

The **Ring-inscription** was a Black Speech inscription in Tengwar upon the One Ring, symbolising the Ring's power to control the other Rings of Power, and perhaps being an actual part of its power.

Description

The One Ring appeared perfectly plain and featureless, but when heated, the inscription appeared in fiery letters on the Ring.

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When Isildur cut the ring from Sauron's hand, it was burning hot, and so Isildur was able to transcribe the inscription before it faded. He described it to be written in an elvenscript of Eregion in a language that was not known to him.

Gandalf first learned of the inscription when he read the account that Isildur had written before marching north to his death and the loss of the Ring. When Gandalf subsequently heated the ring that Bilbo Baggins had found and passed on to Frodo, the inscription appeared, leaving him in no doubt that it was the One Ring.

Long before, at the creation of the One Ring, the smiths of Eregion who had forged the other Rings of Power heard in their minds the voice of Sauron, reciting the words. They then realized his plans, removing the rings from their fingers.

Translation

The inscription read:

Ash nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulûk, agh burzum-ishi krimpatul

These words were disturbing to any Elves who heard them, as any words of that "Black Speech". When Gandalf recited them at the Council of Elrond, the sky darkened and the Elves trembled and covered their ears. This was the first time words of that language had been spoken in Rivendell.

Roughly translated, these words mean:

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them

Ring-verse

At some point following the gifting of the rings, a verse was written and kept as part of the Elven-lore:

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

Abridged from "The Tolkien Gateway": https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Ring_Verse