

A Touch of the Sacred – A Theologian's Informal Guide to Jewish belief
by Dr Eugene B. Borowitz and Frances W. Schwartz.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2007.

The name of Eugene Borowitz on the cover of a book states certain things before the first page has been turned to: that the contents will be sheer quality, that they will be intellectually challenging, and demanding, and that once the book has been finished the reader will be enriched, and, possibly, profoundly changed. His two (in my view at least) masterpieces Liberal Judaism and Renewing the Covenant are eloquent proof of this theory.

In A Touch of the Sacred, Borowitz is joined by the educator Francie Schwartz, and what they have produced is a 'Borowitz for the masses', a wonderful and very personal exposure to the mind of this giant of 20th century Jewish thought.

The book is divided into six sections, entitled Seeking the Sacred One, Doing Holy Deeds, Creating Sacred Community, Reading Sacred Texts, Thinking about Holiness and Learning from Holy Thinkers, each with several bite-size chapters relating to the overall theme. In these sections all of the desiderata which anyone who cares passionately about Judaism would like to see as being part of every Jewish life are covered in an approachable, realistic and inspirational way.

It is impossible to single out any mini-chapter as being the most important, though that entitled Jewish God-Talk's Four Criteria must come close, and is a perfect representation of Borowitz' undiminished skills as a communicator of ideas.

A Touch of the Sacred is replete with learning opportunities for groups and individuals, and as worthy a platform as one could wish for in terms of renewing the energy and passion of Jewish life.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh