

## **DOVID EFUNE**

Esteemed Rabbis, dignitaries, machers, ladies and gentlemen, it's a real honor to have you with us here tonight, specifically with the rain. The good news is that the British people among us now feel very much at home.

The event tonight is the fourth annual Gershon Jacobson memorial lecture hosted by the GJCF, the Gershon Jacobson Jewish Continuity Foundation.

Today's world is riddled with many challenges confronting us not only as Jews but as citizens of the world. We have an economic crisis, nuclear threats from Iran and from North Korea, global terrorism, and of course, what is closest to our hearts are the challenges that face our land, Israel. These are challenges both within and without. Israel's enemies, sadly, have not gone away. The threat from Iran is real, and it's frightening, as well as concern about attacks from Hamas, from Hezbollah and from many others.

I recently had the privilege of interviewing Britain's Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks. He defined the three biggest Jewish challenges that we face today as number one, anti-Semitism, the rise of anti-Semitism, number two, the isolation of Israel, specifically in the media, and number three, continued assimilation and out-marriage.

Our current challenges that we face may seem overwhelming to many people. It causes some of us simply to shrug our shoulders and retreat into our own lives. After all, we all have personal issues that we have to take care of – providing for our families, working at home, struggling to make ends meet. But at the same time we, as Jews, have always known that either you're part of the problem or part of the solution. Sitting on the sidelines, for us, is not an option, and we have to do whatever we can. Indeed, there is a tremendous amount that we can do.

This is why we are gathered here this evening. Throughout history many have tried to define us Jews, sometime as slaves, sometimes as victims, sometimes as an insular ghetto race, and today, sadly, even as occupiers or aggressors. Sadly, at times, Jews have gone along with these definitions, but the strength of the Jewish people has always been to stand tall and not bow to any man-made conventions. In today's Jewish identity crisis we are often lacking in this, with all of our freedom and all of our comforts.

The resolute voice that has run through the annals of history is often very silent. With all of our present challenges we are in sore need for this particular voice. This frames the mission of the GJCF, the Gershon Jacobson Jewish Continuity Foundation, to utilize all modern-day vehicles and technologies to present a strong, courageous voice addressing all of the issues of our times with the wisdom, clarity and direction fueled by 4,000 years of Jewish experience.

Today we live in a time of unprecedented opportunity to bring the Jewish message to everybody, to all, demonstrating how Judaism offers an approach to the matters that concern us both in our personal lives and on a global front. Judaism brings a message of hope in the face of despair, moral courage and guidance to a world of rampant confusion, misdirection and moral relativism.

I joined the GJCF about a year ago. Despite many opportunities for a young man, I was compelled by the mission and the vision of the GJCF's unique opportunity that it provided and provides to shape the future in a meaningful and lasting way.

We all know the power of the media in today's world. The topic of today's lecture is The Media and the Silencing of Support for Israel. Media reaches the ears of the masses, and we have been developing and continue to develop outlets to convey this Jewish message of hope, truth, justice and an unassailable set of morals acting as an indispensable guide to the world in which we live and the challenges that we face, capturing our rich history and our vibrant soul and bringing it to the next generation.

This is a pioneering step in approaching the three Jewish challenges that Rabbi Sacks mentioned and other trials that lay ahead of us. We are media infused with meaning, vision and direction, and we are disseminating information that inspires.

The GJCF is a pro-active organization. We are young, entrepreneurial, vibrant and rapidly expanding. Among our friends and supporters are people that stand bridged between the religious and the secular, and we are honored to have here tonight Tamir Goodman, renowned famous basketball star, and undefeated Jewish boxer, Yuri Foreman. Jewish Reggae artist, Mattisyahu, and undefeated boxer, Demetri Salita, send their regrets. They would have loved to join us tonight.

Two of them are with us; there are a few more that were unable to make it. Mattisyahu is on tour, and Demetri just got engaged. Mazal tov to him; he's probably with his kallah. And there are many other rising stars on this list.

I personally invite each and every one of you who is here tonight to join us in this vital task. Our current vehicle includes number one, the famed Algemene Journal newspaper that now has an impressive English section and whose reach and influence is growing rapidly, number two we have the Algemene dot com website that is now seeing an impressive 70,000 unique monthly visits in Yiddish and in English. We actually went tracking the countries where the Yiddish hits were coming from. I noticed some visitors from Japan and from Jordan, and this has led some to believe that King Abdullah is actually learning a new language.

Number three, we published books and retrospectives. We run programs and events, including this distinguished annual lecture delivered by a prominent leader and thinker.

The new Preserve Your Legacy project is an exciting, innovative new venture which offers a vital service to everybody, to all of you, to preserve the story and the legacy of your family or organizations. The details can be seen in the inside front cover of the event journal that we handed out tonight.

I want to briefly take the opportunity to thank our most talented staff at the GJCF and the Algemene Journal for their on-going dedicated commitment and hard work. Without them none of this would have been possible. A special mention to the editor-in-chief of the Algemene Journal, Yossi Jacobson, who is the world's youngest Yiddish editor.

Finally, I want to thank all of our partners, the visionaries and the forward-thinking leaders whose support has made the GJCF, the Algemene, and all of these initiatives possible. Please take notice of the event journal that we handed out tonight. There is a list of all the greetings and dedications from those of you who have supported us generously.

For those of you who have not pledged to support us, I invite you to please consider our worthy cause and welcome you all to take the advantage of this opportunity and to join our cause. How often are you given an opportunity to help shape the future and influence the course of history? If you are interested, please contact me either after the lecture or at your own convenience.

