

"WE HAVE RETURNED TO THE RESERVOIRS"



Development and Infrastructure

Historical Aqueducts:
The historical aqueducts are an archaeological, touristic, and national asset that we continue to preserve, promote, and develop for the benefit of residents and hikers.

We have continued the development of the ancient aqueducts at the entrance to the Dagan neighborhood, emphasizing accessibility to the aqueducts and ancient water shafts. With the assistance of the Ministry of Tourism, we created accessible walking paths with moderate slopes, integrated shaded benches along the route, and ensured accessibility

for the disabled and those with walking difficulties in compliance with standards. Downstream, near the road, pools were excavated that connect to the “Arrub Aqueduct” and simulate the flow of water as it was two thousand years ago, so that everyone can witness this unique experience and enjoy the site.

Additionally, a request has been submitted for the continued development of a new section, approximately 800 meters long, of the Biyar Aqueduct, including: excavation, reconstruction, and preservation, with a budget of approximately 4 million NIS from the Ministry of Tourism.



Historical Background:

The water supply system to Jerusalem during the Second Temple period was an engineering marvel built by the Hasmoneans and expanded later by King Herod. The water transport system, built in stages, included a network of two aqueducts collecting water from various sources in the Hebron Hills: the "Arrub Aqueduct," which collected spring water from south of the Gush Etzion junction, and the "Biyar Aqueduct," which collected spring water from the foot of the Gefen neighborhood.

The "Arrub Aqueduct," which passes entirely through the "Shafts Valley" (Nahal HaPirim) within Efrat, encountered a mountainous obstacle at the end of its path in the form of Givat HaDagan. To overcome this, a water tunnel was dug beneath the Dagan area. To facilitate excavation and maintenance, seven shafts of varying depths were dug. Part of the restoration work that has been carried out in recent years to uncover, restore, and preserve the aqueduct includes exposing these shafts and making them accessible to the public. Today, thanks to a recently paved accessible path, you can already walk between the shafts above ground.

At the heart of the water supply system stood Solomon's Pools, a series of three giant reservoirs used to store water. Together, the three pools hold 288,000 cubic meters of water. According to measurements taken between 1926-1931, the system supplied Jerusalem with 360,000 cubic meters of water per year.

Current Status of the Water Supply Complex:

In 1921, the pools were renovated by 'Hapoel

Hamizrachi', through the efforts of the pioneer Admor Rabbi Yishayahu Shapira, under the auspices of the British Mandate.

During the negotiations for the Oslo Accords in 1993, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin z"l instructed that the pools remain under full Israeli control. However, by mistake, the words "Solomon's Pools" were circled on the map instead of the pools themselves, leaving the reservoirs under P.A. control. As a result, the site's condition has deteriorated significantly in recent years.

Working to Fix the Situation:

We believe this situation must be rectified, by changing the status of the pools from Area A to Area C, with the pools included within the municipal boundaries of Efrat as a tourist and archaeological site. Including the pools in the new tourism project will ensure their restoration, preservation, and accessibility to visitors from Israel and around the world.

To this end, we are currently raising significant resources to establish the

Solomon's Pools Visitors Center. This will serve as a tourist gateway to the city of Efrat and the entire region, telling the story of the ancient water system that supplied Jerusalem, including Solomon's Pools.

To realize the inclusion of Solomon's Pools within Efrat and all the tourism benefits, the Council conducts monthly walking tours for Efrat residents to get to know Solomon's Pools. Additionally, we have brought Ministers, Members of Knesset, and opinion leaders from Israel and abroad to the site. This project is also part of our efforts to apply sovereignty in Judea and Samaria.

