

BERLIN



Lyrics and music by **ARIEL HOROWITZ**

BACKGROUND

Ariel Horowitz was born to Israeli musical royalty. His mother was the famed Naomi Shemer – she who wrote such classics as Yerushalayim Shel Zahav, Al Kol Eleh, Lu Yehi. Horowitz came to fame with his cute Israeli kind of “50 ways to leave your lover”, called [Yalla Bye](#) – that combination of Arabic and English that together make a phrase in Hebrew. From there he shared his secret love for [Rene Zellweger](#) in another hit of 2001, and caught the hearts of Jews around the world with his [celebration of the funeral of lone soldier Sean Carmeli](#) in 2014. In 2017 Horowitz added his musical opinion to the debates about Israelis moving to live in Berlin.

WHAT'S WITH BERLIN?

Beginning in 2013, inheriting the concerns over Israeli price gouging expressed in the Tent Protests for Social Justice in 2011, Israelis in Berlin began commenting on how standard Israeli-made food products cost far less abroad than they do in Israel. From a concern about the price of the “Milki” chocolate mousse, this complaint led to TV news reports on the “New Yordim” – the new wave of people leaving Israel (literally “going down”) to live in Berlin. Even the Finance Minister at the time, Yair Lapid, wrote on his Facebook page:

“A word for all those who have had enough and are leaving for Europe. You happen to have caught me in Budapest. I came here to give a speech to the Parliament against Antisemitism, and to remind them how they attempted to murder my father here only because Jews did not have a country of their own, how they murdered my grandfather in a concentration camp, how they starved my uncles, and how my grandmother was saved from the March of Death at the last minute. So you’ll forgive me if I have little tolerance for people who are willing to throw into the garbage the only country the Jews have, because Berlin is more comfortable.”



Actually why not Berlin?
Why not Berlin?
Really low prices on the Eastern side
And there's a guy from our unit who's already gone
Better hurry because there's a limit
On the German language course

Actually why not Berlin?
Why not Berlin?
It's been an international city for ages
You don't have to pay for your studies
And sometimes even the apartment is on them

Along the broad boulevard blow winds of change and love
And in the earth the voice of the blood of your brother tells you
Wordlessly
Of the demons of Berlin

Actually why not Berlin?
Why not Berlin?
After a month or two you get used to German
And begin to value the culture
The tram gets to you punkt on time

Actually why not Berlin?
Why not Berlin?
It's been an Israeli city for ages now
You can speak Hebrew out loud there
With an echo of Yiddish off the walls

Along the broad boulevard blow winds of change and love
And in the earth the voice of the blood of your brother tells you
Wordlessly
Of the demons of Berlin

Lama lo Berlin, b'etzem
Lama lo Berlin?
Zol sham me'od b'tzad hamizrachi
V'yesh chaver mehaplugah shekvar nasa
K'dai me'od shetimaher ki yesh michsah
B'kurs l'Germanit

Lama lo Berlin, b'etzem
Lama lo Berlin?
Zo kvar mizman ir benle'umit
Al halimudim ata lo teshalem
V'lif'amim gam hadirah aleyhem

Bashdera harechava ruchot shinu'l v'ahava
Umitoch ha'adama kol dmei achicha mesaprim lecha
Bli milim
Al hashedim shel Berlin

Lama lo Berlin, b'etzem
Lama lo Berlin?
Chodesh chodshayim mitraglim l'Germanit
Umatchilim leha'arich et hatarbut
T'chashmalit shemagi'a elecha punkt al hadaka

Lama lo Berlin, b'etzem
Lama lo Berlin?
Zo kvar mizman ir yisra'elit
Efshar ledaber ivrit sham b'kolei kolot
Im hed shel idish shechozer mehakirot

Bashdera harechava ruchot shinu'l v'ahava
Umitoch ha'adama kol dmei achicha mesaprim lecha
Bli milim
Al hashedim shel Berlin

למה לא ברלין בעצם
למה לא ברלין?
זול שם מאוד בצד המזרחי
ויש חבר מהפלוגה שכבר נסע
כדאי מאוד שתמהר כי יש מקסה
בקורס לגרמנית

למה לא ברלין בעצם
למה לא ברלין?
זו כבר מזמן עיר בינלאומית
על הלמודים אתה לא תשלם
ולפעמים גם הדירה היא עליהם

בשדרה הרחבה רוחות שנוי ואהבה
ומתוך האדמה קול דמי אחיד מספרים לך
בלי מלים
על השדים של ברלין

למה לא ברלין בעצם
למה לא ברלין?
חדש חדשים מתרגלים לגרמנית
ומתחילים להעריך את התרבות
ת'חשמלית שמגיעה אליך פונקט על הדקה

למה לא ברלין בעצם
למה לא ברלין?
זו כבר מזמן עיר ישראלית
אפשר לדבר עברית שם בקולי קולות
עם הד של יידיש שחוזר מהקירות

בשדרה הרחבה רוחות שנוי ואהבה
ומתוך האדמה קול דמי אחיד מספרים לך
בלי מלים
על השדים של ברלין



GENESIS 4

Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him.

Vayakam Kayin el Hevel achiv vayahargehu

וַיִּקַּם קַיִן אֶל-הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהַרְגֵהוּ:

The LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

*Vayomer elokim el Kayin ey Hevel achicha?
vayomer lo yada'ti hashomer achi anochi?*

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-קַיִן אֵי הֶבֶל אָחִיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי
הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אָנֹכִי:

Then He said, "What have you done? Hark, **the voice of your brother's blood** cries out to Me from the ground!

*Vayomer meh asita? **Kol dmey achicha** tzo'akim
elay min ha'adamah.*

וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עָשִׂיתָ **קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ** צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן-הָאֲדָמָה:

Therefore, you shall be more cursed than the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

*V'ata arura ta min ha'adama asher patzta et piyha
lakachta achicha miyadecha*

וְעַתָּה אָרוּר אַתָּה מִן-הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה אֶת-פִּיהָ
לִקְחוֹת אֶת-דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ מִיָּדְךָ:

AND NOW YOU

- How does the combination of history and the Biblical reference affect your reading of the song's chorus?

The song asks: "Why not Berlin?" and in its haunting chorus offers something of an answer.

- What would you say is Horowitz's answer to the question he poses?
- What would be your answer?

THEMES

- # **Family obligations**
- # **History's grip on the present**
- # **Land of Israel**
- # **Holocaust**
- # **Blood ties**
- # **Connection to our dead**
- # **Escapism**
- # **Individual vs Collective**