

Hitchhiking to Heaven – An Autobiography by Lionel Blue.
Hodder and Stoughton 2004.

Millions of people throughout Great Britain 'know' Lionel Blue through his stage show and his appearance on Radio 4's Today programme. His Thoughts for the Day are legendary and he has even achieved the highest of all accolades – being 'done' by Rory Bremner.

I write this review in the privileged position of knowing and loving Lionel as a teacher, colleague and friend. As a colleague he has always been gentle, thoughtful and incisive, and as a teacher an inspiration.

Hitchhiking to Heaven is exactly the kind of autobiography that one would expect Lionel Blue to write. It is incredibly – at times excruciatingly – honest, it is shrewd in its observance of life and the people who have occupied Lionel's world, it is often very funny and in parts hilarious, and it is spiritually challenging and uplifting.

This is a warts and all autobiography, telling the author's own incredible journey from birth in the East End of London, through childhood and youth during the Second World War, past university and the discovery of his vocation as a rabbi, to becoming a national institution. On the way it takes in the people who have informed and influenced his life, and dwells significantly on two major themes, the sexual and the spiritual.

Hitchhiking to Heaven is a fitting testament to an amazing life and ample proof that Lionel Blue is what so many already believe him to be – a truly extraordinary man.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh