an actual "religion" as it would be seen today. Religion then was inseparable from the daily activities of one's life; it was a way of living. Direct communication with Yahweh was the method for the development and growth of the laws that the Hebrews were required to obey. There was no human interpretation, no question as to what was meant by a collection of writings, such as the Bible. The Hebrews followed an oral tradition, one subject to less fluctuation, as their beliefs were being passed on directly from the God that they followed.

Historically, Abraham and those who followed in his path went to the land of Canaan (modern-day Israel) somewhere in the timeframe of the sixteenth to twenty-first century B.C.E. There were no written beliefs of the Hebrews until long after the initial settlement of the land and development into a full, recognized culture from the initial small group that followed the Biblical call of Yahweh to resettle (Wright, 280). The culture was based upon oral tradition, at least until the time of the Exodus and the Ten Commandments, and even then still mostly so. Abraham told his son Isaac about Yahweh and the appropriate laws and beliefs (which were mostly extensions of the laws given by Yahweh), and Isaac did the same to his sons Esau and Jacob. Nothing was written, the information was passed down from father to son in patriarchal manner. Whether the Ten Commandments were truly handed down from above, or formulated by

Moses or another leader of the Hebrews, it was the first codification of the basics of Hebrew law and belief, the first step from oral to written tradition. It was not a complete transition, though, as only the most basic of laws were written down and presented. Everything not covered in the Ten Commandments was still either based upon law passed down through oral tradition, or not covered by specific beliefs of the Hebrews.

The Exodus and subsequent codification of the Ten Commandments happened in the time frame of the thirteenth century B.C.E. (Wright, 280). The period of Hebrew slavery in Egypt was the first major acknowledgement of the Hebrews as a separate group. Although the Hebrews had existed as a unified group since the time of Abraham, there were no major events in their history (other than leaving Abraham's homeland) that distinguished them from any other small tribe of people (266). Similar to other cultures of the time, the distinction between religion and nation was still not fully apparent, nor was the distinction between tribal law and religious law. Hebrews were the chosen people of Yahweh, and Yahweh was the accepted god of the Hebrews. This relation was not specifically thought of as a religion in the modern sense, but more of a tribal nationality, bound together through common belief and law. Although it may be a harder concept to understand today when many people do not even believe in the existence of any god, the idea of a deity being the official leader of a group of people was quite acceptable and common around the year 1200 B.C.E.

Hebrew culture started to change, however, at the time of the transition from oral to written tradition. This was one of the major points in the development of both the religion and the language that the Hebrews used. The culture was still based on belief and on law, but once the law was set in stone (figuratively and literally), unchanging, the Hebrew culture and belief system in general started to take on more structure and development. To any who may not have been true believers, the events that took place during the Exodus with the culmination at Mt. Sinai, would have been proof that Yahweh did exist, and that the laws of a God that saved their lives from slavery should be followed to the letter.

The increased structure and development of religious or legal beliefs, combined with written materials for the religion, was the perfect situation for the advancement and development of a symbolic written language. Written language forms that were the ancestors of Hebrew were in existence at this time, based off of proto-Aramaic, Ugarit, and Canaanite language forms. In the time frame of the fourteenth to thirteenth century B.C.E., the set of letters that would later become Hebrew were finalized. Proto-Aramaic and Semitic languages had previously fluctuated between twenty-five and twenty-seven characters, and at this point in time, the language was condensed into the twenty-two characters that would later make up the set of Hebrew consonants. Hebrew can be seen as the logical descendent of these previous languages, Ugarit in particular (Wright, 63). During the development from the early beginnings of the Hebrew language to the form that is recognizable today, the relation to the Hebrew belief system

could still be seen. Characters used in the alphabet, the collection of the twenty-two symbols used for writing, branched from those of the languages Hebrew was developed from, and meaning was given to the sole inclusion of consonants in the character set.

