

## Renewal

### *Thought for the Day*

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It's been fascinating to watch how the news has been dominated this week by a story of no consequence! Whether or not a 17 year old refugee from nationalism criticised British nationalism in his diary makes no practical difference to anything, whether or not his son, born 28 years later, became leader of a political party!

I must admit anyway to a degree of scepticism about media obsession with people's past misdeeds. Let me experiment live on air: pause for a second, and think back to when you were 17 – was there nothing you did that you now regret, repent, or repudiate? nothing you have just shuddered or blushed to think of? No; I didn't think so!

I recently came across a quotation from a long-forgotten ethicist: "The essence of immorality is making an exception of oneself". Don't we all? (all, of course, except me!)

Jewish people throughout the world have just come to the end of the month-long sequence of festivals that begins with the contemplative holy days of the New Year and the Yom Kippur fast, and ends with the new beginning of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah. One of the themes of this time is renewal, and we talk about turning over a new leaf, making a fresh start.

But renewal is not new! It's re-covering a sofa, not buying a new one; it's revising a script, not writing something different. The new Chief Rabbi, in his inaugural address, pointed out that the Hebrew for "month" means "new", but the word for "year" is derived from "repetition". Renewal is a bit of both.

We want the opportunity to give ourselves a bit of a makeover, to see where we've gone astray, and reset our moral satnav. If we want renewal in our own lives, can we deny it to others?

And if we want young people to become independent, imaginative, and resourceful, we can hardly judge them by the perceived sins of their fathers.