

KURDISH LITERATURE



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**“Kurdish Literature and its Contribution as a way for Universal
Understanding of Humankind”**

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“Una lengua es una tradición, un modo de sentir la realidad, no un arbitrario repertorio de símbolos” Jorge Luís Borges

“A language isn't an arbitrary repertoire of symbols, is a tradition, a manner of perceive reality “Jorge Luis Borges

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1. - Oral and written tradition

1.1 A place into the world

Kurdish tongue have had a very long history where is mixed both oral literature until nowadays, mainly between Yezidi Community (the aboriginal Kurdish religion) by means of qawals (religious hymns) compiled by P. Kreyenbroek (1995) or in Children literature, (S. Nakshbandi 1999) also as a source of history of this People (Christine Allison, N. Fuccaro, Sevê Evîn Çîçek et. Al). So in the West were Layard (1848) and Roger Lescot the beginners is strength oral history of Kurdish Nation.

One of most important oral Kurdish literary (and essential document about Kurdish identity also is celebrated by Persian people but with a different signification, so it's wrote in Shanameh – The Book of Kings- wrote in XI A.C.E by Persian poet Firdowsi) is the epic victory of blacksmith Kawe-î Asinger against king Assyrian Zuhak, tyrant colonialist of the ancient kingdom of Media. that killed young people because he need the youth brain mixed with one of sheep in order to healed their wounds in his shoulders, so he killed thousands of Media youthful. But one of them may escape to Zagrous Mountains named Kurd, many followed him , thus they were called Kurds . One day two Kawe-î Asinger sons were elected for sacrifice, the blacksmith (in this context has an importance because as “master in metallurgy” was a kind of hierophant, he was a nexus between

the metals – the deepest of earth – and sky powers. M. Eliade 1993) refused that their sons were killed and contacted with the people led by Kurd, and, determined not summoned more to Zuhak criminal yoke. So, Kawe-î Asinger with his sacred smithy tools killed Zuhak and with Kurd's troops burned the tyrant body. Was on March 21st during the year 700 before Common Era (B.C.E.) and this day was called Newroz , derived from New Roj or New Day and begun the Kurdish Calendar, also Media people change their name for Kurdish (*Hêlîn Pasewan / HAWARDENGÛBAS*). And their land was named Kurdistan (the country of Kurds), Xenophon in his book "The retreat of 10000" named Kardouchis (in form of Hellenize the word Kurds) a brave people that they sawn when crossed the mountains through Black Sea (quoted by B. Nikitine 1956)

As a memorial for an insurrection that gave freedom and dignity to the Kurds, because with fire burnt all kind of oppression and is an incentive to Kurdish nation in order to they're a people like another with their rights and duties and mainly with a place into the world that such as KRG by means of self determination they'd be masters of their ancestral land, with a message of human redemption to another peoples and also to whole humankind.

1.2 Kurdish Language unity and diversity

The father of Kurdology in the West was a Roman Catholic priest Maurizio Garzoni who published in Rome during 1787 “Grammatica e Vocabollaria della Lingua Kurda” because he was in mission eighteen years with Kurdish people in the region of Amadiya.

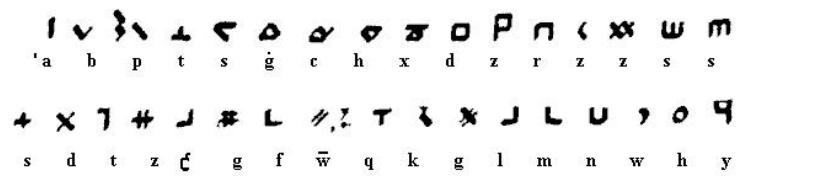
As is well known Kurdish language belong to the branch of Aryan tongues, very next with Luri (there two opinion one supported by a few number of scholars have argued in keeping with the conservative view held by the Persian majority population that Luri is only a highly accented or لهجه (*lahjeh*) form of Persian, and Kurdish is derived from Median (Erik John Anonby, ["Update on Luri: How many languages?"](#) // Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Third Series), Volume 13, Issue 02, Jul 2003, pp 171–197. On the other hand, an increasing number of researchers are supporting the division of the Lori continuum into more than one language” There do exist transitional dialects between Southern Kurdish and Luri-Bakhtiari, and Luri-Bakhtiari itself may be called a transitional idiom between Kurdish and Persian (Encyclopaedia Iranica – Kurdish Languages) .Thus Luri-Bakhtiari maybe regard in a wide sense as part of Kurdish Tongue in this case “Kurdish poetry may started with BâBâ Tâhir Hamadâni (935-1010) who wrote in this dialect” (F. Shakely 2009) and near of Farsi. Mountains Rivers formed by thaw ice of summit and afterwards joined in beautiful lakes Kurdish Language is divided into four main branches Kurmandji, Sorani, Gorani and Kirmandji, also named Dimili or Zazaki. The origin of the word Zazaki is Zaza means stammering because they enlarging the syllables , in a curious similarity with the accent of Córdoba province in Argentina. Although the last language some authors (like Kreyenbroek thought that’s a close tongue but different from Kurdish a respectable

