

THE MEANINGFUL LIFE CENTER

BIRTHDAY GUIDE



YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR A MEANINGFUL BIRTHDAY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Birthday Greeting from Rabbi Simon Jacobson and the Meaningful Life Center

STEP 1. Personal Introspection

STEP 2. Intensify and Initiate

STEP 3. Give Additional Charity

STEP 4. Prayer and Meditation

STEP 5. Connect With Your Song

STEP 6. Throw a Party!

Postscript: Do You Matter?



BIRTHDAY GREETING
FROM RABBI SIMON JACOBSON
AND THE MEANINGFUL LIFE CENTER



Happy Birthday!

Your birthday is a window into your soul.

On your birthday something special happens: a door opens up that reveals the same energy that the universe invested in you at birth.

This energy is the purpose of your existence—your personal mission.

Your birthday is therefore a day when you can tap into who you really are and why you were put here on Earth.

Birth is your beginning. Today is an opportunity to remember that day, to celebrate and give thanks, and to reflect upon how well you are fulfilling your mission. Today is your day to commit to a life guided by eternal principles, by using the abilities and resources you were born with to perfect yourself and society, and to **make the world a beautiful and sacred home for the Divine.**

A birthday is a time to rethink your life: How great is the disparity between what I have accomplished and what I can accomplish? Am I spending my time properly or am I involved in things that distract me from my higher calling?

How can I strengthen the thread that connects my outer life and my inner life?

A birthday can also teach us the concept of rebirth. To recall our birth is to recall a new beginning. No matter how things went yesterday, or last year, we always have the capacity to try again. **Your birthday is a refresher, a chance for spiritual regeneration.**

On your birthday, perform a special act of goodness. It is easy enough to say you are thankful; it is far better to show it by doing a kind deed, something that you did not do yesterday. Do it simply because your inner goodness, your soul, wants to express its thanks for being born and alive.

1

PERSONAL INTROSPECTION

Take some time to reflect on your achievements and goals.

Seclude yourself for a while on the day of your birthday and retrospectively review your conduct of the past year—see what needs improvement—and make good resolutions for the coming year.





REVIEW YOUR YEAR

Examine the fragmented pieces that make up your life. Are you spending time doing what you love? Are you living up to your own mission and personal expectations? Is there a common thread that connects them all?

Below are eleven themes. Take some time to reflect and take stock on the year that passed. Your response will be a good indication of where and how you should focus your energy in the coming year.

RELATIONSHIPS:

Immediate family, extended family, friends, acquaintances & coworkers

CHILDREN:

Positive parenting, spending quality time together, teaching values, teaching boundaries

HOME:

Creating sacred space, guests, feeling of safety, being satisfied with your lot

WORK:

Attitude, accomplishments, failures, making work meaningful

CHARITY & MONEY:

Budgeting & saving, charitable giving, worrying about money, valuing money too much

USE OF TIME:

Well-used time, wasted time, procrastination, down time

PHYSICAL HEALTH:

Eating, exercise, sleep, medical issues

INTIMACY:

Respect, trust, love, vulnerability

TECHNOLOGY:

Too much technology, not enough technology, use of technology for the good, messages sent via technology

COMMUNITY:

Made new friends, connectedness, helping within the community, level of, and response to, loneliness

LEADERSHIP:

Found new leadership opportunities, careful use of power, providing new perspective, helping others to find their own leadership opportunities

2

INTENSIFY & INITIATE

Access your soul, which radiates on your birthday, by intensifying all your existing good activities, and initiating new ones.



Life rests on three pillars:

MIND, HEART, ACTION.

On this day do something to strengthen each of your three pillars, and commit to doing this in the coming days of the year:

1. Stimulate your mind by studying something meaningful
2. Connect emotionally with a loved one through a heart to heart conversation
3. Designate time for saying a heartfelt prayer or for mindful meditation
4. Increase acts of goodness and kindness
5. Give additional charity
6. Connect with your song
7. Feed your soul through spiritual reading

My new commitment is: _____

5 WAYS

TO INITIATE YOUR NEW COMMITMENT

Take first step.

Cultivate your desire to take action and create excitement by spelling out exactly what you are going to do and get started, even if it's taking one small step.

Change your daily ritual.

We tend to get stuck in our daily routines. Rather than being glued to your regular cycles and behaviors, incorporate a new ritual or try to be spontaneous.

Examine your hesitation.

Unwilling to change? Take an honest stock of what is stopping you; then go to the root of inaction and address it.

Share and declare!

Tell a friend your new commitment. By speaking your plan out loud to someone, the commitment is transformed from being an idea to being spoken into existence, giving it more power to become a reality.

Repeat.