The characters used in the Hebrew language were initially based on Persian scripts from around three hundred years B.C.E., around the time of the end of the Persian Empire. This set of characters, the Phoenician alphabet, was in common use during this time period in the area of the Hebrew people, and so they had a good amount of exposure to it. Hebrew had, by this time, been subject to influence by other languages and forms of written letters (Wright, 174). The formulation of the variant of the Hebrew language that is recognizable today is where the religious influence could be seen well. Vowels seem to take on a special significance in both language and beliefs of the people who use the language, and were not included in the language initially, only the twenty-two consonants. Vowels are not sounds in and of themselves, but breath used to shape and arrange the sounds of the consonants. The Hebrews believed that breath was directly related to God, that which gives life, from the very beginnings of the world: Adam rose through the breath of life from God. The speaking of words can be seen as giving them life through utterance, the brief life of the spoken word as opposed to the longer, more permanent existence of written language. The exclusion of vowels from the written alphabet could have been due to belief that the act of giving life to a word by speaking it was

comparable to giving life to a creature by infusing it with breath. Representing the manner of which the word was given that life would be similar to any sort of physical representation of God's power, or idolatry (Abram, 249).

Evidence of the exclusion of vowels for reasons of the religion's belief can be found in a written name of God in Hebrew, "...the best known example of how the faith of the Jewish culture mixed itself inextricably with the technology of alphabetic writing" (Pattison, 48). This example is the Tetragrammaton, the four letter Hebrew spelling of the most prominent name of God. The Tetragrammaton is made up solely of consonants that make no real sound in and of themselves (yod, heh, and vav, making the sounds of Y, H, and W respectively) (Abram, 249). Only the breath put into the letters to shape them are heard, when the word is spoken. If breath is holy, directly linked to life and God, then it is natural that the most true human name for God would be composed solely of that breath. The written letters of God's name are not the true name of God, but only an approximation. The consonants that are required to direct the breath used to speak the name are also an approximation: in a language without vowels, physical representation of something composed solely of breath is impossible.

Of course, vowels are included in the language today, even if they are not usually used. The addition of vowels to the Hebrew language took place in the seventh century C.E. and was accomplished through adding number of symbols composed of dots and dashes that can go above, below, or in the twenty-two

consonants themselves. These vowels are used so that the language can be learned more easily, and are usually not used after a person learning the language reaches third grade level or equivalent. Even today, in virtually all written Hebrew, the vowel symbols are not actually used; even with their addition making the language easier to understand, the language still works by needing a person to fill in the breath, the sound, himself or herself. Hebrew can be a difficult language to learn, because of the involvement and participation required to read it and understand it. In fully alphabetic languages, such as English (or Latin), even if a person has no understanding of what a word means, it can be sounded out phonetically. In Hebrew, the same string of characters could refer to different words, the consonants sounded out differently, and the difference in meaning needs to be understood based upon context (Wright, 65).

The active participation of a reader takes a very important part in the Hebrew language. The participation, a direct involvement of a person with the text, has parallels to Jewish belief and culture, as well as the history contained within the Old Testament. Each word needs to be actively taken on for interpretation, and given the appropriate vowels to sound it out. Giving a word life in this manner is comparable to the creation, or solidification, of something by giving it a name (Abram, 251). Many oral cultures share the belief that names hold the power of creation or control over that which bears the name. The book of Genesis tells how Adam was given, by Yahweh, the task of naming all of the creatures in the Garden of Eden as a stipulation of being the dominant creature

of the world. Many cultures believe that to know the name of something, to be able to speak it, gives one power and control; power and control over the Hebrew language requires that each word be given special attention to creating it through speech (Ong, 32). To speak Hebrew is to participate in the language, and in many beliefs of the religion (whether one knows it or not).

Moving the focus from the religion to the language, and understanding the active participation necessary for reading Hebrew, it is obvious that Hebrew is very highly structured. One important way that this structure can be seen is called Gematria. Every letter in the language has meaning above the meaning for symbolic interpretation: each letter, according to the system of Gematria, has a numeric value assigned to it. Other translations between information sets exist; each letter has parallels to other information, such as body part, Tribe of Israel, and emotion (Avadenka). Of these translations, Gematria is the most prominent, working on a simple and universal translation: the first letter, Aleph, corresponds to the value 1, Bet to 2, Gimel to 3, etc. Values increase from one to ten, and then to multiples of ten up to one hundred. The last three letters end with the values two hundred, three hundred, and four hundred. Final letters (i.e. the “sofit” letters, special variations on the written form of letters that are only used at the end of a word) are sometimes not considered as different letters from the normal forms of the letters, and variations of a single letter (Vet compared to Bet, Sin compared to Shin) are not. From these values, any collection of Hebrew letters, such as normal Hebrew words, can be assigned

numerical values that can be used in numerological and mystical beliefs. To construct a number, the appropriate letters for each digit are written, so that the sum is the desired number. One major exception exists, that of the value fifteen. By this system, the value for fifteen would be yod-heh (ten, five), or a spelling of a spoken name of God. In this case, the letters tet and vav (nine and six) are used instead (Ginsburgh).