opinion but for many another belong to Kurdish linguistic tree).

But during long time the oral literature with rhythm for better remember it, and, suddenly accompanied with music instruments. Was a literature with the pedagogical method that Yezidi Prince Ismail Beg Chol said to a German reporter in 1929 “ I teach to my son our traditions from hearth to hearth, thus he’ll do the same with their sons” (quoted by B. Nikitine 1956)

As quoted Dr. Zurab Aloian (2007) the view of Philip Kreyenbroek must be mentioned: when compared with objective facts, Yezidi traditional stories are an apt illustration of the genesis and function of legendary history in a non-literate society (Kreyenbroek 1995:39).

The first books were Religious in a southern branch of Kurdish and after wrote in Kurmandji the main bough of Kurdish tongue, were deuterocanonical **Yezidi religious Books** (Mishraf resh or Black Book) and (Cilwe or Revelation) and’re written in this alphabet



(Source K.K. Kurdoev 1978)

If it’s true those two books, using the first Kurdish alphabet, unless their very relative Religious value, because the really Yezidi Religion tradition is maintain by the hymns named ut supra. But, their literary value is very important because were wrote in XII century. Before than all another Kurdish book that begun in XVI century , with the another religious books of Yarsanism or Ahl ul Hakk , “They believe that these traditions were

eventually collected and written down by the Golden Pen of *Pîr Musî*, the angel in charge of recording human deeds and one of the five companions of *Sultan Sahak*. This collection is considered to be the Yarsan's holy book called *Serenam* or *Kalam-i Saranjam* (The Discourse of Conclusion) and it consists of *Epoch of Khawandagar*, *Epoch of Ali*, *Epoch of Khoshin*, and *Epoch of Sahak*. These are the different manifestations of Divinity. The epoch of Khoshin takes place in the Luristan region and the epoch of Sahak is placed in the Land of Gorans (Hawraman) near the river Sirwan. The sayings attributed to Sultan Sahak are written in Gorani Kurdish, the sacred language of the Ahl-i Haqq. Some of their literature is written in the Persian language.” (Z. Mir-Hosseini, *Inner Truth and Outer History: The Two Worlds of the Ahl-i Haqq of Kurdistan*, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol.26, 1994, p.268)

Gorani is the liturgical language of Yaresan , but, today the area of this tongue as alive is reduced to Kirmansha, Halabja and few places more; the another Kurdish of eastern and southern Kurdistan used the Sorani both were branches of Kurdish tongue. Is used in Eastern and Southern (Iran and Iraq) Kurdistan

Although as is said before the mainly stick of Kurdish language is Kurmandji, whose origin was near Hakkari Mountains., but is widely expanded in Northern (part of Turkey, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) and in Western (North of Syria) Kurdistan.

Kirmandji or Zazaki is used in area of Dersim (renamed in 1938 after a

Genocide repression the insurrection for Kurdish independence as Tundjeli in a reduced area of ancient Dersim province) in central and eastern part of Turkey (Northern Kurdistan).