Last week somebody told me about a conversation that he remembers having with Gershon Jacobson, of blessed memory, the editor of the Algemene, whose yahrtzeit we are commemorating. It was a few months before Gershon's passing in a shul on the Upper East Side. And Reb Gershon said to him, "You know, when I leave this world I will not leave vast sums of money, but what I will leave is much more valuable than that. And that is my family." And on that note I would like to acknowledge the Jacobson family that is here with us tonight.

It is my honor to now call upon the oldest son of Gershon Jacobson, Simon Jacobson, to introduce our guest speaker. Simon Jacobson is not only a best-selling author and world-renowned lecturer; he's a visionary and a pioneer, the chairman of the GJCF and publisher of the

Algemene Journal. I'm always inspired, and it's a real honor to work together with him. Simon Jacobson.

## **SIMON JACOBSON**

Thank you very much, Dovid, for your eloquent British introduction. It's an honor to be here, and I want to acknowledge by name my family members. Of course, my dear mother, the matriarch, as I always say, "the blonde," she's still blonde. She's sitting here in the front. And my dear sister, Freida, and her husband Shia, Rabbi Hecht. My brother, Baruch Shalom and Leah Jacobson, Chani and Rabbi Koziansky from the upper east side, Chabad of the Upper East Side. And finally, as was mentioned, Dovid Yosef Yitzchak and his dear wife, Esti, Jacobson. And all the progeny, the generations that they bring.

Talking about family and celebrities, there was one more person that Dovid forgot to mention. Michael Jackson was supposed to be here, but he had other plans. We have connections. Shmueli Batea.

Okay, so my maternal grandfather, his name was Yankel Lipsker, who was blunt in a certain way or many ways, told me this himself more than once. I am sure he kept in mind that my father was a journalist. He said to me – he'd say in Yiddish --, "Everything in the media is a lie. Everything in the newspapers is sheker, it's lies. Even the date on the newspaper is a lie because it was printed last night." And I as a young man dismissed an old provincial Jew, my grandfather. He comes from a different world. He doesn't understand we live in a progressive democracy. Here everything is emes and true, and he doesn't really get it.

In that world of the Soviet Union, there was a newspaper actually called Emes. You all know what emes means, right? Truth. And it was spelled, appropriately, ayin mem ayin samech, emes. I guess nobody knows how to spell here, or else you'd laugh. Emes – in Hebrew you spell it aleph mem saf. Ayin mem ayin samech is actually like saying, spelling truth with the word lie. Okay? Commentary. Fine.

I remember when a relative came back from Moscow years ago, actually with a Russian newspaper. This was 1971 or 1972. It was an English paper, and its headline was "The Last Family in New York City has Evacuated Due to the Crime Rate in New York City." There was a picture of a street corner that was dark, bleak. So this is the news of the Soviet Union.

But in America, I thought to myself, my grandfather, you know, he doesn't really get it. Here everything is truth. The New York Times is almost like the Ten Commandments. I got a little older, and they say, 'you wear an older man's clothes now,' and I'm probably the age of my grandfather when he told this to me. I start wondering whether I had it right or he had it right. The media, you know.

How many here, by a show of hands, although I can't really see everybody, but by a show of hands, believes that we truly have an objective, in the secular world, an objective media? Not one person raised their hand. Really? Okay, what about when it comes to Israel, how many feel there's an objective media? Malcolm, I think there are a lot of supporters of Israel here.

So we're here to talk about the media. I'm involved in the media whether I like it or not. My father was a journalist, and I thought about it many times. Everything has to have a basis. The kabbalists, the mystics, like to say, the Rebbes tell us, this is a world called 'alma d'shikra,' it's a world of lies. A world of lies. That doesn't mean we're lying 24/7, but we could be lying at any given moment. And we do, we all have our lies. There are white lies; there are darker lies. There are lies of withholding information. A lie doesn't always mean an outright lie. A lie has a broad definition.

So what is the role of the media? Are journalists above the ability to be subjective? Are journalists so detached? Yes, there are those that claim that and, in the name of detachment, end

up being equally biased. Sometimes you're so detached that you're biased as well. So, I was thinking about it. Where is the first Jewish journalist? Is there such a thing or is it some type of modern invention.

There's a midrash that talks about Moses. I don't know if you could call him a journalist, but it says that when he was up in heaven on Mount Sinai speaking to G-d, G-d was speaking and he was taking notes. It was essentially an interview, and we hope it was objective, and we hope that he documented correctly. I mean, it's the basis of all of Judaism. We're, after all, here for almost 4,000 years. So you can say Moses was, essentially, the first true journalist.

What is a journalist? Some journalists claim they are listeners, "all we are are listeners; no judgment, nothing." What happens if you're listening to the wrong people? And how many headlines and newspapers today actually reflect this type, that they really went through every piece of news that day and say, 'this is the truth.' I would say to retreat, because the world is full of lies and there is much bias and subjectivity, and say we should have no media, or we should have no comments and statements is equally problematic.

This is the challenge of true Jewish journalism. When I say Jewish I don't just mean the word Jewish, I mean Yiddish, infused with the spirit of what a Jew is all about and pride. It means that we can enter the world of falseness, the deceptive world of *alma d'shikur*, even where there are many lies and much bias, and we, too, are biased. Every one of us is biased, but we come connected to some higher vision.

What kept Moses honest was that he was dedicated, that he was selfless, and in his selflessness he was able to communicate a message. That's really what it is all about, not to be afraid to communicate it, and at the same time recognizing our own biases. We may disagree, but there's this fundamental honesty and integrity at the heart of it.