Gematria is a system of meta-information built directly into a language in a manner that is unique. Although other languages, most notably Greek, have had other sorts of translations between letters and numbers, Hebrew seems to be the only language that has carried this meta-information for such a long time as to make it a common system. In any language, translations can be formulated externally through arbitrary assignment of numbers to letters, but Gematria has such a strong involvement in the Hebrew language that much careful thought would have been necessary to construct some of the relations that Hebrew has, based on it. The other systems that used similar constructions for numerology are no longer widely in use, whether from change of language, change of belief, or general lack of use or focus.

Gematria is studied mostly with relation to the Torah, along with other word patterns and structures that can be found within the writing. Some scholars believe that there are patterns of information in the Torah that transcend the language of Hebrew itself; that the information as it is given has one meaning, but there is another meaning locked in the text somewhere, that is waiting to be

found. Although a lot of the search for “bible codes” is based on information that could be considered questionable in terms of scientific accuracy, many patterns based on Gematria and word patterns can be found in the Bible, the Torah in specific. Interpretation of the patterns or numerological values aside, it shows a very strong emphasis on the specifics of writing of the Torah; the writing was not a simple writing or collection of stories, but a work that was given much thought and meaning above the material presented.

Although these observations might not seem significant at first, the fact that the primary written work of Judaism is so carefully constructed is very important, when looking at the relationship between the religion and the language. To the religious, the Torah is believed to be the word of God, whether written directly or through human prophets. As it is the word of God, it is not to be changed or altered in any way over the years. When a scribe copies the scrolls of the Torah, a single mistake is all that is needed for the copy to be destroyed and the work started over. The involvement of such strong patterns within the words of the Torah are evidence to the strongly religious that the form was truly given by God, and not by a human historian; the information itself has meaning, but the form is does as well. The form of the language is the evidence that the work has special meaning, and the reason many people scour the written letters not for interpretation of the words, but for meaning that can be discovered from the patterns. This sort of hidden information, containing meaning and information coming directly from God to the Jewish people, would

not be possible in any other language other than Hebrew. The extra layers of information are internal to the language, as opposed to an external structure constructed over the language. Were this the case, the information would not be coming directly from God, but from the person who created the form of the external structure. The information being internal, translation of the Torah to another language completely destroys the layer of meta-information that holds all the patterns, forms, and translations that would be looked at for a higher meaning than the story of the words alone.

Hebrew is a language that was developed by a specific group of people who shared one set of beliefs, one religion. As a result, its development was closely tied to the development of the religion and set of beliefs. Hebrew is unique in the amount of meta-information that it can convey, through immersion in the religion's beliefs and methods of communicating information. The role of Hebrew is that of the language of the Jewish people, and continues to exist as such to this day. As the religion of Judaism is still based upon the language of Hebrew, the relationships between the language and the religion are very clear, and very solid, from having existed for such a long time in the same branch of development. Not all religions have a specific language that developed along the same lines as it, and not all religions have (and have had) a single language that can be considered that of its own. For those religions, the relations between the religion and the language are still present, but differ in a number of ways from the relations between languages immersed totally in belief.

In contrast to Judaism and Hebrew, one religion that does not have a language of its own, that did not develop parallel to the speech and writing of its believers, is Christianity. Christianity was formed in the time of the Roman Empire, and the languages of Greek and Latin were in common use. Of these two languages, Latin was the organized and set language of the Empire, and was the common tongue of a large part of the civilized world. Latin was a good universal language, but shortly after its creation, Christianity was not looking for a universal language; it would take some time before the paths of Latin and Christianity merged formally. Influence of each on the other still existed, even as Christianity opposed and attempted to avoid a lot of the influence that came with the formal language of Latin. This opposition shows that some connection did exist, and could be seen by early Christians, as otherwise no opposition would have been necessary.