You 'd known that Kurdish branches have had different standardization as it was defined by Ferguson (1961 "as a single , widely accepted norm used with only minor variation for all purposes of language use .He explicitly distinguishes between this general notion of "standard" and the degree of native literacy ("writing") in a speech community."(quoted by Y. Matras and G. Reershemius 1991) "

"Following Ferguson's definition, standardization should thus be regarded as the process of language unification in a given community, affecting written as well as oral communication. Ray is not as strict with respect to the possibility of a coexistence of varieties or different vernaculars within the speech community, alongside the "Standard". The standard itself, however, is considered as a language variety the use of which is unified in writing, grammar and lexicon" (Y. Matras and. G. Reershemius 1991).

The first Kurdish bought to be standardized were Gorani and Sorani in 1931 with an Arabic and Farsi alphabet modified in order to be useful for Kurdish phonetic and orthography by a commission formed by Soane author of Kurdish Grammar and collected a Gorani poetry anthology also British governor of Iraq under United Kingdom mandate. He strengthened the importance of Kurdish tongue as second official language with Arabic in the Haschemite Kingdom of Iraq. But Kurdish attempts of independence such as Sheikh Barzanji (self named King of Kurdistan in 1932) were drown in blood.

The status of Kurdish tongue in Iraq was maintained until 1970 when S. Hussein installed his dictatorship , and was restored after his downfall.

Soranî variety used a Persian alphabet modified for phonology and orthography

So sometimes is utilized Latin alphabet but in exceptional cases.

ا ب پ ت ج چ ح خ د ر ر ز ژ س ش ع غ
 x̄ ' ş s j z rr r d x h̄ ç c t p b a Hawar
 xh ' sh s jh z rr r d x h' c j t p b a Unified
 [ɣ] [ʔ] [ʃ] [s] [ʒ] [z] [ʈ] [r] [d] [x] [h̄] [ç] [t] [p] [b] [a]
 ف ق ک گ ل ل م ن ه ه و و و ی ئ ئ
 ê y,î o û w,u e h n m ll l g k q v f Hawar
 é y,í o ú w,u e h n m ll l g k q v f Unified
 [e] [j̄:] [o] [u:] [w/u] [e] [h] [n] [m] [l] [l] [g] [k] [q] [v] [f]

Numerals

١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩	١٠
yek	du	sê	çar	pênc	şesş	heft	heyst	neh	deh
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

(Source Kurdish Academy of Language)

The Kurmanji bough used Arabic alphabet in this manner was printed the

first Kurdish paper named Kurdistan in El Cairo on 1918 by two brothers Mehdad Pasha and Abd-al – Rahmân but were forced to move to Europe, the last number was printed there in 1902.

**The front page of KURDISTAN first number El Cairo April 23th.
1898**

Kurds, and the weekly Kurdistan in 1917-18” (P. Kreyenbroek 2011).

The WWI post war in the former territory of Ottoman Empire was tragic for their minorities first Armenians, second Koçgiri Kurdish , third Anatolian and Thracian Greeks but repression for Kurdish continuous until today because their right to self determination with an independent land signed in Sèvres Treaty and also in Wilson 13 points was erased by Lausanne Treaty and Kurdistan was divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq (under British mandate and Syria under French mandate) . So, in those days the brothers Jeladet (1893-1961) and Kamiran Bedir/Badr Khan (1895-1978) were well known in Kurdish intellectual circles of Damascus and Beirut .”They developed a Kurdish orthography in Latin Script, which still used today”(P.Kreyenbroek 2011)

This alphabet changed from Arabic in 1931 and is a Latin extended alphabet, with 31 letters.

Aa Bb Cc Çç Dd Ee Êê Ff Gg Hh Ii Îî Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq,
Rr Ss Şş Tt Uu Ûû Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

We may see, the short vowels are «e i u» and the long vowels are «â ê î o û». And also it has letters that not belong to Turkish tongue such as W , Û , X.

The second branch of Kurmandji standardized worked the Scientifics of Iranian Languages of Leningrad and 1940 Kurmandji were standardized in Cyrillic alphabet modified in the same manner of Cufic.

