

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

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## My Lorax moment: Why Tribe run summer camps



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Towards the end of camp this past summer, after a few days of relentless (and oddly specific) requests, we showed the participants of Tribe camp Sufa/Kerach (Years 8 and 9) Dr Seuss' *The Lorax*. I realise how strange it may be to say this given this film is a cartoon based in a fictional world with furry trees, but the unrealistically fast sprouting of the seed at the end of the film bothered me. It took me until this week's parasha to put my finger exactly on the problem.

At the start of this parasha, Moshe begins his song by comparing his teachings to the rain. Rabbi Chizkiah ben Manoach (known as "Chizkuni", 13th century, Northern France) explains this simile through the idea that the impacts of both teaching and rain are not immediately evident. In the sense that rain does not immediately cause plants to flower or crops to ripen, the impact of teaching on someone's life can also take time to show.

As leaders on camp, our position of responsibility provides us with a unique opportunity to try to encourage participants to connect to our Jewish values, heritage and identities. Learning lessons that can only be learnt in the informal setting that camp provides, away from the routines of their usual lives and surrounded by their friends. Camp may only last a week or so but that does not undermine its formative

power. Speaking from both personal experience and from conversations with peers, the impact of the values learned in a short time over camp can permeate every aspect of your life. Like a rain shower, camp is over in a flash, but this should not understate its potential effect.

Thinking back to camp this past summer, as I sat in our makeshift cinema room somewhere near sunny Stoke, this is what bothered me about *The Lorax* too. The end of the film has the protagonist Ted racing around trying to plant a sprouting seed before it is too late. Not to state the obvious, but that is not how seeds work! They do not sprout immediately - much like with teaching and a rain shower, it can take years before the impact of planting a seed is observed.

This interpretation of Moshe's simile mirrors part of what we are trying to achieve on camps. Recognising the limited window of opportunity provided by the constraints of this setting, the best we can hope for is that our impact will be lasting like that of rain. That we can provide a Jewish setting to encourage each participant in their own journey to developing strong identities.

Of course, it would be remiss not to take this opportunity to reflect in more depth on the incredible summer of camps we have had at Tribe. This summer saw over 500 people spread across 6 countries with activities such as speedboating on the Mediterranean, ice skating, a trip to Disneyland, and we even had time for a New York Yankees baseball match. Can't wait for next year!

