

REPORT NO. 2

October 10 2019

We are a group dedicated to the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Saida. Since our first communication in October 2018 (Report no. 1), we have received an enthusiastic response from many members of the Saida Jewish community, as well as from friends and supporters. This has encouraged our group to push on several fronts.

We want to report here on our progress, invite you to join Nabi Saydoun, and prompt you to explore our new website. You will be encouraged below to send us feedback, to register as a member of the organization, and to contribute personally and financially to the effort.

NABI SAYOUN, DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE JEWISH HERITAGE IN SAIDA

We are in the process of creating an official NGO named Nabi Saydoun, registered in France. We have called this organization Nabi Saydoun because the name is used by Sidonians to designate what is believed to be the tomb of Zebulon, one of the sons of the Patriarch Jacob, in Saida. The not-for-profit, apolitical, organization commits the group to a governance structure that is democratic and transparent, and to checks and balances on the funds collected and used.

BECOME A MEMBER OF NABI-SAYDOUN

Help us expand our reach by building up our mailing list, by sending names and contacts of interested people. We also need to build up the membership, which is open to all people interested in the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Saida. Members would then become ambassadors of the group, and get involved delivering some of its programs. To enlarge our mailing list, or to become a member, write to us at nabisaydoun@gmail.com.

A NEW WEBSITE

We have developed a website to document the Jewish presence in Saida through the ages. We invite you to explore it at www.nabisaydoun.org. Please send us your reactions to the website, pictures and other documents especially old pictures of the hara, the synagogue, or community events that could be posted.

The main focus so far is on the Saida cemetery, whose rehabilitation is our first project. The preservation of the memory of our ancestors is our first priority, and this effort needs to be successful in order for our future efforts to be credible. The cleaning and rehabilitation of the cemetery is proceeding, and we are planning a second cleanup phase during this fall.

You will find on the website the names and pictures gleaned from all the intact tombstones. All the remaining tombs are in various measures of decay and we cannot tell to whom they belong (see a few pictures below). We have started a list of names for people buried in the cemetery, which we hope to expand with additions by you, and

others over time. We would like to find a way to honor the names of all those that rest there and we are open to suggestions.

We are also willing to mount an effort to locate and rehabilitate particular tombs - contact us if you are interested in exploring what can be done.

The names on the intact tombstones were deciphered and translated by a dedicated team of volunteers that we would like to thank by listing their names:

Albert Elie Barzilay (Geneva)

Rene Drezner (São Paulo)

Dani Liniado Gadeh (Mexico City)

Routi Ajami Holcman (São Paulo)

Rav Chaim Dovid Rubinsztajn (São Paulo)

Lina Ajami Sion (New York)

CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFORT

So far, we have counted on donations from our small circle. We now need to broaden the effort, both to make it more sustainable, but also to provide a larger group of people with the sense of ownership through participation. Our current goal is to raise about US\$10,000 in order to engage in a further cleaning up of the cemetery.

You can contact one of the officers of the organization listed below should you wish to make a bank wire transfer or discuss the rehabilitation and maintenance of a particular tomb.

The ad-hoc committee for the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Saida

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