This branch of Kurmandji (only differ in alphabet) is written and spoken by Kurdish people living in Federation of Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and formers Soviets republics of Central Asia

A, B, B, Γ, Γ', Д, E, Ə, Ə', Ж, З, И, Ы, K, K', Л, M, H, O, Ö, П, П', P, P', C, T, T', У, Ф, X, H, H', Ч, Ч', Ш, Ш, б, Э, [□](#), [□](#)

Zazaki – Dimili branch transformed Cufic to Latin during the 80 years of XX Century in the exile mainly in Sweden , as follow.

letter	pronunciation [IPA]	Zazaki	Persian (UniPers)	English	German
A	a [ɑ]	asmên	Âsmân	Sky	Himmel
B	be [b]	Bıze	Boz	she-goat	Ziege
C	ce [dz / dj]	cemed	Yax	Ice	Eis
Ç	çe [ts / tsh]	Çê (keye)	Xâne	house	Haus
D	de [d]	Dare	Dâr/deraxt	Tree	Baum
E	e [ɛ]	Ez	Man	I	Ich
Ê	ê [e]	Dês	Divâr	Wall	Wand, Mauer
F	fe [f]	Fek	dahan/fak	Mouth	Mund
G	ge [g]	Gırs (gırd)	Bozorg	Big	Groß
Ğ	ğe [gh]	ğezale	Qazâl	Gazella	Gazelle
H	he [h]	Hak	toxm/hâg	Egg	Ei
I	ı [ə]	Bırr	Fangal	Forest	Wald
I	i [i]	Isot	Felfel	Pepper	Paprika
J	je [zh]	Jên (zên)	Zin	Saddle	Sattel

K	ke [k]	Koli	Hizom	firewood	Feuerholz
L	le [l]	Lew	Lab	Lip	Lippe
M	me [m]	most	Mâst	Yogurt	Joghurt
N	ne [n]	name	Nâm	Name	Name
P	pe [p]	Porr	Mu	Hair	Haar
Q	qe [q]	qatr	qâter/xar	Mule	Maultier
R	re [r]	Ri	Ru	FACE	Gesicht
S	se [s]	Sole	Namak	SALT	Salz
Ş	şe [sh]	Şêr	Şir	Lion	Löwe
T	te [t]	Tı	To	You	Du
U	u [u]	ustne	Sotun	column	Säule
Ü	ü [ü]	dü (du)	Dud	Smoke	Rauch
V	ve [v]	vewre (vore)	Barf	Snow	Schnee
W	we [w]	ware	ham.vâr	tableland	Sommerweide
X	xe [kh]	Ém	Ame	aunt (<i>paternal</i>)	Tante
Y	ye [y]	yene (êne)	jom'e/âdine	Friday	Freitag
Z	ze [z]	ziwan (zon)	Zabân	tongue; language	Zunge; Sprache

Source Paul, Ludwig. (1998) *"The Position of Zazaki Among West Iranian languages"* University of Hamburg.

Berdi Xan in 1932 wrote "As I have noted before, the Kurdish nation will converge via a unified Kurdish language. **The prerequisite of a unified Kurdish language is a unified Kurdish alphabet.** This means that the Kurdish scholars and the literati need to develop a writing system that allows all speakers hailing from every Kurdish dialect to use that writing system."

Today Kurdish tongue has a very rich linguistic landscape : three alphabets , four branches but mainly authors y readers!

But we'd not forget that is the expression of a national identity that suffer oppression except in the Kurdish Regional Government. Until that elected members of Turkish Parliament were forbidden, that an apartheid politics (including pogroms) were commons in Turkey , Iran and Syria. That many writers were forced to exile in for their national condition, and, because is impossible for them may write in their invaded motherland.

As an Appendix I putted from Kurdish Academy of Language, the Kurdish phonemes, their history phonology and the relation between Kurdish and Aryan Languages.

