

# DEIN JUDE

HEY YOU!

What?

THEN IT WAS THE SILENCE  
IT WAS SILENCE INSTEAD OF SILENCE

So, what?

- Nothing

THAN IT WAS NOTHING  
INSTEAD OF NOTHING  
IT WAS THE BEGINNING  
OF THE OTHER SIDE  
THE PROMISE OF A NAME  
PROMISE OF STARS  
AND ALSO A KIND OF  
PENIS PROFANATION

Who's calling?

ANYWAY, NOW THE QUESTION IS:  
WHERE HAVE ALL THE QUESTIONS GONE?  
ONE MINUTE HAS GONE  
I TALKED ENOUGH

Who's calling?

I don't remember what it was,  
the reason why, I don't remember it at all.  
But I know that you and I can be together,  
because I love you.

What? Are you telling me I'm egocentric?

- Yes you are! Yes you are!

And what about you?

Aren't you a bit too charming?

What?

Yes, your charms!

Pretty junk!

PRETTY JUNK CHARMS

We talked enough!

- Yes, we're always talking...

...do something!

Ye! I guess I killed your God!

I guess he was one of us.

- You are a fucking egocentric bastard!

PRETTY JUNK LOVE CHARMS

Yes, but

where have all the questions gone?

I think the Question is dead!

Don't you?

- So, Jude...

What?

- Yes! I killed your God. Yeah!

I guess it was out of revenge.

THAN IT WAS SILENCE  
AND THEN  
NOTHING INSTEAD OF SILENCE

OK...and then?

- Than what? What do you want?  
Do you want reconciliation?  
Pratensation?

Oh my God! No!

It's fifty perversion!

I don't want to be your brother,

it sounds like incest.

Really, no thanks!

- Hey, what the fuck are you doing?

You're not Jew, you're just insane!

But I want to tell you something:

memory is a luxury,

something for the rich.

You're still in this luxury, Mr. Rothschild!

You're wrong.

I'm not Mr. Rothschild, and, above all,

memory belongs to the future

therefore, something for the poor.

Anyway, I think you're asking bad jokes.

You can't kill the Question.

THEN IT WAS THE SILENCE

IT WAS NOTHING

LIKE THE NOTHING BEFORE

IT WAS ALSO BROKEN CHINA

AND THE ASS WHO SAW THE ANGEL

AND ARKS ON THE ARARAT

THE HYERATIC AND THE ERRATIC

A FEW ZELOTS BUT ALSO

RACHEL, JUDITH AND ESTHER

THE PRINCESS AND THE JEWISHNESS

OR WHATEVER ELSE YOU WISHED

AND THEN ONE KILLS THE GOD

AND THE OTHER KILLS THE QUESTION

AND THEY START TO BLA BLA

HEY YOU!

Who's calling?

- Who's what?

I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU

What question?

She says questions died long ago.

WHY DO YOU KEEP ON SWINGING?

And you call this a question?

AND YOU, DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE

A JEW?

And you, do you really think you're a voice

over?

NO, I AM YOUR VOICE OFF

Und ich bin dein JUDE

( It was autumn in Berlin)

From DEIN JUDE video, edition 1 / y liver 2008

# YOVEL\*

- Fifty years have gone by. That doesn't belong to you anymore.

\* Ah. It doesn't belong to me anymore.

- That's for sure! And believe me, it's best for you! For everybody; and damn it! Forget about the world; it's all for the better! That's something at least.

\* Are you sure? Anyway, I'm only thirteen years old and in this case it wouldn't belong to my father either.

SILENCE TOOK PLACE AGAIN, SOME PEOPLE ATTACH TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO QUESTIONING.

\* No? Don't you agree? Why are you smiling?

- For no reason.

\* For non reason. Indeed. In that case, allow me to say that every cultural identity should be questioned every fifty years.

- Do you regard your identity as being something you own?

Is an identity a due?

\* Crap yes!

- You always go radical. It's funny.

\* No I dramatize, it comes naturally, it's because of Europe.

- If you say so, haha, I like it.

SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO FALL OUT OF A BIKE. IT GIVES THEM AN IMPRESSION.

\* You know the "yovel" has never been put into practice.

- Maybe. So, are we anti-Semitic and chauvinistic?

DL - Paris, July 2009

\*\*Every fifty years, after seven Sabbatical cycles of seven years, HaShem's people observe the yovel, or jubilee, year. At such a time, both the forty-sixth and fiftieth year are to be considered holy, and we are to abstain from working the land, free our slaves, and let the purchased properties revert back to their original tribal owners.



# MARHAMI BOOKATZ + KURDI \*NY

560 Broadway Suite 604 New York City 10012  
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# AND NOW THAT "THE SIX MILLION JEWS FOUND ALIVE IN ARGENTINA" ARE MOSTLY DEAD BY NOW?



## And now the question is

By David Liver

Let's start with a story since that's where I intend to go anyway. It was snowing hard when I left my grandmother and moved to Italy.

I was five years old, and the truck driver who was taking us there sat me on his knees for a make-believe driving lesson. This was the moment when I found my grandmother by losing her.

I spent the next twenty years in Italy, between the Swiss border and Milan. At the outset, my feelings about that country were merely conflicted. Now I hate it and I live in Paris.

In those early years of my life, I was a stranger and I certainly felt like a stranger. I developed a sort of dreamy but unhealthy tendency to the elsewhere and in the blink of an eye this became softly mystical - let's say symbolic so as not to offend the partisans of atheism. Within a few years, however, it was inevitable that I became Italian, because of geography and the sun's effect on my skin.

Distance had become remoteness and remoteness turned into absence: in my mind, they were all physical. But I will not tell of my childhood and write pomography. My experience of this state of the human being was all too human. Actually I would prefer to talk about dogs spelling my name by prising on a wall.

I have a question.

"what about the "Six million Jews found alive in Argentina" who are mostly dead by now?"

*This is not a real question, but the rattle for cheap rhetoric stimulated in him that sense of distance for which he was so eager. He was sad and did not put sugar in his coffee. Being paranoid can turn you into a true New Yorker and this is quite glamorous.*

And now?

Let's question the questioning. This should not be idealistic. After a long relationship with "the doubt", right now I think that asking is the same as affirming.

Before the Enlightenment, that which was questioned and therefore put in the dark was in the general domain of morality and under the jurisdiction of the religious code.

PLAT LUX, and then contextually, "European" society shifted towards secular religion. Illusional efforts to demean the notion of the sacred in favor of new progressive values were illusional because surrounding euphoria (the loftiest of revolutionary symptoms) and the corrupting of necessary seditious visions.

Something has been overlooked, forgotten or ignored. The sacred is the foundation of western political thinking which produces separation as well as poetic urgency, and which, in fact, has never truly disappeared. We just adapted it to current circumstances. This issue would require much more consideration, but that's not the point.

Like a crocodile, this concept of Sacred has survived all the eras and remains the murkiest and oldest of concepts.

Questioning in and of itself remains the main instrument of any inquiry, whether it is conducted by the establishment or not. From the moral inquiry to the logical inquiry, the goal of questioning is to sustain the current system through the interviewee's confession.

The question enables us to know how everything is positioned and refers to the relative scale of values that is implicit within the question itself.

Secular society - of secular beliefs and as disparaged as it may be - has not abolished the symbolic structure of the Sacred. It also uses questioning as a medium between the two parties involved in this speculative system: the known and the unknown, or the here and the there.

The Question then becomes what Socrates might have described as the demon, that semi-divine entity who creates relationships between men and gods.

The Question then becomes what Socrates might have described as the demon, that semi-divine entity who creates relationships between men and gods.

What secular morality based solely on reason has lost after its establishment is that there can be no evolution without symbolic thought and that symbols that are not, by definition, subjective.

The idea of a technocratic society is a dogmatic illusion. Within a speculative model - question and answer - one cannot imagine alternatives other than those those predicted by that scenario.

