

pressing Judaism, two ways to be Jewish that incredibly strengthen each other: the rooted one and the exiled one.

Israel without a maintained exile would perhaps lose a very fundamental dimension of its being, its pluralistic cosmopolitanism, which evidently originates from the memory of exile. Conversely, a Judaism of exile that wouldn't be reinforced by the existence of Israel would be moribund, shameful and vulnerable, for it owes the pride of its self-assertion to the existence of Israel. These two Jewish destinies are politically and metaphysically complementary.

You present two distinct concepts within the French Jewish community: one depicting a frightened Jew, ashamed of his identity, and the other praising the Jew, confident in the values of freedom of speech. Is this a community ideologically armed against the threat of antisemitism?

For the most part, France is a mosaic of Jewish micro-institutions, gathering into pressure groups determined to fight semantic drifts targeting Jews or Israel, as well as concrete manifestations of antisemitism. Opposing this, the Jewish official representative institutions act with blatant conformism, and waste time in rifts of internal policy.

In your book, you also praise the Jews of Europe whom you call "its best sons and very first teachers" and express concern over the future of Central Europe, freed from dictatorial regimes, but deprived of "the millions of Jews missing from the landscape." What is the Jews' contribution to the spiritual development of Europe?

Central Europe before the Shoah was a Jewish Europe, its cultural ferment was Judaism. The loss of its Jews is an unprecedented historic catastrophe, a disaster whose full extent those countries don't yet realize, which, in my opinion, is likely to hinder their future development the most.