According to the Kurdish Academy of Language, Kurdish has the following [phonemes](#):

Consonants

	<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Labio-dental</u>	<u>Apical</u>	<u>Post-alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Uvular</u>	<u>Pharyngeal</u>
<u>Nasal</u>	m		n			ŋ		
<u>Plosive</u>	p b		t d			k ɡ ɟ ɢ		
<u>Affricate</u>				tʃ dʒ				
<u>Fricative</u>		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ	ç	x ɣ		ħ ʕ
<u>Lateral</u>			l ɭ ɭ̥					
<u>Flap</u>			ɾ					
<u>Trill</u>			r					
<u>Approximant</u>		ʋ			i			

- ^{^1} Just as in many English dialects, the velarized lateral does not appear in the onset of a syllable. Additionally, in some dialects, the velarized lateral /ɭ/ changes to a [ɾ] in women's speech.[42]
- ^{^2} /k/ and /ɡ/ are strongly palatalized before the [close](#) and [mid](#) front vowels (/i/ and /e/) as well as the [rounded high front allophone](#) [u] of the [phoneme](#) /w/, closing on /iʃ/ and /dʒʃ/.

Vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Back unrounded</u>	<u>Back rounded</u>
<u>Close</u>	i			u
<u>Near-close</u>			<u>ʊ</u> ^[citation] <u>needed</u> []]	ɯ
<u>Mid</u>	e			ɔ
<u>Open-mid</u>		ɛ		
<u>Open</u>		ä		

Historical phonology

<u>OP</u>	<u>MP</u>	<u>Persian</u>	<u>Kurdish</u>	<u>Parthian</u>	<u>Avestan</u>	<u>Pr</u>
θ	H	H	S	S	S	*š
D	D	D	Z	Z	Z	*ž
Ç	S	S	s?	Hr	θr ('s'?)	*θ
s/z	s/z	s/z	sp?/zw?	Sp/zw	Sp/zw	*š
Pasā	Pas	Pas	Pāš	paš	pas-ča	*p
J	Z	Z	Ž	Ž	J	*j
Ç	Z	Z	Ž	Ž	Ç	*
duv-	d-	d-	d-	b-	duu-	*C
(h)uv-	xw-	x(w)-	x(w)-	Wx-	xv-, huu-	*P
Rd	L, r	L	unclear (maybe: l, ł, r)	Rδ & rz	Rd & rz	*r
y-	j-	j-	j-	y-	y-	*y
fr-	fr- (hr-)	for- etc.	fr-	Fr-	fr-	*f

Θw	H	H	h? or w/v?	F	Θw	*C
B, d, g	w, y, (')	w, y, (/nil)	w, y, (nil)	β, δ, γ	b, d, g	*B
P, t, k	B, d, g,	b, d, g	w, h, y, (/nil)	β, δ, γ	p, t, k	*P
Nd	nd/nn	Nd	N	Nd	Nd	*R
Šn	Šn	Šn	Žn	Zn	Sn	*S
Všm, Vhm	-šm, -hm	-šm, -xm	-v (-w)	-šm, -hm	-šm, -hm	*Š
Vm	-m	-m	-v (-w)	-m	-m	*M
x-	x-	x-	k-	x-	x-	*X
šiyav-	šaw-	Šaw-	č-	šaw-	šiiu-	*C
w-	w-	b-	b-	w-	w-	*W
Ft	Ft	Ft	(w)t, (ft?)	Ft	Ft	*F
Xt	Xt	Xt	T	Xt	Xt	*X
-š-	-š-	-š-	-h-/nil	-š-	-š-	*-

Indo-European linguistic comparison

. (Source: *Altiranisches Wörterbuch (1904)* for the first two and last six.)

Kurdish	<u>Avestan</u>	<u>Persian</u>	<u>Sanskrit</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Engli</u>	<u>Germ</u>	<u>Swedi</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Lithuan</u>
ez "I"	äzəm [ezəm]	Adam [Old Persian]	aham	egō	I (< <u>OE</u> iċ)	ich	jag	Ego	Aš
Lep "hand"					(<u>OE</u> (<u>OH</u>				lōpa"p

						lōf G		aw,
						"fillet lappo		claw"
						, "palm		
						band (of		
						") the		
						hand)		
)		
		ghenānā				(OH		
Žin	mca					quee G	kvinn	(OPruss
"woman"	[ghenâ]	Zan	janay-	gynē		n	quen a	Femina .
	"woman"					a)		genna)
	"							
		ley ley						
leystin(bile		kardan(to						
yzim)	"to	réjati	paizo	play leich leka				láigyti
play(I play)"		jump with						
		one foot)						
		Masan				muc		
		(middle				h (< OH myck		
mezin,gewr	maz- ,	mah(i)-				OE G	et	Magnu
e "great"	mazant	/mahānt-	megas			mičil, mihh	"muc s	
		gošn(num				myčil il)	h"	
		erous))		
mêzer	Miθra	*Miça		mitra				
"headband/t	"binding	"god		"headba				
urban"	", "god name"(Old	mitrah		nd,				
	name" Persian)			turban",				