And it's a great challenge. Trust me, it's a challenge. You write about something, you always have arguments. People don't like this. People used to tell my father and they tell us today, 'too religious,' 'too secular,' 'too Chassidish,' 'too non-Chassidish.' They'll always have an opinion. However, we ourselves have to maintain a certain heartbeat, a certain soul. And it's a challenge; we'll make our mistakes. There's no question about it. But it's an interesting challenge, because we are as a bridge between two worlds – a false world with many deceptions, many PR machines that are busy just selling and lobbying certain ideas and concepts whether they're true or not, and at the same time trying to find some truth amidst this whole mess, this confusion.

So the topic this evening, obviously, is extremely appropriate for our mission, the *Algemene* mission, the mission of my father for so many years, the GJCF, as Dovid articulated. We felt it would be most appropriate for someone to speak about it who himself is on the bridge between those two worlds, the distinguished Malcolm Hoenlein. Trust me, some people criticized us for choosing Malcolm, but I found that as a compliment. But over all, most people were actually very supportive and spoke about your great oratory skills. (Unclear)

Personally, knowing Malcolm, a friend of my father that goes back all the way back to the beginning of Malcolm's career over 30 years ago, there was a deep connection. My father turned to Malcolm many times for help and always received it. I know it was also reciprocal.

So it's a great honor for me to introduce a friend of my father's and a friend of our GJCF and *Algemene* and someone who is one of the most articulate, educated and experienced Jewish leaders to speak about this topic, Media and the Silencing of Support for Israel, which, of course, is very timely. Israel is always in the news. And it's critical.

I remember, now I can mention his name, Kenneth Woodworth. He was the religion editor of Newsweek magazine – not Jewish, but very respectful toward Jews. He told me that the most difficult people to work with at Newsweek were the Jewish east coast editors. They didn't want

anything religious. Every time there was a talk about faith they were the ones that always fought it. He said, "I don't understand you Jews." That's a topic for another time.

But he was in the media, a student of Abraham Joshua Heschel, and this is our challenge, media in a world of – I would say – lies and Israel, of course, is always embroiled in it. It's a great honor for me to introduce a friend, a supporter, and a leader of the Jewish people today. He's involved in so many organizations. He's the vice president of the Conference of Major Presidents of the United States.

### **MALCOLM HOENLEIN**

I'm here, despite the objections. I'm here because of a central Jewish principle of hakarat hatov, of expressing appreciation to those to whom we are indebted as a people or as individuals. It's a central concept in Jewish life that we don't take for granted, neither people nor what they do for us and on behalf of us.

My relationship with Gershon Jacobson, a"n, goes back well over 30 years. When I came to New York they had a conference on Soviet Jewry, and there were many skeptics. People told me that I was crazy to come from Philadelphia where I was teaching at Penn and doing other things. People said, "They'll never be free." Gershon Jacobson shared my belief that they could be free, and we had many long discussions.

Given his background, he shared many insights in those early years, warning me of pitfalls, both human and situational. We celebrated many smachot together in each other's families, and I was often honored to be his chauffeur, especially after late-night meetings. On the way home I would have the privilege of taking him and dropping him off in Crown Heights. Those 45 minutes were something I really valued and cherished. They were informative; I learned a lot about a lot of people and a lot of things, and they were most enjoyable.

Gershon was a complex person who did not always hew the line, though deeply rooted in Chabad and its community and in our traditions. That spirit of intellectual curiosity, of challenging convention, of journalistic adventurism, of loyalty and passion, are shared and reflected in his children and especially those involved in the Algemene, who carry on their father's tradition and who remain committed and sustain his legacy. The foundation they established under the capable leadership of David works to assure that what Gershon stood for, what he fought for, will be perpetuated. Our entire community stands to benefit and to be improved by it.

There's a story told about a shul where they used to have a fight every Shabbos about whether you stood or you sat during a certain prayer, Nishmas. Every week the fight would get worse and worse, and finally somebody remembered that one of the original members of the shul was in a senior citizens home. So those who advocated standing during this prayer sent a delegation to see him. They found him rocking in a chair, and they said, "Reb Yid, isn't it true we used to stand during Nishmas?" And he rocked for a minute, and he said, "To tell you the truth, I can't remember if that's the way it was."

Next week a delegation of those who advocated sitting went to see him. They again found him rocking in a chair, and they said, "Reb Yid, isn't it true we used to sit during this prayer?" He rocked for a few minutes, and he said "To tell you the truth, I can't remember if that's the way it was."

Finally the situation got totally out of hand. There were fisticuffs. Blood was flowing in the aisles. A joint delegation went to this old age home. They grabbed the old man out of the chair. They said, "Reb Yid, tell us! The situation is terrible! We're killing each other; blood is flowing!" He said, "Oh, that's the way it was." Ein chadash tachat ha'shemesh.

I'm going to talk about subjects that are of great seriousness and great consequence, but none of it is new. We read in Parashas Balak that he claimed, Bilaam was powerful in both blessings and

curse. Why did he not request him to give a blessing to his own people rather than curse the Jewish people? He would have stood to benefit a great deal more. Throughout our history the enemies of Israel prefer its destruction even at the expense of the devastation of their own people. Hitler took vital resources, diverted them from his own forces, sacrificing his own national goals just to destroy the Jewish people. Pharaoh did the same thing. It's been true throughout our history.

