



Man on the Rock: Mayor Solomon Levy and the Jews of Gibraltar

Michael Freedland

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This is the story of perhaps the world's most unusual Jewish community, told through the eyes of the oldest member of one of its most unusual families. Solomon 'Momy' Levy is one of the best known figures in Gibraltar. Levy was the Rock's first civic mayor, and he is a prominent and cherished part of both civic and Jewish life. His friendships with the Governors of the Rock are legion. Solomon Levy's story is told with a wonderfully humorous approach, and it includes accounts of his schooling at the Jewish private school Carmel College in Britain; his astonishingly close family; his dealings with a succession of Governors; his attachment to the Queen and all things British; and his relations with the local Catholic clergy, particularly its bishop. Written by Michael Freedland, a renowned journalist and broadcaster, *Man on the Rock* is also very much the story of the Gibraltar community, which is Jewish in a way few others in the non-Charedi Diaspora are. Walk through the main street on a Shabbat and one will see shop after shop closed. Hence, unlike in other places, Saturday is not the busiest trading day of the week. Solomon Levy embodies this religious approach, as this anecdote demonstrates: As an officer in the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, he was asked to lead the 10-gun salute for the Queen's Birthday. The trouble was that it occurred on a Shabbat, so he consulted his rabbi. "What do you have to do?" asked the rabbi. "Just shout, "Fire!"," he replied. "So do it," said the rabbi. "I then walked all the way to the top of the rock and ordered "Fire!" Everyone seemed happy with that." *** "Man on the Rock is the fascinating story of Solomon Levy and his family. Levy's biography parallels the history of Gibraltar's unique Jewish community. The book includes many quotes by Momy [Levy] himself as well as his family and friends. Most interesting is his veering from protocol when he met Queen Elizabeth. Highly recommended for libraries that collect biographies and books describing world Jewish communities." - AJL Reviews, Vol. IV, No. 1, February/March 2014

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