The Question thus coincides with the Assertion and this mutation of the Doubt has lost all suggestion of poetry. It is the perfect portrait of the isolated at the top of a totalitarian system's intelligence.

Now I wonder: Should we still faithfully believe in this golden bull?

And I want to reply to myself: Should there exist a question other than some blurry and ridiculous poem or something miraculously lost?

I'd really like to ask this question once again.

Paris - August 2009

Translated from French by Roger Liver

# Ashekemuslim mice we are

A conversation piece with Fa'iz Marhami and David Liver

**DL** - Hey! What's new today?

**FM** - Not too much David, I'm on business travel.  
Raining here.

**Same here.**

**How are you?**

**I'm fine**

Then I saw your work and have been addicted since  
Hey, I could not remember if you knew where I from and my ethnic background.

**Mother German  
And Palestinian father  
Actually our two best contemporary friends**

**Yes, your two best friends.**

**I love this kind of friends**

I work hard to bridge the divide,  
Haha.

**I think the divide is healthy. No needs bridges.**

That's impressive let me think about it...  
How has that "identity" or label changed for you throughout your life?

**Oh, The switch was made by a conversation between My Grand Ma and my aunt, I was 10 and Judaism was really not present in our lives - for lots of reasons. Anyway and they were talking about a gift for my birthday it was matter of: is it "healthy" to give MAUS the comics to a ten years kid? - Kind of psycho brainstorming - I received MAUS and the discussion I heard, turned me in to a Heeb!**

I think that's what turned me to the Heeb side as well.

**What do you mean Muslim?**

Religion was not lived in my family either. I went to Quran School. I grew up extremely religious to the dissatisfaction of my parents. At Um I read MAUS lol and everything changed from that point forward.

**AshkéMuslim mice we are!**

**What a great wording!**

**I like to joke with meanings, sometimes they become richer to me.**

A friend introduced to me yesterday... "Are you Taliban Teasing me?"

**Hahaha**

Tell me more about this idea of "belong to mice?"

**I don't know, it's not only about the Shoah as every body could think at first just after we talked about Maus.**

**It's a political image ... I like Mickey "Maus."**

It's interesting: you're the first person I have talked to that uses the term Shoah.

**So?  
It's normal... no?**

Oh I'm not suggesting it is bad in any way in English... I have just never heard anyone say Shoah though I know lots of Jews and I know what it means.

Last week for instance I made the nazy HEB, with the right hand lifted, you know, and I was with my Jewish friends onto which I drew a Mickey mouse portrait. I love him! I told you. Also during a press conference in Berlin, I said that after the shoah we committed suicide of our culture and bla bla, B.L.A. B.L.A.

**Ah so?**

**It's completely stupid to me, but it's something like a vaccination to stupidity with a little dose of stupidity I try to make some safe noise. But Now I'm sick about it.**

But to challenge an individual's ideas, provocation can be used to help.  
So do you consider yourself very religious?

**I don't know, it is a ground**

I feel the same way

**I always try to see what remain sacred in the contemporary.**

It's as much a study of what remains sacred or how we today view/perceive the sacred in our various universes?

**Yes at least remains sacred and untouchable**

It also is a study of how the sacred can today be easily turned into a commodity.

**Yes good observation, but there is no didacticism for me just new stories.**

You explained exceptionally well.

**I don't think so, maybe you find it nice just because I speak English as I can, edgy, like an urgency and this can seem poetic like art, as I can.**

I can't describe it other than ... yes. Thinking to what you said We both has to find a solution to re-define us ... you see? Actually redefining ourselves given our mixed Arab/Muslim backgrounds that not means to modernize those cultures, but to exit from some stoned attitudes; it does not mean assimilate, but is like turning on a flashlight in the darkness.

**Restart to create. Even with the cheap material that we dispose.**

**And you say your English is bad.**

**Yes extremely bad. I'm drunk today**

Ha ha are you drunk?  
I need a glass of wine, good idea!!