He came to curse and he turned it into a blessing. Every morning we remember when we say 'mah tovu ohalecha Yaacov,' his words, 'how goodly are thy tents, oh Jacob.'

We recently read about the ten spies who were sent by Moses and who came back with a negative report. Two came with a positive report. I once stood in an airport where a group of priests were about to go to Israel, and a leading rabbi was there talking to them. He said to them, "How many of you can name the ten spies who came back with a bad report?" All of them just stared blankly and couldn't name them. He said, "But name the two who came back with a positive report," and every one of them said, "Joshua and Kaleiv."

Throughout history those who make a positive contribution and who see the value, who do not look to curse the Jewish people or the Jewish state, are remembered. Those who choose the other path are forgotten in the black hole of history.

We see by the story of the spies the importance of one word, that you can't dismiss what is written or what is said, what is reported on television or on the internet or in newspapers. The two came back with the same report as the ten. The ten said, "There's bountiful fruit. It's a beautiful country, but it has giant cities, with anakim, with giant people, fortress cities." Yehoshua and Kaleiv came back with the same report. They said, "It's got bountiful fruit, beautiful country, and it has fortresses and anakim, giants." That one word changed the course of Jewish history. You can't dismiss what is said. All of our lives, our future, can hang on a single word and the way that it's expressed.

This is a complex time in American history, in world history, but particularly in Jewish history. I believe it's a transformational time, domestically and internationally. We have so many issues of lasting consequence and significance that confront us. Globalization has brought greater emphasis to it. It's not just true of economics; it's true of politics. Everything is inter-related.

As I said when I came to New York, they had the Soviet Jewry movement here. You didn't have to think about what were the ramifications in Malaysia or Iran or Indonesia, as big an issue as taking on the Soviet Empire was. But today you can't talk about any issue without talking about its consequences globally, everywhere else, because everything is inter-related. Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, North Korea, Honduras. Not of vital consequence for us? Each one will impact our lives, and the failure to act or the success of the actions taken will be determined.

Bernard Lewis, the great historian who's now 93, said recently that he's more concerned about the outcome today than he was in 1941 when France already fell to the Vichy, and the Nazis were marching across Europe. The decisions that will be made now are going to be decisions for generations, not for years or months. They're going to affect your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren and their grandchildren.

So we have to step back and try to understand what is happening at this decisive time, this watershed period. The promise of a new world order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has yielded to old-world disorder, a world where violence and terrorism, religious and ethnic conflict and anti-Semitism are increasingly dominating the international agenda.

And I fear sometimes that we, the Jewish community, are falling victim to the same illusions, avoidance and ignorance that took such a heavy toll on us in our past. Seventy years ago people said they didn't know. It was a lie; they didn't want to know. We know from the archives that

have opened that the allies knew every day how many Jews were being killed, because they broke the Nazi codes, but never revealed it.

They try to hide behind a cloak of ignorance. We have no such cover. We know everything. And we will be judged by how we respond by our grandchildren and their grandchildren. And we know everything, so why focus on the media? The answer is because it is vital. It doesn't just report events; it shapes events. It doesn't just report policy; it shapes policy. My daily frustration is at the distortions, misrepresentations, disinformation, misinformation, which have real consequence and real impact.

If you respect the media and freedom of the press, you also have to recognize the responsibility of the media. It is one facet of the challenges we face, but a very critical one. It is at the core of so much of what is happening. We need vigilance to monitor, to assure the honesty and integrity of the media. It was never more true than now.

There no longer is a news cycle. It used to be 24 hours, eight hours, ten hours. Now it's instantaneous. The news cycle ends as soon as the news report is out. And because of the international (inaudible) you have immediacy, that 24 hours a day on the cable stations and others there's a constant flow of news, and when they don't have the news they make up the news. As you know, when there is a false report it can never be killed. It keeps coming back and back and back. That is the nature of the internet. It is an incredible invention that has changed our lives, but there is no verifiability, and you have such immediacy.

When we read that the Egyptians wronged us, the commentators say, "Why didn't it say they did wrong to us?" And they answer that before the Egyptians could accept the enslavement of the neighbors with whom they had lived for generations, the Jews had to be wronged. They had to be shown that they were responsible for all the ills that befell Egyptian society. And once people were convinced of it they were ready to accept enslavement of their neighbors. Throughout our history we have seen that the Jews were wronged.

Today the Jews are being wronged again. The big lie still works when it comes to Jews. It took Hitler months to do it; today it's done in seconds. Tens of thousands of anti-Semitic websites, Al-Manara, Al Jazeera, Al Aksa, all of the satellite systems that pervade our world today and convey these awful messages.

Who doesn't know now the truth of Muhammed Al Dura, the poster child of the intifada, in whose name hundreds were killed and died. Schools are named for him all over the Arab and Muslim world. His picture is on everybody's desk. But it turns out it was a lie. We all know the picture of him cowering behind his father as Israeli troops allegedly shot at him. There was no blood; there were no bullets. The French courts finally, after many years, had to acknowledge the truth.

The same was true with the accusations in Jenin. 5,000 dead. 3,000 dead. 1,000 dead. Condemnations in the U.N. and everywhere else. Reuters had to remove 500 pictures from its archives, 900 pictures, because they were falsified.

We have seen how NGOs, like Human Rights Watch and others, fall victim to this, publish reports, giving accounts that were based on fallacious information. The New York Times admitted that pictures about the Lebanon war were taken out of context and doctored. And unfortunately, I must say, that it's true of some of the Jewish media as well. Colored by ideological dispositions of their publishers or their reporters or their sponsors, more and more they seem to reflect the mainstream press and sometimes even go beyond that.

