INTRODUCTION
Bet David Synagogue, a Progressive Reform Jewish community in the heart of Johannesburg, South Africa’s most energetic and vibrant city, is seeking a new Senior Rabbi.
We are looking forward to extending a warm Bet David welcome to the right candidate: a Rabbi who will relish the opportunity to lead worship, assembly and study at Bet David Synagogue.
Now approaching the fiftieth anniversary of our founding, Bet David has created an accepting and safe space for people of the Jewish Progressive Reform religion.
The ideal candidate to be the next Rabbi of Bet David will be enthusiastic about embracing the remarkable diversity of South Africa, a country both rich in culture and beauty of every kind, with intriguing complexities.
Reflecting the inclusive, international nature of our faith community, Bet David is conducting a global search to ensure that we find the ideal candidate.
The position will be for a term of 5 years and will give the successful candidate the opportunity to contribute to the spiritual growth of the Jewish Progressive Reform congregation in Sandton, Johannesburg and throughout the “Rainbow Nation” of South Africa.

REQUIREMENTS
• Five or more years’ experience as a Rabbi in a Progressive Jewish community
• Exceptional interpersonal skills and empathy
• An openness to new cultural experiences
• Energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas
• A natural ability to lead meaningful religious services
• An inspirational approach to their faith
Rabbis wishing to apply for this position should send their CV and a covering letter, explaining why they would be a perfect fit with a synagogue that operates as a place of respect and dignity for worshippers, visitors and all South Africans, to info@betdavid.org.za;

SERVICES OF THE RABBI
As the spiritual leader, the Rabbi to be appointed will provide the usual services of a Rabbi, which will include:
The updating and enhancement of the curriculum of the Religion School and the ‘Jews by Choice’ course, as well as attending to the teaching of such courses.
Implementation of programmes to improve the awareness of the central role of the Bet David Congregation and Judaism within the community.
Adult Jewish education.
Officiating at life-cycle events.
Officiating at religious and community services.
Visiting the sick.
Visiting and comforting the bereaved.
Providing counselling to congregants.
WHAT OUR CONGREGANTS ARE LOOKING FOR:

Below are thoughts from congregants on the qualities they wish to see in a Rabbi for Bet David and what they believe “makes a good Rabbi”:

1. First and foremost, a Rabbi should be religious. This should not be just a job for him/her. We are first and foremost a Synagogue and they should bear that in mind.

2. He/she should be a Spiritual leader who is interesting and able to inspire and direct ..........should have a vast knowledge of Judaism.

3. Our Rabbi should always carry him/herself in a dignified and respectful manner and be a leader, in all respects

4. A Rabbi should be a great teacher (after all, our children are going to be the people to carry us through the ages)

5. As a staff member, the Rabbi should be mindful of the Synagogue’s financial situation and be thrifty if necessary.

6. Our Rabbi needs to want to visit the sick and comfort the bereaved.

7. It is very important that our Rabbi makes congregants/staff feel that they can come to him/her with a problem (congregants/staff should feel that what is being discussed will remain confidential).

8. For those who come to Shul, sermons should be spiritual and uplifting (something to remember and be talked about after the service). As it could be hard to achieve this every single week, maybe the Rabbi could deliver a sermon fortnightly or once a month, with lay leaders doing the rest. Maybe “sermon fatigue” could be avoided then and this might inspire congregants to look forward to coming to Shul because of the variation.

9. The Rabbi should get to know the congregants (after all, their money pays for most things). It is important for the Rabbi to know congregants and their family members by name (not just a few favourites), what they do etc. An interest must be shown in the whole congregation (again, not just a few). If unsure, the Rabbi must ask how to pronounce names. This is important for reading Yahrzeits etc.

10. The Rabbi must be concerned if a congregant resigns and take heed of the reason for the resignation. It is important that the Rabbi tries to fix the situation (unless it cannot be helped). Our Rabbi needs to show an interest and not just fob off resignations. Rabbis must try to build their congregations. On that note though, the congregation must be built with “stayers” because, in that way, the congregation will last.

11. Our Rabbi should not be the type of person who has learnt to be a Rabbi “parrot-style”. The feeling for caring and enriching people should come from the heart. Emotional intelligence is very important.

12. Our Rabbi needs to show empathy towards others.

13. He/she should be a “rock” and a leader for the staff he/she works with. Rabbis must treat them with respect, if respect is expected in return.

