

ברכות-ברכות השחר- Lesson Four- The Identity

Source 1

הלמוד בבבלי מסכת מנהות דף מג עמ' ב'-חניא, היה ר' מאמר: חייב אדם לברך שלוש ברכות בכל יום, אלו הן: שעשאני ישראל, שלא עשאני אשה, שלא עשאני בור. ר' אחא בר יעקב שעמיה לבריה, דהודה קא מברכ שלא עשאני בור, אמר ליה, قول' האי נמי? אמר ליה: ולא מי מברכ? שלא עשאני עבד, היינו אשה! עבד זיל טפי.

Translation: It was taught: R. Mayer said: A man is required to recite the following three Brachos daily: Blessed are You, G-d who did not make me a non-Jew... who did not make me a woman and... who did not make me a boor. Rabbi Aha the son of Jacob once overheard his son saying Blessed are You who did not make me a boor, whereupon Rabbi Aha said to him, And this too? Said the son to him: Then what blessing should I say instead? Rabbi Aha replied. . . who did not make me a slave. And is that not the same as a woman? A slave has a lower status than a woman.

Source 2

הווספה מסכת ברכות (ליברמן) פרק ו' הלכה יה'-ר' יהודה, או' שלוש ברכות חייב אדם לברך בכל יום ברוך שלא עשני גוי; ברוך שלא עשאני בור; ברוך שלא עשאני אשה. גוי שני (ישעיהו מ', יז) כל הגויים כאין ננדו באהם ותהי נחשבו לו; בור, שאין בור ירא חטא. אשה, שאין הנשים חייבות למצות.

Translation: R. Yehudah says: The following three Brachos should be said by a person each day: that I was not created as a non-Jew; that I was not created unlearned; that I was not created a woman. The basis to acknowledge that a person was not created as a non-Jew is the verse (Yeshayahu 40, 7): All the non-Jewish people are like nothing in front of G-d; For not being ignorant because the ignorant are not afraid of the consequences of sin and an ignorant person is rarely a zealous person; For not being a woman because a woman is not obligated to perform all the positive commandments.

Source 3

ספר אבודרדם ברכות השחר-ומברך אדם בכל יום שלוש ברכות אלו בראשונה שלא עשני גוי מפני שאין הגויים כלום לפניו שנאמר (ישעיה, מ', יז) כל הגויים כאין ננדו מאהם ותו הוחשבו לו. והשנית שלא עשני עבד מפני שאין העבד מצווה במצוות עשה שהומן גרם וא עוד שאין לו זכות אבות שלא עמדו אבותיו על דרך סני. ועוד שאין מאמין בו דרבבה עבדים מרבה גול (אבות פ"ב מ"ז). ועוד שאמור ליישא בת ישראל וקרוב לנו... והשלישית שלא עשני אשה מפני שאיןה מצויה במצוות עשה שהומן גרם כמו שפירשנו בהקדמת הספר זהה. האיש דומה לפועל שנכנים לשדה חבירו ונטעה ברשות. והאשה דומה לנכנים שלא ברשות. ועוד שאימת בעלה, עליה, ואין יכולת לקיים אפי' מה שננטווית. והנשים נזהנות לברך במקום שלא עשני אשה שעשני כרצונו למי שמידיק את הדין על הרעה הבאה עליו.

Translation: Each day a person should recite the following three Brachos: Sh'Lo Asani Goy-because the non-Jewish world is considered worthless before G-d as it written: (Yeshayahu 40, 17): All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. Next he should recite the Bracha: Sh'Lo Asani Aved because a Canaanite slave is not required to fulfill time bound Mitzvos; he has

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*no ancestral merit since his ancestors did not stand at Har Sinai; he has little credibility as we learn (*Avos Ch. 2, Mishna 7*) the more slaves you own, the more theft you suffer and he is prohibited from marrying a Jewish woman. All of these conditions transform his status as being nearly the status of a non-Jew . . . The third Bracha is: *Sh'Lo Asani Isha* because a woman is not required to perform time bound Mitzvos as I explained in my introduction. A man is like a person who enters his friend's field and works the field with permission while a woman is like someone who enters her friend's field and works the field without permission. Also she lives with fear of her husband and does not have the choice of even fulfilling those Mitzvos that she is required to perform. Women have accepted the custom to recite in place of this Bracha the Bracha of *Sh'Asani Kirtzono* as one who accepts her fate concerning the difficulties she has been dealt.*