Because Christianity did not create or develop with Latin, there was some reason it would need to be chosen for adoption. This reason could be as simple as the fact that Latin was wide-spread in the world, or that prominent Christians were speaking it. However, these reasons are external to both the language and the religion themselves. Previous to the adoption of Latin by Christianity, the religion had little to no influence on the language. The language being more universal, though, could still affect the religion: any global effects or influence that the language may have caused in the world would still apply to Christianity, even if indirectly. The language's relation to the world, then, would affect the

religion it was now tied to. The influence of the language on the religion was less prominent in the pair of Hebrew and Judaism, where most of the influence was in the opposite direction.

Once adopted by Christianity, Latin started to be influenced more strongly by the religion. Latin was both a spoken and written language, although the written aspect of it was much less used or widespread. Early influences of Christianity attempted to reduce the power of the written aspect, through isolating it within the higher-ups of the religion. "Christianity is sometimes called a religion of the book because its traditions and doctrines are embodied in a text, but in fact this religion of the book devalued the skills of reading and writing" (Pattison, 71), states Pattison, showing one of the major differences between the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity. Christianity was based upon not the codified text that held its beliefs, but on the information within it as being the Word of God (71). Judaism held similar beliefs, and is also known as a religion of the book, but the written form of that Word was emphasized, due to the more unchanging nature of written material as opposed to the spoken word of oral tradition. This is the opposite of what Christianity was trying to do: Judaism emphasized the written word, and Christianity emphasized the spoken word. "Reading" according to the ways of Christianity did not involve actual reading for most of the people involved, but being read to (Street, 119). Reading and writing, the tools of written language, were prominent in the religion, but only among those holding position within the ranks of the organized religion. For the

general people, the spoken word was what was focused on, through tradition and ritual. The literate members holding position within the religion would read the written works aloud to the common people, giving it the emphasis of spoken word. With more flexibility for interpretation, and without the potential for the same sort of analysis that came with other forms of writing that Christianity was trying to avoid (the rhetoric of the Greeks in particular), spoken language was the proper form for presentation of the religion's information and beliefs (Pattison, 67).

A "religion of the book" requires a written language. Latin was the chosen language, but with the stipulation that the written aspect of it was kept to a small group of people within the religion, those who held position within its official structure, and only the spoken part spread. This effect developed over the period of time after Latin's adoption, once Christianity had become much more prominent than the small, persecuted group it was at the time of its founding. The near-disappearance of literacy during the Middle (Dark) Ages was assisted by the push by Christianity to bring language back towards the spoken only nature of oral tradition for most people. Christianity divided language between spoken and written aspects in the opposite manner that the Romans and Greeks were bringing them together, and the written aspect of the language was only used when necessary: not much, during its early days.

With the growth of the religion, however, a formalized written language was eventually necessary (around the time of the fifth century C.E.) for more

than spreading the Word of God, so that the Church could run properly as an institution. To justify the increased use of writing, which was previously avoided, it was restricted to within the Church, effectively giving Christianity (as a single, unified force) a monopoly on the ability to work with written language. This came at a time when the remainder of the world had reverted to mostly (if not totally) spoken communication: the once widespread language of Latin, and the forms it manifested in, had been influenced almost totally by the religion that had adopted it as its own (Pattison, 71). The influence was in a way that was external to the form of the language, but still a strong part of the language as a whole. Latin itself had been developed and formalized by those who came before the Christians, and unlike Hebrew, there was little development to the common written form of the language through Christianity.

Latin and Greek were descended from the same language branches as that of Hebrew, in terms of written characters. Looking at the characters, the similarities are obvious. Hebrew's Aleph to Greek's Alpha, to the character that ended up being the modern-day A, show relation to each other. The same can be shown from the transition from Bet to Beta, to and then to B. Hebrew Aleph-Bet became the Greek, and then the Roman alphabet: the descendent of the word that is still currently used (in English) for sets of characters.

