

## **From Generation to Generation**

### *Thought for the Day*

*Ephraim Borowski (Director, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities)*

*Broadcast on Radio Scotland, 25 March 2014*

The world around is a constant source of wonder. I wonder, for example, who needs the warning “may be hot when heated” on their ready-cooked meals. And which strategic thinker labelled another packet, “May contain ingredients”!

I wonder too at yesterday’s BBC headline that “Active mums have active children”. As research goes, that’s hardly as weighty as the Higgs Boson! If the children of doctors tend to become doctors, that’s not evidence of genetic predisposition or biased selection procedures, but because children listen to their parents’ conversations!

Isn’t that as obvious as that a peanut crunch might contain peanuts? Isn’t it equally obvious that this also applies elsewhere? If you talk films, or music, or football, at home, if what you and your friends have in common is literature or athletics, then there’s at least a fair chance that your children will grow up knowing something about that subject. They may not share your skill or your obsession, or even your opinions, but they’ll almost certainly know more than the child next door.

That’s true in politics too. You might not share your parents’ affiliation, indeed you may actively rebel against it – but if you do, you do so from knowledge, not ignorance. And it’s equally true of religion, or for that matter lack of it. If you give thanks for living to see a new day, for having food to eat and clothes to wear, for your successes, then that’s what your children regard as normal – even if they later question it.

I’m not sure who coined the disparaging term “God-botherer”, but in this secular age it’s as likely to be the evangelical atheists who do the botherering! My inner sceptic wonders whether it’s not those who most take His name in vain who might be raising the next generation of believers.

That’s neither indoctrination nor aversion therapy, but how culture and tradition are transmitted from generation to generation. You can’t help it – you might as well try to live without weather!