**I need a coffee, and you can't drink wine. Don't do it bloody muslim!!!**

**Ha ha**

**Sometimes I loose the goal of all this. So I have to remind to myself why I do that Right now I don't know how to explain what I'm doing as an artist, really I don't know. My Jewish character is baring me a lot. I'm becoming allergic to Jews.**

I know... do you feel disconnected from Judaism?

**Totally today  
No wait, maybe.**

I think this raises a very interesting question. The disconnect that our generation seems to experience between religion. Is that a result of the situation in Israel/Palestine? What causes it?  
How does each person deal with it?

**I think the Middle East conflict is just one more superficial and mainstream consciousness deal of our society. But of course it raises some true doubts on what history and public knowledge really are.**

What remain of the collective history feelings? That is especially important to me. I agree that it is superficial but in some ways it has begun to transcend superficiality into something much larger at least on the Palestinian, Lebanese side; it has completely divided a people, an ethnic group.

My family for instance is ashamed to say they are Arab let alone Palestinian and stopped talking to me when I began to openly say I am Palestinian and proud of it.

**The generation of our parents is especially atheist because after the world second war everybody tried to make society more modern, in a sense. Religion now is often a kind of social circle... let's say a lobby.**

But religious feelings still also something like financial, naïf old fashion attitude.

**I don't know, I think all is religious, also stupidity and rigidity, because the scarred little boy inside of us. I'm one hahahaha.**

But it takes a man to admit that.

**What? Religion?**

That everybody is a scarred little boy inside.

**The interesting for me is to explore those personal perceptions made also of history, I mean made also of social narration. So if you are in front of ambiguous languages that teas you, actually you have to reorganize your personal heritage, your own way to see. That's religion in fact. Because the fear and the lost you feel.**

Sorry I'm trying to understand part of what you wrote.

**Yes it's a little bit difficult for me to explain in English.**

Explain it please.  
I'm going to grab some water while you're typing.

**Mmmm , ambiguity makes the chaos and you have to listen to your background if you want to exit this chaos. So this is a basic attitude for a lost person, something natural and at the ground of the culture. Reorganization of points of view. This is religion for me: a kind of chaos in the eyes. Ok I grab some coffee**

**What about this?**

"This is religion for me: a kind of chaos in the eyes".

**Well, Think to an emigrant. Try to figure out an emigrant. When the sight is getting lost I find the religion it's maybe banal but I want to test this religious being in our contemporary culture.**

This is making me think of La Nausée - Jean Paul Sartre.

I prefer Remain Gary. Anyway, when aesthetical and historical perceptions are blurred there is the nausea. I want to do something like this nausea, hahaha Oh shame on me! I don't want to make parallelism between Sartre and me. Like you try to religious with emigratives. I mean emigration is a luxury like art. Emigrants need such a good snob side to survive in their extreme experience. They must be snob face life.

So good to contrast. Coming for fun as a luxury. Coming as I'll be back or I'm coming because I was forced, or shipped here. Well mainly your work centers on the Jewish as the emigrant, but in two totally different ways. I'm thinking to the BMW series, there's a story around that.

**There is always a story behind. That's the meaning of all our works. There is here something sexy you know?**

Completely

I have those projects, for instance, Just to bridge with the BMW series A ceramic garlic and the Jesus family refugees. Sexy refugees.

I love that "sexy refugees".

**I wrote something about the sexy being of the emigrant! I also wrote Jewishness is sexy like a high heels walk. Hey, what do you think about impertinence? Someone told me that I'm an impertinent artist.**

Someone told you that?  
It can have multiple meanings in English.

**That's drives me to think about this concept.**

I think what he was saying was precisely an edge, some sort of incivility, rudeness but that's precisely what gets the point across for instance the "Dem Jude" video or even better your performance at the Venice Biennale. Your work embodies at times an irrelevance, an unfriendliness even that gives it a certain distinguishing quality. At first it comes across as rude, vulgar but when you stop to watch, listen, really think about the underlying message you begin to realize that it's actually quite beautiful, passionate even.

**I'm happy. Thank you. Now I can grab some water.**

While seemingly impertinent, the piece is actually of immense value emotional, cultural, political, social value.

**The truth as I told you one day, is that I focus on the deception. Generally the background is the conflict And my figure with Jewish characters is an artistic stuff. I try to build something at new with all this mess of culture that's our heritage.**

Wait we have to come back to that...that was an interesting statement  
Was your performance where you painted the star of David on the window front in Germany?

**Yes Berlin. Very controversial.**

What was your objective?

**I was wearing "Jewish" and I ran out in the street with a big woody ladder and a jar of white lacquer. I jumped on the ladder with a big brush and hop hop hop, the star was made on the shop window, it takes ten minutes. Peoples passing near was shocked or enjoyed and quickly there came the police! I was a Jew doing self vandalism; doing something having a common sense of anti-Semitism.**

Why?

**It has the opposite sense for me Judaism begin with a vandal act, Abraham breaking idols; he left the family, his home, his country and he circumsised himself: another violence in some way and another destruction of the idols. A kind of first decide. Well, In Berlin the show name was JUDE. The first thing that people had to see was the huge vandal magen David, my name, and the easiest symbol of Jewishness. Of course immediately in Berlin it refers to kristallnacht The very first action and image of Jude, the vandalic star act was for me like the first act of Judaism with Abraham - breaking idols - I wanted to broke the Shoah idol before starting the Jude show**

Why ambiguous position?

**Because I try to be in opposition with all comfortable positions. I want to be a dialectic partner even for the Jewish. Facing Judaism I become a kind of anti-Semite. I know it's absurd. It's what Husseinme call the criminal penetration, but it's a good feeling. Fa'iz still you there? I know I talk too much. Ok. I talk too much**

Wow No at all. I'm just thinking, trying to take it all in. That's a heeb story right there.

**Probably, what I love in Judaism is the "perversion".**

All is perverted when you use it.

**The human culture in itself is a kind perversion.**

Je dois l'écrire.

**Just do it**

hahaha universal american language. haha  
People don't take the time to get to know the artists.  
That's what's important at least for me.

**Yes but what's make important to know artists?**

To understand their work, where they are coming from .

**Yes. Maybe. In the case that you love art.**

Yes

**Ok, but in fact we make our business with our marginality.**

Explain

**We make of our personal adventure some precious kind of things that makes business; so our marginal meaning become a business for investor. It's maybe a way to make durable ecologic business.**

That's a very interesting way to look at both markets  
Your questioning is good.  
I question all day too. Thank god for my journal.

**Thanks Sir. So recording , rerecording...**

It's just my way of expressing things sometimes.

**Recording life it's always "kunst" Mekas teach !**

Life is always kunst?  
Elaborate on that for me.

**No: rerecording life it's always Kunst. To record is make art.**

I'm sort of obsessed with recording; like these chats.  
And Mekas?

**Mekas, I don't know, probably. He records a video journal since ... I think since forever I think Recording just to record it's absolutely sublime. So your journal should be the same**

Remember remember remember  
We are so much alike  
I'm going to grab some water...I'll be back in five minutes.

**Ok While you grab water I feed my Fag.**

I love that you feed the fag, but what do you want to talk about?

**I don't know.**

**Not your art...but what does Y Liver want to say.**

From here the art, the creativity will flow, for instance with this project with me.

**Manage some ambiguity. Stories of divides.**

Divides? Good!

**Yes the distance and the divides We joked about us as Ashkemuslims mice. That's the divide. I see the ambiguity as something health and same for the divide. I don't pretend to teach anything. Just to blur.**

Oui, je comprends, c'est la nuisance. I know you're not preaching.

**I tell stories I don't want to change anything with the dogma and that's way I want to tell things and not just making mute contemporaries.**

I agree, push beyond more contemporaries. Push, push.

**I need muscles**

Me too!  
Damn its so rainy here and so cold. I hope it's sunny when I'm in Paris.

**Cold, hot, cold , hot , cold and hot !!! Boring tango**

I like that the Ashkemuslims and their conversations.  
I'm so glad.

**I'm glad that you are glad. Such a gladship !**

Now we need a great title...