14. If this Rabbi is coming from overseas, he/she must know that the South African culture is different to any other. Accept and value us for who we are and embrace our diversity.

15. A Rabbi needs to understand that this job is almost like a doctor’s and the Rabbi can be on call 24/7.

16. Please be approachable, friendly and warm........adapt to the congregation’s style. Know that our congregation consists of younger members as well as the older generations. This is important because a Rabbi might have to adapt to suit the needs of all generations. Our older generation is as important as the younger generations (if not more so, because they have been the stalwarts of the Synagogue).

17. A Rabbi needs to be willing to learn and to be able to reflect upon and assist in any situation that may arise in the office environment. A Rabbi must fix and not aggravate and be mindful of this as, even though the Rabbi is the “leader”, he/she is always a colleague.

18. Rabbis should accept and take heed of advice, and not think they are above learning. No-one is.

BET DAVID SYNAGOGUE

Bet David Synagogue, in the heart of Sandton, in Johannesburg, is known for its warm, welcoming congregation, wonderful choir and exquisite gardens. Bet David is a large Progressive Reform Jewish Congregation. The Campus is set in beautiful, landscaped gardens with new modern facilities, including function halls and educational facilities, as well as the sanctuary.
There is a long history of Progressive Reform Judaism in South Africa, dating back to the late 1920s – read more here: http://saupj.org.za/a-history-of-reform-in-sa/
You can also learn more about the history of Judaism in South Africa here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_South_Africa

WHY LIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Johannesburg

Johannesburg, which began as a 19th-century gold-mining settlement, is the country's largest city and the capital of Gauteng Province. Sandton, the area in which Bet David is located, is the economic hub of South Africa, yet there are wildlife parks less than an hour's drive away. Johannesburg has established itself as a major cultural centre too, with an exciting vibrancy and energy. The city and its surrounds are home to renowned galleries, music clubs, art collectives and museums reflecting the cosmopolitan and multicultural population of the city. Johannesburg is also the largest urban forest in the world, with over a million trees in the city, creating a beautiful environment with a large and varied bird life. There are many great day trips to be made in and around the city and its suburbs.

POLITICS AND ECONOMY

South Africa completed a remarkable transition to democracy in the early 1990s, culminating in the first-ever free and fair elections in 1994. This saw the once-banned African National Congress (ANC), under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, achieve a majority in parliament. This result has been repeated at all subsequent elections, although robust and vociferous opposition parties ensure that the ruling ANC is held to account.

South Africa is widely reckoned to have one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. This enshrines a wide range of rights and freedoms and is championed by an independent judiciary and a fearless media. While the economic and social wounds of apartheid (the system of racial division and oppression enforced by white minority governments from 1948 to 1990) have been, in some instances, slow to heal, and there are still very great inequalities of opportunity and affluence, South Africa has maintained a positive trajectory. The “Rainbow Nation” sobriquet was coined to reflect the incredible diversity of a republic that has 11 official languages and people with a dazzling array of heritages and stories. South Africa's economy is the second largest in Africa and is built on a solid foundation of mineral wealth (especially gold, diamonds, platinum and coal). In part due to past adversity, South Africans have developed a remarkable resilience and self-sufficiency. Ours is a nation that takes great pride in its ability to “make a plan” and find ways to overcome any obstacle. Today, South Africa has a diverse economy, driven by both large corporations and an unquenchable entrepreneurial spirit. South Africans are investors, inventors and hustlers; what they don’t have, they’ll make, earn or find a replacement for.
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

South Africa has a past marked by conflict and colonialism, and, as a result, has communities that can trace their roots to elsewhere in Africa, Europe and Asia.

Speak to any South African, and you’ll detect their justified pride in their nationality, as well as in their membership of their own ethnic group.

Ethnic groups include Indians (often descended from indentured labourers brought to South Africa by the British), Europeans, Afrikaners (a linguistically and culturally distinct group, whose forebears were Dutch settlers), Coloureds, and multiple African tribes, including the Zulu, Xhosa, Bapedi and Tswana peoples.

Each September, South Africans celebrate Heritage Day, a public holiday created in celebration of the fact that the things that unite the people of the Rainbow Nation are far greater than the things that divide them.

Although the country’s history is littered with examples of injustice, South Africans today are united in their desire for a peaceful, harmonious society and unstinting in their joint efforts to achieve and maintain this.