The major difference between the alphabets of Hebrew and those of Greek and Latin (aside from the different character sets) did not come from the symbols themselves, or the pronunciations of them, but from the meaning given

to them. The letter Aleph, for example, was descended from a pictographical representation of an ox, and had meaning in and of itself that reflected upon this (Avadenka). When Greek adopted the Hebrew character set, all of the meanings behind the letters were lost, as the symbols were used for the purpose of representing sounds only, with no alternate meanings. A layer of information in the Hebrew character set, even older than that of the numerical equivalents used in Gematria, was completely stripped away and the resulting language was made completely symbolic and abstract (Pattison, 48).

The Greek language finalized the abstraction of the Hebrew character set with the addition of vowels. Letters that were not necessary in the Greek alphabet but still existed in the Hebrew alphabet were modified into vowels. Hebrew consonants that did not represent individual sounds were also modified, so that they could become vowels: Aleph, for example, was given the sound associated now with the vowel A. In Hebrew, the letter Aleph does not make any sound, but is a “begin” or “stop” character based on where it appears in a word. The end result was a character set that included everything necessary to represent any possible word in the language, with no external influence or knowledge needed for interpretation. This was a large step for language, as it expanded the range of information able to be represented by the character set, and also set the new alphabet and language(s) apart from those that they were descended from (Abram, 251). Like with the case of the Hebrews’ similar development, the change from oral to written tradition made communication more

externalized, with a greater potential for information transfer, propagation, and set of information able to be represented.

Once the use of a written language is established, the movement from a pictographical language, to a partially symbolic language, to a full symbolic language mirrors many of the same aspects of earlier development. Further externalization of the language allowed for greater information transfer, but caused even more abstraction of the information. This abstraction of the language allowed for the greater development of systems such as formal logic and mathematics, as the greater symbolic nature of the language could be translated to different forms, much as Gematria allowed Hebrew to be translated into a system of numbers (Pattison, 48). Each progressive step from the concrete to the abstract allowed for a greater range of information to be represented by the language (Hofstadter, 56). The difference between Latin (and Greek's) systems for representing logic and mathematics are different from Hebrew's representation of Gematria because the systems created with abstraction are for a purpose, influenced by outside necessity. Gematria was included directly as a part of Hebrew, during its parallel development with Judaism. The purpose of Gematria was not based on external need, but directly related to the language's parallel religion.

Latin, and Greek as well, differ from Hebrew in the level of participation needed. The transition to a fully symbolic language removes the need for active participation of any sort in the language. There is no longer any effort, or any

work, required to sound out each word, or give each word a meaning. No effort or involvement is needed to bring each word to life through chosen breath and sound to infuse the consonants with. The transition to a fully symbolic written language completely abstracts the language from the lifeworld, but at the same time, makes it easier to understand and to learn (in addition to giving it more potential uses) (Abram, 252).

This tradeoff between participation and ease of learning and understanding is an important one. Separation from the lifeworld through complete abstraction of a language means that the language is independent of any religion of belief structure. Hebrew is not required to be exclusively for the Jewish people in any way, but outside of that group (and now, Israel as a whole), few speak it. Even though most of the connections between Hebrew and Judaism are not immediately obvious to casual observers, the length of time that Hebrew has been the chosen language of the Jewish people, without any general usage of it, has caused the language to stay within that small group. Languages that have become fully symbolic and removed from the lifeworld have the potential to spread more widely, if even only because they are more easily learned and maintained.

This ease of understanding and usage comes with both written and spoken forms of the language, one of the main reasons for Latin (and Christianity's) development and spreading through the world with much greater force than Hebrew. The two languages were developed from the same roots, the written

form Latin being loosely based on Hebrew and proto-Hebrew forms of writing. Christianity was initially based upon a form of Judaism, and still bears many similarities to it to this day. Though these similarities do still exist, each religion, and each language, have developed much since their respective branching points. A large amount of information about the different path each took after branching can be seen from the influences of each pair's language on the religion, and vice versa.

The influence that religion can have upon language can be clearly seen through religions that share developmental paths with the languages they use. Hebrew's development, parallel to that of Judaism, shows many relations to the language itself that are often overlooked in the daily usage of the language. Hebrew is different from many other languages by the fact that it is not fully symbolic, and still needs interpretation and active participation for it to be read. The active participation is not limited to the language, but is part of the religion and culture that comes with Hebrew as both a language and a people. The distinction between the Hebrews as a people, and the Jews as a religion exist today, but did not in the time of the development of both the religion and the language.