Anti-Semitism today is a global challenge. It's ages old, but brand new, using the most modern technologies to spread the most ancient of hatreds. It's hard to quantify. Nobody really knows the numbers, because most anti-Semitic incidents go unreported. More than a thousand incidents, though, were recorded just in the month of January with more than a hundred being violent. That's more than the last six months of last year.

What is clear, as the Chief Rabbi Sacks of Great Britain said in describing what he called 'the tsunami of anti-Semitism in Great Britain,' "What is clear is that it's here and it's getting more virulent, is greeted by more and more tolerance, excused or dismissed, camouflaged under thin cloaks of anti-Zionism or anti-Israelism."

Israel is the corporate entity to day that represents us. It's not acceptable to say 'I hate Jews,' but you can say 'I hate Zionists,' and certainly 'I hate Israel.'

We see this dangerous cocktail of anti-Zionism, anti-Israelism, anti-Semitism, traditional anti-Semitism, Moslem-based anti-Semitism, and anti-globalism coming together and yielding the kind of violent demonstrations that we saw at the beginning of this year. The economic conditions have exacerbated these events, and Jews again are blamed for some of the economic dislocation, just as was true years ago.

First, in the pattern that was established from the time of our forefathers, they told Abraham 'you cannot live amongst us as a Jew,' and they told Isaac 'you cannot live amongst us' and they told Yaacov, Jacob, 'you cannot live.' It is the same prototype we have seen throughout all the ages. First they want to get us, the Jews, as a people, then the Jewish people, then the Jewish state. Anti-Semitism adapts to the idiom of the day, and it seeks what is acceptable using those prototypes.

The problem is that this cancer has to be addressed early on, and the question is, are our legal systems and the laws that are passed, are the voices of influence fully deployed against them? We see the intellectual justifiers on our campuses and the op-ed pages. We see the corruption from significant elements of the academy and its aborting of parts of the media here and abroad.

There is a debate about whether this is 1938. A, I do not believe it's 1938, but it's not the relevant question. The question is what lessons did we learn from the 1930's that we apply to today? The post-holocaust taboos have been broken. Social constraints seem to have been lifted. Many disturbing trends that we see, whether it's the European parliament elections recently, the attacks that were planned in Riverdale, the murder of a Jewish student in the University of Connecticut, the attack of the guy against two soldiers in New Orleans who had claimed to attack Jewish institutions, so many in short period of time.

But of greatest concern to me is a process that we saw in Great Britain that is being replicated here. It was documented in the House of Commons in a study that they released, three non-Jewish members who said they could no longer remain silent wrote a report about the poisonous atmosphere of the campuses, the rise of anti-Semitism, and what I call the poisoning of the elites. It is the blueprint for what is happening in America, and the media is a critical part of it.

How is it that Pat Buchanan can talk about us as a fifth column, can talk about the issue of Ferster's, can say that those who sought the prosecution of Demjanjuk, the Nazi war criminal, were driven by the same vengeful hatred that drove an innocent man to (unclear) 2,000 years ago. Yet he remains on the media and on television. His website hosts holocaust deniers and he, himself, espouses views in his new book that make Hitler a victim. (Unclear) said a lot less and was taken off radio.

Michael Scheuer of CBS constantly writes about us as a fifth column, about dual loyalty openly, and yet they retain him.

Part of this is a long-term effort to undermine the U.S.-Israel relationship and to stop support for Israel. We see some erosion already, partly as a result of this, although the base amongst the American people remains strong.

This is a cancer, and it grows quietly. By the time you discover it it's too late, because many of you are questioning and saying, 'how come I don't see it? How come I don't see it?' It's not because

it's not there; it's because you're not aware, because you're not ready to confront it. It was true in Great Britain when they could have stopped it, and we have to stop it here and now.

It's a goal to intimidate us, to make those who support Israel outsiders and disloyal. The implicit and explicit charges of dual loyalty attempts to delegitimize the Jewish state by every means, not to hold it to a higher standard but to an impossible standard, to deny the Jews the same rights as are accorded other people and to deny the Jewish state the sovereignty that is given every other state.

We see it in the denials of Jewish history, the revisionism, that Israel was created because of the holocaust and not because of 3,000 years of Jewish connection to the holy land. We see it in the refusals to recognize who refused peace over the last hundred years. Who accepted it in 1936 and 1948 and 1967 and 1972 and all up through Olmert's proposals only two years ago? Every time the Jews accepted; the Arabs rejected.

The Jewish lobby has become a pejorative term, and we see they lend themselves to leaks, to threats against Israel and against Jews. They shape policy by this. They are used by those who are shapers of policy. Isn't it interesting to see that Bibi, in every report, is called a hard-liner and right wing? But the leaders of Iran are called reformers and moderates.

Rasanjani, Musabi, Khatami, with the blood of thousands on their hands, Rasanjani responsible for the blowing up of the Amia headquarters and the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires. He's a moderate. Khatami is a reformer who went into the students and all of them who are responsible, including Musabi, who started Iran's nuclear program, they're the moderates. But Netanyahu is a hard liner, right wing, at best a conservative.

This month's National Geographic has a featured article saying that the decline of Christian populations in the middle east is caused by the creation of the Jewish state. In all of the middle east, in what country has the Christian population increased over the last 40 years? Only one. Israel. It's decreased in every other state because the Moslems don't tolerate it. But National Geographic doesn't see it that way.