South African even has its own indigenous philosophy, “UBUNTU”, whose central premise is that we are “because of others”. The genius of South Africa is that this sense of unity thrives alongside important differences that are respected and shared in a spirit of mutual respect and friendship.

Watch the spirit of South Africa https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCZVL_8D048

PLACES OF INTEREST IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa’s landscapes are as diverse as its population and make ours an endlessly rewarding country to explore. From near desert to snow-capped mountains, plus endless sweeps of sandy beaches and two oceans, South Africa really is the world in one country. World-famous landmarks include Table Mountain in Cape Town, while the vineyards of the Western Cape Winelands produce award-winning wines.

There is always something new to discover in South Africa. With year-round sunshine, it’s no wonder that the lifestyle here is the envy of people everywhere.

JOHANNESBURG AND SURROUNDS - SOWETO

The famous township was a hotbed of resistance to apartheid. Today, it is a thriving community with numerous landmarks, including the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Nelson Mandela’s house on Vilakazi Street.

https://www.sowetotour.co.za/

APARTHEID MUSEUM

A visit here is essential to understanding recent South African history and the struggle for democracy. Visitors are divided by race on arrival as a way of bringing home the realities of the former regime.

https://www.apartheidmuseum.org
KLIPRIVIERSBERG NATURE RESERVE
This is a small nature reserve in southern Johannesburg that offers an easily accessible respite from the hustle and bustle of the city.

http://klipriviersberg.org.za/

CONSTITUTION HILL
Formerly a prison, this is now an education centre dedicated to interpreting and celebrating South Africa’s constitution. From here, there are sweeping views across the city, giving a true sense of “world’s largest manmade forest”. When the famous Jacaranda trees are in bloom, the city is a sea of purple.

https://www.constitutionhill.org.za/

JOHANNESBURG HOLOCAUST & GENOCIDE CENTRE (JHGC)
The JHGC honours the memories of the victims of the Holocaust and of the Rwandan Genocide and serves as an education and awareness centre to ensure that these events are neither forgotten nor repeated.

https://www.jhbholocaust.co.za/

GOLD REEF CITY
Johannesburg is a relatively new city and was founded on wealth generated by the area’s gold mines. Gold Reef is a fun family day out – a theme park with rides inspired by the gold rush, built on the site of a former gold mine.

https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/gold-reef-city

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THE CRADLE OF HUMANKIND
One of the world’s most important archaeological sites, the caves in the Cradle have yielded incredible fossils of early hominids, including Mrs Ples, Little Foot, and, more recently, Homo naledi. Ongoing excavations at Sterkfontein continue to give clues as to how our distant ancestors lived, while the Maropeng Visitor Centre offers a fascinating journey back in time to the very origins of our species.

https://www.maropeng.co.za/

https://www.maropeng.co.za/content/page/sterkfontein-caves
CAPE TOWN
Regularly rated as one of the world's best destinations, Cape Town has it all: a stunning location, great architecture, amazing food and wine and a vast array of cultural riches. Highlights include the Table Mountain cable car, the V&A Waterfront, The Company Gardens and the colourful houses of Bo Kaap. The South African Jewish Museum (SAJM) can be found here, next to the Old Synagogue – the first to be built in South Africa.

https://www.capetown.travel/

https://www.sajewishmuseum.org.za/

WESTERN CAPE
Easily reached from Cape Town, this region blends green rolling hills with a rugged coastline and offers activities as diverse as wine and cheese tastings, and shark cage diving.


KRUGER NATIONAL PARK
The size of Israel, this protected area has superb wildlife viewing (including the famous “Big Five”), while the adjacent private reserves boast luxurious safari lodges. If you’re interested in seeing iconic African species in their natural habitat, Kruger is the obvious choice. However, it’s just one of many amazing national parks in the country. Other highlights include the Pilanesberg (easily reached from Johannesburg), set in a vast meteorite crater, and Addo, known for its population of elephants.

https://www.sanparks.org/parks

https://www.pilanesbergnationalpark.org/

CULLINAN
To the east of Pretoria, this small town is famous for one thing: diamonds! It’s where the world’s largest diamond was found, and mine tours here offer a fascinating insight into some of South Africa’s geological riches and how they have shaped the country’s history.

https://www.cullinan-tours.co.za/

FURTHER AFIELD
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