

**Address by Levi at the Jubilee Celebrations held on the  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at the Queen's Cinema**

Your Excellency, Ministers Your worship the Mayor, Mr Speaker, Members of the Opposition, Reverend Sirs and Mesdames, ladies and gentlemen and of course, dear children.

Tonight, Jews celebrate the third night of Hanuka, an 8 day festival of lights during which we commemorate the successful outcome of the first battle **ever** fought for religious freedom. In 165 BCE, Greek society, with its emphasis on tolerance couldn't tolerate the Jewish spiritual way of life in Israel. The Greeks saw holiness in beauty. Jews saw beauty in holiness...and the spirit of the spirit won. This is the victory we celebrate annually by lighting Hanuka candles which energise us with their soothing luminosity. But lights and especially candlelights do much more than just decorate and grace our homes. They serve as subtle but penetrating pointers of the power of light over darkness. Most faiths have drawn into their rituals the concept and vitality of light and flames, candles and oil lamps. Faith transmits its light to faith.

We are all part of the great family called mankind, animated by the whispers of Divinity to extend our benevolence and good cheer beyond our own group for our canvas is our human soul.

Mankind yearns for a steady hand at the helm capable of motivating and inspiring us not only in moments when we ride the thrilling crest of political and economic successes but especially when we scratch the belly of misfortune and pain.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the II has had her fair share of the fangs of adversity. At the age of 25, Princess Elizabeth while in Kenya, received news of her father's sudden death and her prompt accession to the throne. Today, sixty years later, we assemble to commemorate, celebrate and offer thanks giving for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth the Second whose reign has spanned six decades of vast and thrilling innovations marked by wretched pockets of personal challenges. Indeed, 1992, the Queen referred to events then as part of an annus horribilis, a year of horrors. Regardless, she exhibited resolve, boldness of spirit and fearless confidence, rallying her country-men by invigorating the spirit of Britain serving by example and setting the example.

In last year's televised Christmas message, in the midst of a world economic downtrend, Her Majesty wisely surmised; "It is in a crisis that Communities break down barriers and bind together to help one another. Indeed, sadly it seems, it is tragedy that draws out the most and the best from the human spirit." Faith in G-d is central to that spirit.

Queen Elizabeth is head of the Commonwealth whose essence emphasises the dignity of difference by banishing the hollowness of indifference. In 1952, during the first year of her reign, the Queen became patron of the Council of Christians and Jews, giving inter faith work a central role in her reign. In one of the first public occasions of her Diamond Jubilee at Lambeth Palace, she met leaders of the nine major faith communities in Britain; a royal salute to the transcendence of diversity. Her Majesty lights an exemplary light in the dark night of the planetary soul.

The Jewish Community has profound esteem for the royal family. We recite specific blessings on seeing royalty; we recite prayers for them every Saturday and Jewish holidays because we see the Queen as the binding and aligning force among us; indeed a rare beacon of light and stewardship. She exemplifies poise, integrity and authenticity. We, in Gibraltar, have absorbed traditions and values which have nourished us and made us a solid, sensible, singular and sound society which I am confident shall overcome the tests of time.

In Judaism, when we bless someone, we wish them *Ad meah veesrim shana*, may the beneficiary of our blessings live for 120 years .... We thus bless Her Majesty with longevity, happiness and good health. We unite with other faiths in offering prayers of thanksgiving for the Queen's reign and we join in this commemoration of her Diamond

Jubilee and thanksgiving ceremony. I turn to this brief, emblematic, familiar and most earnest of Jewish blessing, by wishing Her Majesty 'lehim' – to life.