C-Span, with the Washington Journal, has the most vile screeds against Israel and ignores them. Lancet Magazine, a leading medical journal, has an article this month, again depicting Israel in the most unbelievable ways. Look at the textbooks used in colleges and in high schools in America, where again Israel is depicted in ways that you cannot believe. But jihad is a mental exercise.

Roger Cohen can write article after article telling us about the real situation in Iran until everything was disproved, and then in a little column you see a little paragraph in a column that says 'I was wrong.'

Oliphant, the number one cartoonist in America, can depict the Jewish state and Jews as a headless Nazi marching behind a grinding wheel chasing a little figure, a woman in black, called Gaza.

I can give you example after example. When Jimmy Carter goes before 6,000 people in Iowa and tells them, "I came here because you can make a difference in the elections. You can make sure that we don't elect a knee-jerk supporter of Israel."

Chas Freeman appears with Aretha Carion of CNN and can spew forth his hatred against Israel and the pro-Israel elements and AIPAC and us and everyone else, and it's not even challenged. The reason he was denied his promotion was because of the Jewish lobby and their attempt to squelch anybody who doesn't march in line with them, not because he was lined up with the Chinese lobby and taking money from them, and not because he was lined up with the Saudis and taking money from them, as the speaker of the house and others pointed out.

We see the moral equivalence. The firefighter and the arsonist are equated. We see the double standard that endangers Israel. We see employees of Jewish organizations charged with espionage by CBS, only to have the case ultimately dismissed because it was baseless.

We see an Ahmadinejad getting up on the stage, the podium of the United Nations and being able to excoriate another member and threaten its very existence. And they don't walk out. "The Zionists are the enemy of dignity and integrity," he said. "They're ruining the American and European people." And he draws on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

And then we see the 'if only' crowd throughout the media. If only Israel would make more concessions. If only Israel would withdraw. If only Israel would be more forthcoming. If only Israel committed suicide all the problems in the Middle East will go away.

The Sunni-Shiite war of 900 years would disappear. The fact that every Arab country is in a conflict with every other Arab country – disappear. The fact that Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan pray for Israel's existence because it is the safeguard for them and that they hope Israel will do the dirty work in Iran for them like they did in Syria. Did you notice after the attack on the Syria reactor not one Arab country, except Syria, condemned it?

If only Israel. The formula is if somehow Israel makes peace with the Palestinians we might be able to deal with the Iranians. It's the reverse. Deal with the Iranians, and all the problems will go away. Hamas won't be Hamas. Hezbollah won't be Hezbollah. Syria won't be what it is. We'll change the Middle East. But as long as they think that they can get away and buy them off because it's the 'Palestinian-Israeli conflict' you're never going to have progress.

We see history distorted, because they try to take away our past to deny us a future. And they try to divide Jews in Israel. It won't work. Now we have to defend Israel's very right to exist.

You all remember the front-page story in the New York Times which had this opening line, "Israel's creation was branded a racist act by the United Nations in 1975." It ran just a short while ago on the front page of the New York Times without any mention that it was rescinded 25 years later. No mention that it was passed by a majority of the dictatorships of the world, and all of the democracies voted against it.

Israel's birth now becomes original sin. We have to justify Israel's very creation. What country is more legitimate? What country has a greater claim on sovereignty than the state of Israel with 3,000 years of continuous history, the only people speaking the same language with the same religion coming back to the same land as they had 3,000 years ago. There's no one else on earth like it. And it's sanctified by the blood, the sweat, the tears of thousands of years of Jewish history. But we have to justify Israel's right to exist.

We see boycotts, obscene boycotts. In Norway they put yellow stickers on products that came from Israel to identify them. In Britain they put markers that they came from the West Bank. Supermarkets refuse to handle Israeli products. Universities refuse Jewish speakers and pro-Israel speakers.

Yet they forget about Jewish refugees from Arab countries who outnumber the Palestinian refugees. We see that they forget who rejected the peace deals. They forget who attacked whom. If the Arabs didn't attack Israel, and if the Arabs wanted peace the world would be a very different place. They put the Palestinians in camps, not Israel. It was their war against Israel, not the creation of the state.

This is not to say that all criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism. Hardly. If that were the case, 90% of Israelis would be anti-Semites, I guess. There are no demands anywhere else as we see in the case of Israel where all of them are made of one party. Israel 'must' but the Palestinians should 'try.'

The truth is that as bad as the media is, it's our fault, because we raised the bar on what we're prepared to tolerate. Things that are published today in the mainstream press would not have been acceptable on the fringes five years ago. Would CNN have done a thing depicting Judaism and Christianity as the same as radical Islam in producing "terrorists" and radicals? Would we have tolerated the headlines? The New York Times led three front-page stories about the IDF's behavior in Gaza. Three front-page stories in one week. I don't know of any other situation where you have such comparable coverage, and they said based on accounts, based on reports, based on eyewitnesses. They all proved to be untrue. But how many of you believed it?

How many of you would believe these reports that the IDF that you know so well, that had 800,000 phone numbers and called the people in Gaza before they hit houses, that sent planes with leaflets 12 hours before despite the fact that it meant that the terrorists could get out? They sent dogs with cameras and flashlights into homes to get civilians out of places where Hamas forced them to be so they would be killed.

How many of you believed it? We raised the bar. When G-d took us out from Egypt, it says He took us out "m'tachat siblot Mitzrayim," from under the oppression of Egypt. The commentators say the word is not siblot, oppression, it comes from the word savlanut, patience. When the Jews said, 'we can take it,' more bricks, more work, more hours. They said, 'we can live with it, we can live with it.' More torture. 'We can live with it.' When they said, 'no more,' then G-d said now you're ready to be redeemed.

