מה. שלושת ברכות אלו יברך דוקא על פי הסדר הנזכר, משום שבכל אחד יש תוספת שבח, מפני שהעבד עדיף יותר מגוי, והאשה עדיפה מעבד.

ואם טעה וקדם ובירך ברכת "שלא עשני אשה" קודם שיברך "שלא עשני גוי", ו"שלא עשני עבד". יש אומרים שלא יברך עוד שתי הברכות הנזכרות של עבד וגוי, אלא יהרהר שם ומלכות בליבו. [ראה באי"ח וישב הי"י, מקבציאל שם הי"ט, כה"ח ס"ק לד]. אולם להלכה רשאי לברך שתי ברכות אלו בשם ומלכות, ויש לו על מה שיסמוך. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' נד]

In the proper order

48) These three blessings must be recited in the proper order, since each blessing thanks God for a greater gift than that expressed in the preceding blessing. This is because the soul of a non-Jewish slave who belongs to a Jew is on a higher level than the soul of a non-Jew, and a Jewish woman's soul is on an even higher level.

Some *Poskim* ruled that if someone mistakenly recited the blessing of *shelo asani isha* before reciting that of *shelo asani goy* or that of *shelo asani aved*, he may no longer recite the blessing or blessings that he skipped. According to this opinion, he should recite those blessings while meditating on God's Names without pronouncing them. In practice, however, there is a sound basis to permit him to recite these blessings in full, and he may certainly rely on that opinion.[38]

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created us. When we recite these three blessings, it is as if we are saying, "I wish that I had not been created, but now that God has created me, I will bless Him for not creating me a non-Jew, a non-Jewish slave, or even a Jewish woman.

The *Bayit Hadash* did not consider this answer satisfactory, and therefore he offered his own resolution, as follows: If our Sages had instituted a blessing of *she'asani Yisrael*, it would not be possible to afterward recite blessings to thank God for being created as a free man and for being created as a male. Once a person says that God created him as a Yisrael, he has already stated that he is not a slave and that he is male, since a Jewish woman would not be called Yisrael but *Yisraelit*. The only way we can recite three separate blessings is by thanking God for not creating us with inferior human souls. We first thank God for not creating us as non-Jews, then for not creating us as non-Jewish slaves, and finally men thank Him for not creating them as females.

The *Ture Zahav* offered an alternative resolution: If we would simply recite a blessing of "for making me a Yisrael," it would suggest that the creation of non-Jews and of women is worthless. This is not true; Jewish woman are essential and occupy an honored place in both this world and in the World to Come. Furthermore, the world benefits from the creation of the non-Jews as well, especially since many of them convert and join the nation of Yisrael. The Talmud states (*Bava Kama* 38b) that God guaranteed the continued existence of the nations of Amon and Moab because He knew that in the future two righteous women, Ruth (of Moab) and Na'ama (of Amon), would convert and assume prominent positions in our history.

Who did not make me

The *Bayit Hadash* explained that these blessings are meant to thank God for the fact that we were not born as a different person. At the moment that a child is conceived, an angel is instructed to place a soul inside the embryo. Each person thanks God every day of his life that He did not decree for his soul to be deposited in the body of a non-Jew. According to this interpretation, a convert would not recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* since his soul had originally been that of a non-Jew at the time of his conception and birth.

38. The *Magen Avraham* (46:9) and other *Aharonim* compared this set of blessings to the blessings of *matir asurim* and *zokef kefufim*. Just as someone who mistakenly recited *zokef kefufim* first cannot afterward recite the blessing of *matir asurim* (as explained above in halakha 31), the same halakha applies to someone who recited *shelo asani isha* before reciting the blessings of *shelo asani goy* or *shelo asani aved*. Likewise, if someone recited *shelo asani aved* before reciting the blessing of *shelo asani goy*, he may no longer recite the blessing that he skipped.