2.- Modernity with a living tradition

After Chaldiran battle were Safavids Iranians defeated by Ottoman Empire whose consequence was the 1639 treaty marked a line in Kurdish principalities, although they preserved good part of their autonomy . Before Sharaf al-Din ibn Shams al-Din Bitlisi). Born Feb. 25, 1543, in Bitlis; died 1603 or 1604 wrote in Farsi a book very important document for mediaeval history of Kurdish named Sharaf nameh (Book of princes). Because there's a good description of Kurdish half autonomy 40 principalities and also the peculiarity of Kurdish lordship , the hereditary condition , the condition in minted coins and the prayer in name of the prince no the Ottoman Sultan nor Iranian Shah , but, were under eminent sovereignty of both powers. In Ottoman Empire six major principalities endured until second half of XIX century (A. Hassanpour 2002).

I remember Italo Calvino words "A poem or a novel may describe history more faithfully than the best of specialized essay" because I will write about the dramatic love story of Mem u Zin wrote by Ahmad = e Khani . Indeed in the prologue Khani wrote with words that remember Dante Alighieri's De Monarchia "the Monarchy" and N. Macchiavelli's "Il Principe o il Stato" "The Prince or the State" . Because he "extolled the princes, and the

Kurdish language = courageous, ambitious, munificent etc. cc.226,227=265,273. he prognosticated the Kurds as an orphaned people they were "defenceless", "subjugated", "deprived", "defeated and subordinated", "doomed and utterly destitute" and "soaked in their blood" because Ottoman and Iranian rule and their division of Kurdistan. Only a king could reverse this situation" A. Hassanpour 2002. A king such as Machiavelli's prince means a unified state; don't forget that in those days the state will is expressed through a sovereign.

Although poetry was the main branch of Kurdish literature, in second half of XIX century the rhyme and rhythm of traditional poems began to use the free verse, a situation that strength in XX century and mainly with the partition and colonization of Kurdistan between four countries.

It was in the exile that Kurdish literature flourished more, even do , if authors may write in their own land with the conquerors tongue.

So, novel , essays and poetry are printed in Sweden, Germany or France. In Turkey thanks to exceptional editors very worthiest such as A. Önal and R. Zarakoglu in Istanbul.

The ancient tradition is alive in a wealthy literature,

3.- Why Kurdish Language is forbidden ?

The dialectic between conquests and conquered is to depict the last in order to he thought that is unworthy, that the only means to be a human person is denying their own nationality in favour of conquers nationality. The mother tongue is relevant indeed because is their root.

That's the main reason in forbidden a language or in papers allow but in reality be prohibited .The case of former southern Amid (Diyarbakir) Mayor A. Demirbash when he tried to accomplish European Community Agreements and put in Kurdish , Arabic and in Turkish booklets and instructions for hospitals and Communitarian Center in three tongues , he supported pressing for his demission for took this Linguistic Equality measures and nowadays , although his very weak health conditions may be condemned to prison.

That kind of crime against humankind has a name is cultural ethnocide.

3.1 Through a contemporary of New Roz?

If you remember the beginning when the tyrant Zuhak need youthful brains, now, a new tyrannies need youthful brains. By means of forbidden their

mother tongue try to impede an independent pattern of thinking, a worthy of their patriotic values and their free expression in their mother language .

The declaration of Cultural Autonomy in Amid (Diyarbakir) try to rescue the wealthy culture not only Kurdish of all peoples that inhabited the territory of Turkey.

A contemporary New Roz that may carry a shining light for oppressed peoples is as wrote in Martín Fierro Poem “No será para mal de ninguno si no para bien de todos” , “It won’t be for anybody bad , unless will be for general goodness!”

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