Jews in Germany said, 'look, they cut us off from commerce and education; we can live with it. It'll change; it can't stay this way.' The New York Times writes on page three of the edition of January 1, 1933 after Hitler got elected, "Hitler gives up on being a dictator. Hitler will never pursue his radical ideology. Von (unclear) won't let him. They call him a Charlie Chaplin-like figure, the hardest working leader in Europe."

We tolerate it. We give them the license to continue.

The first Rashi in Chumash, as you all know, asks why does the Bible begin with the story of the creation of the earth and not with the first mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh, the new moon. The answer is given because when in the future the nations of the world will say 'you stole this land,' you will say 'G-d created the earth and He gave this to Abraham for all of his children throughout all of the generations.' It is a contract that is not bound by time or by consequence, circumstance. But Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, the great German Jewish scholar says, "The issue is not that the non-Jews will challenge us; it's when Jews have doubts."

When Jews aren't prepared to stand up and speak out, when we're not convinced, when the friends of Israel are not convinced, when we're willing to accept those accusations from those on the fringes and bring them into the mainstream, when we see Israel equated with Nazism and the star of David equated with the swastika, what do we do? Do we simply say 'this is terrible?' Do you understand the consequence of this? Because what it says is that the Europeans and the Germans and everyone else bear no guilt, because you see 'everybody in power does it.' Even the Jews.

It expunges the holocaust. It expunges the guilt. And if you believe the State of Israel was born because of the holocaust, you've taken away the legitimacy of the state. Holocaust deniers get more and more access. Those who used to be shunned in societies get accepted. We see war crimes charges. We see law-fare, the new form of attacks against Israel where you use the law, universal jurisdiction, to be able to go after Israelis.

We see in the United Nations the fair treatment of the Jewish state. 47% of the resolutions in the U.N. deal with Israel, but 100% of those in the human rights council. No Darfur, no China, no Syria, not all the violations in the world – only one place. And we can look forward into a new year at the General Assembly because d'Escoto, the Sandanista from Nicaragua, has been

removed now, and he will be replaced by the prime minister of Libya. So we know that we have good things ahead.

We see the incitement still isn't taken seriously. History teaches us that words of hate and violence lead to deeds of violence and hate. We get tired, but we dare not. We dare not dismiss this. The Palestinians honor a suicide bomber, just in recent weeks, by naming a computer center in her memory. We see the broadcasts and the statements and the mosques and what the textbooks say.

This is what the Palestinians must do if you want peace. It's not the birth of a child on the West Bank, and you can discuss it and we can work out a deal and all of the rest, but if you're going to continue to educate generations in hatred, all the rest will be meaningless. Where's the media holding them to account?

Remember the story about sudden Jihad syndrome, that somehow suicide bombers and others all of a sudden get the idea and do it. It's always a lone figure who all of a sudden was inspired rather than recognizing the true nature of the terrorist threat.

Moses, when he gave us the mitzvah of chakhel, told us that the greatest dangers to the Jewish people are not natural disasters or wars. It's apathy, indifference and ignorance. It's the failure to recognize the world as it is and to stand up to it.

Disraeli once said there's no fate more ghastly than a stupid Jew. He didn't mean your I.Q.'s. He meant Jews who don't get it, Jews who don't understand the real nature of the challenges to us. Because when Jews stand together others will join us, people of good will of every faith, of every creed, of every geographic location. You saw it in Durban II, because unlike Durban I the Jews stood up and we spoke out. And we took the streets back. And it reversed the course of history.

When 13 Jews were arrested in Iran I had the privilege of coordinating the effort around the world. The first time that we found out before they executed a Jew we mobilized 65 countries, including Moslem and Arab countries. Because when they see that the Jews are united others will come behind us. When they see we're divided, no one comes. You know where those 13 Jews are? After all that you witnessed? Three of them were marked for death and ten for long prison terms. Today they're all home with their families, because of you and you don't even know it.

There is nothing we can't accomplish if we stand up and recognize our responsibilities and not be diverted and not be cowed because the media doesn't like it when we speak up for Israel. We can never allow ourselves to succumb to some imposed sense of political correctness or perceived political correctness at the expense of vital interests of Israel and the Jewish people. To react responsibly, and even at times forcibly, is a fulfillment of our obligation as Jews and as Americans, especially to future generations.

My time doesn't allow me to go into greater detail, but I want to say just a few closing words. I'm tired of us being the canary in a mine of humanity. I'm tired of us being the barometer for the consciousness or unconsciousness of societies we live in. But we see that the big lie against Jews works. We have to silence it. We cannot appease haters.

Winston Churchill said appeasement is like feeding a crocodile in the hope that he'll eat you last. They only understand one language, and that's strength. We cannot allow the Jewish people to be diminished and degraded, to deny us the right to free expression, for lawful organizing, to live up to our obligations under the Constitution of the United States and American democracy which demands one thing of us and that's to be involved.

The Australian Foreign Minister said recently, "The more we and other countries stand up to this sort of behavior," referring to the anti-Israel resolutions at the U.N. at elsewhere, "the more we stand a chance of success. The more we try to appease the anti-Israel forces, we will only encourage them."