Whereas a religion's influence on language can be seen mostly in parallel development, the influence of language on religion is mostly evident through political and other external forces that the language is part of. This sort of influence is not as strong, or even present, when the religion dominates the

language. From looking at Hebrew and Latin, compared to Judaism and Christianity, beliefs of a religion are modified by language when it is appropriate for the religion to take that step. This “step” could be seen as external need, whether for the purpose of information transfer, or for the codification of that information. Once the religion has reached a point of where it is stable, such as Christianity’s assertion as a major world power by the fifth century C.E., it will affect more strongly the language that it uses, whether the effects are intentional or not.

Language and religion show many connections to each other, influence on the development and growth of the other. The type of influence can be seen most clearly in development of the two in relation to each other; languages that develop parallel to the belief systems they are primarily used by are more influenced by those belief systems, than languages that are adopted by a religion. The pair of Hebrew and Judaism is an example of this case, and each are still continuing today their parallel development of many thousands of years. Those languages that develop independently from any religion, those that are more widespread, show a greater influence on the religion than vice versa, during stages of the religion’s development. Once the religion has reached a point of where it has been meshed with the language for a long enough time, fully integrated into the beliefs of the religion, then the two can be considered to follow a parallel development as each continue to grow and change. Latin and Christianity, although initially having no formal connections, eventually grew

independently to the point of where they were paired. Christianity was immediately influenced by this pairing, changing to best use the split between the oral and written forms of Latin. After enough time, and the integration of Latin into the religion (more influence of the language on the religion), the pair continued parallel development.

The different forms of influence are explained by the type of development. Parallel development means that the two are much more closely related, having the ability to grow and change together over periods of time. Languages that are adopted are adopted for a reason, and that reason is usually dependent on the needs of the religion. The adoption of a language demonstrates the outside influence on a religion, and is the first change made to the language. Although the language itself is not immediately changed, its character set or language type made to function in a different form, the adoption brings a new purpose to the language. Giving a language a specific purpose within the religion gives the language an additional layer of information over that of the language itself.

Where the paired development of language and religion lead in the future is unknown. The languages of today are still varied in terms of form; widely spoken languages such as English and Spanish are fully symbolic, but others such as ideographic Chinese are still based off of earlier pictographical systems. Latin itself is a dead language, not used in common speech anymore, but the symbolic languages are descendants of it. Hebrew still exists and is used in the world today, but not widely so, and is rare outside of Israel and other Jewish groups:

it is in the process of dying. Today, the participation of the Hebrew language is only seen through the lack of vowels, the influence between it and Judaism is hard to see other than the exclusiveness of the language to the religion. The parallel development continues, however, as it has for a few thousand years now.

The advancement of the presentation of language still continues today, in many of the same ways as it did when written language was new. Technology continues to push methods of communication to greater degrees, and externalizes information and language from a person further. Just as it was argued that written writing would cause people to become less intelligent, due to the ability to “look up” information and not personally retain it, the same argument is given concerning computers and devices like calculators. Literacy, the knowledge of how to read (and to write), was once the large split in between mediums of communication. Today, new forms of communication (such as computers and the Internet) are starting to become more prominent, and the necessary knowledge of how to communicate using the new technology is causing a new split between forms of communication. The case of computers is slightly different, as a physical object is needed for the usage of the technology. The parallels do exist, as writing itself requires some technology for the most efficient use (something to write with, and something to write on), but not to the level of computers. Writing on a computer cannot be done without the usage of the computer, while a person has the ability to write even without any tools (a finger in dirt, for example).

Religion and this new technology would not seem to mix, at first glance, especially in a world where religion is struggling in a number of ways against the modern belief in science. The patterns of the past, the influence that could be observed, however, exist to this day and can be observed in a number of different ways. Online religious groups allow people of similar belief to come together without distance being an issue; the complete freedom of speech that the Internet provides is a wonderful medium for expressing one's beliefs when it would not be possible otherwise. Although at first glance, our world shows few to no parallels to that of two to four thousand years ago, the same sorts of development are still in place. Observation and analysis of the past is always much easier than that of the present, and the case holds for the development of language and religion, the influence each has on the other. Even in a completely different world, the same forms and patterns of the development and growth of language and religion will still hold, and continue on into the future through adaptation to new technology.

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