Source 4

Guide To Jewish Prayer, Rabbi Isaiah Wohlgemuth, pp. 44-45

Many women feel uncomfortable about the men's blessing. In the Middle Ages, women gave expression to this discomfort by adding the blessing *שענני ברצון* ("Who has made me according to divine will"). Many years ago, Rav Soloveitchik noted that *Rabbi Meir* taught us the blessings of formation. *Rabbi Meir's* wife was *Bruria*, a most extraordinary woman who was a scholar in her own right. Whenever she felt that her husband was wrong in Talmudic learning, she told him so, and he accepted her word. He clearly did not view her as his inferior.

There is another, historical reason that Jewish men said this blessing, again relating to the need to learn not to resent an extra burden. The Romans forbade the study of *Torah* because they knew it prevented Jews from assimilating. The Romans executed any man who was caught studying or teaching *Torah*. *Rabbi Akiva* was murdered in those days, as was the father of *Bruria*, *Chananah ben Tradyon*.³⁰ Women were frequently captured (such as *Bruria's* sister, who was put in a brothel), but they were not executed.

Women as well as men became martyrs during the first Crusade, however. When the great communities of Worms, Speyer, and Mainz were massacred, the Christians did not make any distinction between men and women. All were massacred equally.

When *Rabbi Meir* saw what happened to his father-in-law, he introduced the blessing for men. He was expressing gratitude that men were given the "opportunity" to die for God. When the Crusaders in the Middle Ages started massacring all Jews, including women, the women introduced the blessing for women, because they too now had this "opportunity."

Source 5

The Three Morning Blessings" . . . Who Did Not Make Me . . . A Historical Study Of A Jewish Liturgical Text, A Dissertation by Yoel H. Kahn, Presented To The Faculty Of The Graduate Theological Center, April, 1999 (Now available in book form from Oxford University Press, 2010)

Chapter I: Sources and Parallels

A central tenet of ancient Greek culture was faith in the superiority of the Greeks and Greek civilization over other peoples and cultures. Non-Hellenic groups were universally characterized as "barbarian." In the period following the Persian Wars [490-479 BCE], Greek culture sharply distinguished between Hellene and barbarian, excluding the non-Greek from participation in key social activities and declaring the barbarian "other" a source of ritual uncleanness.¹ This assertion, along with other core Hellenistic identity statements, was summarized in an aphorism which was circulating as early as the 3rd century B.C.E.. if not before. The Jewish M tradition is based on this earlier Greek textual tradition, and began as a Jewish rejoinder to the competing Hellenistic slogan. The original Jewish context for the saying was probably the marketplace, bathhouse or similar shared inter-cultural space, rather than the exclusively Jewish space of the synagogue where it ultimately found its home. The parallel adaptation of the Hellenistic saying to the local culture and religious language, in which only the statement about nationality is changed, may have also taken place in Zoroastrianism. James Darmesteter

Many observers, beginning with Martin Luther, have noted the parallels between the language of *Menahot* and an aphorism from classical literature.³ The closest parallel to our text—and the oldest—comes from the fourth century BCE Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius, who suggests that the passage he quotes is widely known and its origin already clouded by the time he writes it down. Diogenes says that the aphorism is variously assigned to Thales, in whose name he quotes it, or by others to Socrates, in whose name it is most often cited:⁴

¹ ...[H]e used to say there were three blessings for which he was grateful to fortune:

^S first, that I was born a human being and not one of the brutes;
^G next, that I was born a man and not a woman;
^N thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian.

In a parallel vein, Plutarch, in his *Caius Marius*, writes:⁵

^I Plato...lauded his guardian genius and Fortune because, to begin with,
^S he had been born a man and not an irrational animal;
^N again, because he was a Greek and not a Barbarian;
^T and still again, because his birth had fallen in the time of Socrates.