There has to be zero tolerance for anti-Semitism, zero tolerance for anti-Zionism, zero tolerance for anti-Israelism because they are the same thing. Our grandchildren are going to ask us, 'what did you do? Did you do everything?' We have to be ready to be assertive, to be proud, to be confident, which means we have to educate ourselves because the truth is our strongest weapon. Abba Eban said in World War II Jews had influence in many places but power in none. Today Jews have power because the world says we have power.

Walton Mearsheimer wrote their book, this horrific book, with all the factual mistakes, with all the historical inaccuracies that's sold now a million copies and is used as a textbook in classes from California to Boston, not because we failed but because we've succeeded. They don't bother with people who fail. The fact that they're invited on to television programs without refutation, that they appear on campuses across the country, as does Jimmy Carter, spewing his ignorant message of hate, comparing Israel to an apartheid state, saying he did it only to stimulate debate when he's the only one who won't debate and will never allow questions from the floor except if they're pre-screened.

There are many Walton Mearsheimers, hundreds, publishing books, writing articles, affecting the minds of the next generation. We cannot tolerate it. Geno Giordano said something that Osama Bin Laden and Khania of Hamas all said, that wars in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will not be determined by number of enemies killed or territory captured but by will and determination. Those who have the will will win. Weakness will be exploited.

We have to hold to account our leaders and opinion molders. We have to live up to our obligation, our responsibilities. We have to show them that we have the will. That turns every klalla, every curse, into a bracha, into a blessing.

'Re'eh anochi nosen lifneh lechem bracha u'klalla.' The Torah tells us that G-d said, 'I'm putting before you a blessing and a curse. He didn't say or a curse, because every blessing can be a curse and every curse a blessing depending upon what we do with it. We're not the generation of tzuris. We're the generation of miracles.

We have seen things that our grandparents and their grandparents would have given everything they had to see even one of the miracles. Look at the discoveries every day in Jerusalem, uncovering our past, verifying the Biblical accounts, every day. Because G-d is sending us a message. We look back in order to look forward. He's giving us the confidence to go out and advocate and speak against those who try to deny us our land, our rights, our past, our future.

Rabbi Soloveitchik once asked what was the difference between the holiness of Mount Sinai and Har Habayit, the Temple Mount. Why was it that G-d gave Moses the ten commandments? Right afterwards the Jews could go and touch it. But till today there are parts of the Temple Mount we're not allowed to go to. And he answered that at Mount Sinai the Jews simply went, took the ten commandments and said, "Na'aseh v'nishmah," we will do and we hear. That was the end of it. They didn't do anything at that moment. But the Temple Mount where Abraham brought Isaac to be sacrificed, sanctified by generations of blood, sweat and tears as they built two temples, where the Maccabees fought, all of Jewish history encapsulated in that place, that's what gives it its sanctity. G-d sanctifies time; man sanctifies space.

This is a space we have to sanctify right now, and we have to do it by showing our unity, that when we see these manifestations of anti-Semitism, which I've hardly even touched on, that we will not be silenced. Each of you can make a difference.

Gershon Jacobson showed us what one man could accomplish. How many minds he changed, how many people he influenced, can't be calculated. But each of us talks to people. You know, we did a study that showed more than half of the American people say they have a Jewish friend, relative or acquaintance. But three quarters of them said 'they never talk to us about Israel.' Of the one quarter that did, the pro-Israel numbers went up 300%.

Think of how many people you can influence every day. You could be more powerful than the New York Times. Read the daily alert dot org. You don't need the New York Times anymore. This is the challenge to us today, to recognize the power of the word, and to see that we have the power over the word as well, to know that we can stand up. This is not going to be an instant solution. You know, the Jews are prepared to run like an antelope. It says, why doesn't it say we run like a cheetah? A cheetah runs 70 miles an hour. An antelope can run 25 miles an hour, 30 miles an hour. The answer is a cheetah can run 70 miles for a short sprint; an antelope can run for hours. We're in it for the long run.

We draw our inspiration from Gershon Jacobson, a"h. If we understand our responsibility to the past and our obligation to the future, then we can turn it around.

### **DOVID EFUNE**

Growing up in England I can testify to some of the horrific trends that you refer to. Friends at Oxford University were recounting how students took over the faculty headquarters and demanded divestment from Israel, etcetera. Your reference to Kaleiv ben Yefuna, as a supreme example, one of the 12 spies, is of special significance to me, as my last name, Efune, is an anglicized version of Yefuna, only one generation ago.

I want to thank you, Malcolm Hoenlein, for your stirring words of wisdom and inspiration. I know that every word that you speak is mirrored with many actions, and I know that you are an inspiration to many. I'm going to reserve the right to refer back to a quote from Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill famously said, "Before you can inspire with emotion, you must be swamped with it yourself. Before you can move to tears, your own must flow, and to convince them you must yourself believe." And I know that you are such a man who cares deeply about the Jewish causes of which you speak.

We're now going to show a short documentary on the life and legacy of Reb Gershon Jacobson, which reflects not only the story of one man, but of a generation which has risen from the ashes to achieve an unprecedented renaissance in capturing the soul and mission of GJCF.

(video)

The good news is it stopped raining. It's up to us to write the next chapter of Jewish history and, once again, I thank each and every one of you for making the effort to be with us here tonight. Please make sure to take home with you the event journal that was handed out, a copy of the Algemene Journal, the brochures, and I encourage each and every person here to participate in whatever fashion they are able to.

Your thoughts, your comments, your feedback are always greatly appreciated. Please be in touch with any of us, and please make sure to visit our new website, GJCF dot com pictured here on the screen for more information and for pictures of this event, which should be posted shortly. Thank you very much. Zei gezunt.