מט. מברך "שלא עשני גוי", שצריך ליתן שבח והודאה למקום שעשאהו מבני ישראל, שבחר בנו מכל האומות וקרבנו לעבודתו ולקיים מצותיו. [טור, ולבוש ס"ה]

והנופח הנכון הוא "שלא עשני גוי". ומה שיש באיזה ספרים נוסח "שעשני ישראל", או "שעשני יהודי" זה השינוי הוא מן המדפיסים שמחמת הפחד מן הצנזור שינו מן הכתוב. [עוד יוסף חי וישב ה"ט ועוד]

For being a Jew

49) The meaning of the blessing *shelo asani goy* is to thank God and praise Him for the immeasurable gift of being a member of the nation of Yisrael, who enjoys an intimate relationship with God and is privileged to fulfill the commandments of the Torah. Although in some ancient printings of the prayer book we can find this text substituted with the words *she'asani Yisrael* or *she'asani Yehudi*, those are not genuine texts of the blessing. These are unwanted perversions of the text forced upon the publishers by the Christian censors. They are testimony to the intense pressure placed on our people by the Christian Church and the heavy hand that the Christian censors wielded on every published Hebrew volume.

The *Mishna Berura* (46:16), however, cited many *Aḥaronim*, including the *Eliya Rabba* and *Derekh Haḥayim*, who disagreed with the *Magen Avraham* and ruled that in this case the person may recite the blessing or blessings that he had skipped. The *Ture Zahav* (46:6) explained that although a Jewish woman is on a higher spiritual level than a non-Jew or a non-Jewish slave, those men possess certain advantages that a woman does not have. In particular, they have the potential of becoming full-fledged Jewish men obligated to fulfill all the mitzvot – the non-Jew can convert and the non-Jewish slave might earn his freedom, in which case both men would become full-fledged Jewish men. A non-Jew has an advantage over someone who was born as a non-Jewish slave since a non-Jew has some familial status and he is considered a member of a nation, whereas the non-Jewish slave has no relatives at all; even his biological parents are not related to him. Moreover, he has no racial status at all according to Torah law. Furthermore, the *Maḥazik Hashekel* pointed out that a non-Jew can choose to convert to Judaism, but a non-Jewish slave cannot choose to become a free man, and in that way a non-Jew is superior to a non-Jewish slave. The *Peri Megadim* pointed out that a non-Jewish male slave has spiritual advantages over a woman since he must be circumcised and he is forbidden to cut off the *peyot* of his head and beard, whereas a woman is not obligated in those mitzvot.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 54) demonstrated that many *Aḥaronim* (*Eliya Rabba*, *Peri Ḥadash*, *Zekan Shemu'el*, *Matte Yehuda*, Harav Zalman, Harav ḤIDA, *Bet Oved*, *Peri Megadim*, Harav Akiva Eiger, *Derekh Haḥayim*, *Shalme Tzibbur*) concurred with the *Ture Zahav*. In fact, a number of *Poskim* (Rabbenu Aharon Halevi, *Leket Yosher*, *Bayit Ḥadash*) ruled that it is permissible to recite the blessing of *matir asurim* after reciting that of *zokef kefufim*, and if so they certainly would rule that it is possible to recite these blessings out of order as well. Moreover, according to the *Od Yosef Ḥai* cited above in the footnote to halakha 31, one must recite all the morning blessings each day even if one recites them out of order. Since the overwhelming majority of the *Poskim* concurred on this matter, one may rely on them and recite all these blessings, even if one mistakenly confused their order.

נ. גר אינו מברך ברכת "לא עשני גוי". [ברכ"י סי' מו אות ט]. **אלא יברכנה בלא שם ומלכות.** [כה"ח שם ס"ק לח], **וכן לא יברך הגר בנוסח "ברוך שעשני יהודי".** [אור לציון ח"ב פ"ד אות ב]. **וכן לא יברך בנוסח "שעשני גר".** [ראה משנ"ב ס"ק יח, וכה"ח שם]

ולכל הדעות יוכל הגר לברך "שלא עשני עבד", ו"שלא עשני אשה". [ראה ברמ"א שם, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק יח]

