

Amnun Forest: The Story Behind the Name

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Amnun Forest: Where Nature and Tradition Meet

The KKL-JNF **Amnun Forest**, situated northwest of Lake Kinneret, takes its name from the Amnun fish, native to the Sea of Galilee. Also known as Tilapia or St. Peter's Fish, the Amnun is Israel's most popular fish, with strong cultural, ecological, and commercial significance. The Amnun fish plays a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of the Kinneret.

Throughout the Talmud, fish are seen as a symbol of blessing. Tractate Berachot 40a, reminds that fish multiply quickly and are found in abundance. Fish are symbols of fertility and blessing. Furthermore, because they are hidden beneath the surface, they are blessed with protection from external harm. Midrashim often speak of fish as a metaphor for the Jewish people reminding of G-d's constant provision. Similarly, the Talmud Berakhot 60b says: Just as fish cannot live outside the water, so too, the Jewish people cannot live without the Torah.

Tractate Taanit 9a tells us that when the Jewish People traveled for 40 years in the desert, they miraculously (in the merit of Miriam) were accompanied by a traveling well that provided them with water. What became of the well when they crossed into Israel?

The Jerusalem Talmud and Midrash Rabbah bring the opinion that Miriam's Well was hidden within the Sea of Galilee. This is based on the verse *V'Nishkefa Al Pnai HaYeshimon*, "and it overlooked the face of the wilderness" (Numbers 21:20). The Midrash says: "Rabbi Chiya bar Abba taught: Anyone who ascends to the mountain of the wilderness and sees a small sieve-like shape in the Sea of Tiberias, this is Miriam's Well." (Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Ketubot 67a, and also in Midrash Rabbah, Vayikra 22:4) This further explains why the Kinneret is such a source of life and blessing.

In many ways, the Amnun Forest reflects the timeless blessings of the Kinneret itself. KKL-JNF extends heartfelt thanks to our global partners for their commitment to preserving and revitalizing the cherished Amnun Forest.