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I identify the various elements of the aphorism:

- ¹ Introduction
- ^s Species (person vs. beast)
- ^g Gender (male vs. female)
- ⁿ Nation (Greek vs. barbarian, Israel vs. gentile)
- ^f Free vs. slave
- ^c Circumcized vs. uncircumcized
- ^p Polis (Athenian vs. Thebian)
- ^t Time (Generation of Socrates)

Source 6

סדר חיבור ברכות

זוקף בפופים
 מנביה שלדים
 המלביש ערומים
 הנוטן לשכוו בינה להבחין בין ים ובין לילה
 המכין מצעדיו גבר
 רוקע הארץ על המים
 האור ישראל נבורה
 שעשיתה بي כל צרכי
 שלא עשיתני גוי ועובד ע"ז כינוי הארץ
 מל ולא עדל
 שלא עשיתני עבד לבריות
 שלא עשיתני אשה
 שלא עשיתני בהמה

Source 7

מחוויר רומא 1548

כֹּאֵן אָמַה הַנּוֹתֵן לְשִׁקְוָי בִּינָה לְהַבְּחִין בּוֹין יָם וּבּוֹין לִילָה:
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה טְעַטְּתִּיתִי יִסְרָאֵל
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה פּוֹקְדִּת עָרִים
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה בְּגִבְעָה שְׁלָדִים
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה זְקוּף בְּפּוּפִים
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה הַפְּכִין בָּצָעִרִי גָּבָר
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה שְׁלָא עַטְנִי עֲבָד
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה שְׁלָא עַטְנִי אֲשָׁה
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה סְתִיר אֶסְוִרִים
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה סְלִבִּיט עֲרוּפִים
 כֹּאֵן אָמַה רַוקְעַה אַרְצָעַל הַמִּים

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Source 8

Cairo Geniza

בא"י אמר אשר בראת אותו ⁵⁴

אדם ולא בהמה
איש ולא אשה
ישראל ולא גוי
מלך ולאUrל ⁵⁵
חופשי ולא עבד.

Source 9

Sephardic 1700's

**ברוך אתה יי' אליהנו מלך העולם
שלא עשנינו כוותה חטא אומרים כוותה :**

Siddur Hegyon Lev

**ברוך אתה יי' אליהנו מלך העולם שלא עשנינו
עובד בוכבאים :**

Ashkenaz-Seder Avodas Yisroel-1800's

ברוך אתה יי' אליהנו מלך העולם שלא עשנינו נבריך נסיך :

Source 10

לקט יישר חלק א' (אורח חיים) עמוד ז' עניין ב'-ויאמר איש אומרת במקום שלא עשאני איש
שלא עשאני בהמה, אבל שמעתי מאשה שאומרת במקום שלא עשאני איש שעשאני
ברצונו, וככמדומה, לי שלא דודה, לה הגאון ז"ל כי אםו של הגאון ז"ל הקדושה בגבורת
אוושטריך הי"ד, דיתה אומרת שלא עשאני בהמה, ודבידרא שמצאהי בספר אחד, ז"ל:
ושמא כי בזה נחלקו רז"ל במנחות אם יש לברך שלא עשאני בהמה ודוק' וכן מזאתי בא"ה
בשם' מ"ז ז"ל ונחוג הנשים לברך שעשאנן ברכzionו.

Translation: He said that a woman recites in place of the Bracha of Sh'Lo Asani Isha, the Bracha of Sh'Lo Asani B'Heima (animal). Nevertheless, I have heard some women saying in place of the Bracha of Sh'Lo Asani Isha, the Bracha of Sh'Asani Kirtzono. And it is my recollection that the Gaon did not agree to that practice because the Gaon's mother who died in the decree of persecution that took place in Austria in the 1400's, followed the practice of saying Sh'Lo Asani B'Heima. I also found it written that way in one Siddur. Perhaps that explains why you find an argument as to whether we should say the Bracha of Sh'Lo Asani B'Heima. However I did find it written in the Tur Orach Chaim Siman 46 that it is customary for women to recite the Bracha of Sh'Asani Kirtzono.