Converts

50) A convert must not recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* in full, nor should he recite a blessing of *Barukh she'asani Yehudi* or *she'asani ger*. Instead, he should recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* without pronouncing God's Name.[39] All the *Poskim* agreed that a convert may recite the blessings of *shelo asani aved* and *shelo asani isha*.[40]

39. The Rama (gloss to 46:4) ruled that a convert does not recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* since he was born a non-Jew. The *Bayit Hadash* interpreted this to mean that, according to Rama, the convert should substitute this blessing with *she'asani Yehudi*, but he disagreed with that as well. He argued that the fact that this person converted to Judaism is not God's doing but rather the convert's own choice. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 39) reconciled the Rama's opinion, explaining that it was not entirely up to the convert to become Jewish. He was able to convert only because God installed this system into Judaism enabling a non-Jew to petition a rabbinical court to accept him as a member of the Jewish nation. The fact that the judges on the court agreed to accept him cannot be taken for granted, either. Therefore, the convert may thank God for enabling him to successfully undergo the process and become Jewish.

The *Magen Avraham* (46:10) deduced from the *Darkhe Moshe* that a convert is supposed to recite the blessing of *she'asani ger* – Who made me a convert. The term "made me" can apply to the fact that God inspired this person to reject idolatry and to accept Torah Judaism. We find this expression used regarding Avraham Avinu, who took those people of Haran whose "souls he had *made*" with him to the land of Canaan (*Bereshit* 12:5). Nevertheless, the *Magen Avraham* admitted that many authorities disagreed with this formula, arguing that when a person converts to Judaism, we cannot attribute it to God but to the personal decision of the convert to take this great step forward.

There are *Poskim* who permitted converts to recite the regular blessing of *shelo asani goy*. The *Sheyare Kenesset Hagedola* (glosses on the *Bet Yosef* 46:5) explained that when the convert recites this blessing his intention is to thank God for the fact that he did not remain a non-Jew. Nevertheless, he ruled that it is best for the convert to recite the blessing of *shehikhnisani tahat kanfe haShekhina* – Who brought me under the protection of the Shekhina's Wings.

The *Magen Avraham* likewise permitted converts to recite the regular blessing, explaining that according to the Kabbalah this blessing is based on the fact that a person's soul leaves his body each night when he is asleep, and when he wakes up he thanks God for not replacing his soul with that of a non-Jew. If so, a convert can likewise thank God each morning for the fact that he finds himself still Jewish. The *Yad Aharon* concurred with this.

In practice, however, Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 46:9) ruled that a convert must not recite this blessing since Rabbenu Meir Halevi Abul'afiya (cited by the *Orhot Hayim* and Harav David Abudarham) ruled that he may not recite it, and it appears that the *Bet Yosef* concurred with this. In light of the many opinions regarding this issue, the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (46:36) and the *Or Letziyon* concluded that a convert should recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* without pronouncing God's Name, and not to recite the blessings of *she'asani Yehudi* or *she'asani ger* at all.

Actually, it might be commendable for a convert to recite these alternative blessings as well without pronouncing God's Name. In that way, he can satisfy the opinion of those *Poskim* who ruled that he should recite one of those blessings. On the other hand, this might be superfluous once he recited the blessing of *shelo asani goy*.

A woman who converted while expecting a child

The *Peri Hadash* ruled that if a non-Jewish woman became pregnant and then converted to Judaism before she gave birth, her child may recite the blessing of *shelo asani goy* with God's Name. The *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 46:5) disagreed, pointing out that it appears from the words of Rabbenu Meir Halevi Abul'afiya that only someone who was conceived by a Jewish woman may recite this blessing. Even though there are multiple reasons to permit this person to recite the blessing in full, in practice this person must follow the principle of *safek berakhot lehakel*.

40. The *Mishna Berura* (46:18) explained that although this person was born a non-Jew, who is inferior spiritually to a non-Jewish slave belonging to a Jew, there nevertheless is a great advantage to being a regular non-Jew. He had the choice of petitioning a rabbinical court to convert him, whereas a non-Jewish slave has no choice but to remain a slave; he cannot petition his master to free him.