Use endurance and persistence to get the job done. Just as the inertia of routine prevented you from starting, use the momentum of action to keep the ball rolling.

GIVING ADDITIONAL CHARITY

Your birthday is the day when your soul was sent to earth to give to others—to illuminate the world with your special light. What better way to energize this than by being extra charitable on your special day?

5 WAYS TO GIVE CHARITY

Give Daily

Fill...Give...Repeat. Place a charity box in your home or office and put a coin in it every day. The very act of giving, even a small amount, trains us to be generous. Additionally, placing a charity box in a place redefines the entire space as a center for kindness and caring. When it is full, give it to an organization whose mission you support.

Give With Joy

How you give is more important than how much you give! Don't begrudgingly toss a coin into someone's overturned hat. Give with a smile and genuine warmth. Make the recipient feel great, rather than shameful, about having to ask for help.

Give More Than Money

The highest form of charity is to empower another. Financial giving is only one component of charity. You have way more to offer than the coins in your pocket, such as your time, experience, and advice. If you have an expertise in something or an employment opportunity or a loan, giving that can be far more valuable than a one-time donation. There is an expression that you can give a man a fish and that will be dinner for one night, or you can teach a person to fish and now he can feed his family for the rest of his life.

Give to Those Closest to You

Sometimes we can be blind to those who need us the most—our closest friends, family, and colleagues. In our attempt at being generous, we can neglect to give to the people who need us the most—our best friends and family. It's easier at times to give to those we don't know or to organizations since we are judgmental about whether our close friends truly need help.

Give Anonymously

The highest level of giving is when we do so anonymously, without ulterior motives while preserving the dignity of the recipient.



4

PRAYER & MEDITATION

On the day when your soul renews its mission, prayer can help you emotionally connect to your divine calling.

WHAT IS PRAYER

Prayer is a conversation, a dialogue between your heart and your soul. It is hard because it takes practice and work to develop the skills necessary to converse from the heart. This is why prayer is called “service of the heart.” As such, it is not an intellectual experience—it is an emotional experience.

*If study is exercise for the mind,
prayer is exercise for the heart.*



5 SCIENTIFICALLY SUPPORTED BENEFITS of Routine Prayer and Meditation

1. Stabilizes your mood, making you more emotionally consistent
2. Increases your resilience to stress and attenuates anxiety
3. Improves self control-empowering you to absorb and dissipate negative energy without having it affect you
4. Makes you more forgiving
5. Offsets the negative health effects of stress



4 EASY STEPS

to get started with prayer.

Take full advantage of the day for connecting, receiving, achieving, and being grateful.



STEP 1

Free up real time. Find a quiet space away from any distracting sights or sounds. Get everything else out of your mind and release yourself, by focusing inward. Listen to yourself breathe. Close your eyes. Sing a song to yourself. Create the mood—an oasis.



STEP 2

Concentrate on your inner soul—the invisible force within that makes you tick. Allow yourself to feel and speak to your deepest essence. Then realize that your soul is part of a much larger essence. That larger essence is called G-d. If you were able to speak to your essence, what would you say?



STEP 3

Open your emotions. As you recite the words, speak to G-d with the awareness that He is the essence which sustains and energizes your soul. Allow the words of the prayer to open up your deepest emotions before G-d.



STEP 4

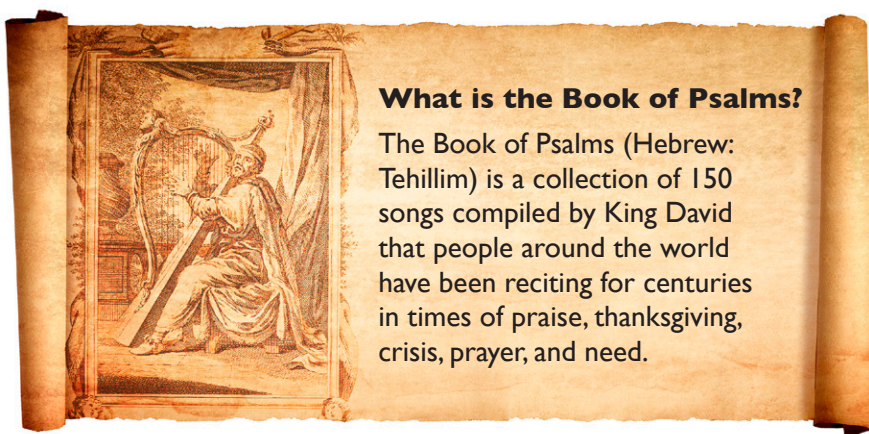
In your own words, ask Him for everything you need in life. Be completely open and vulnerable. Express your feelings about the most important matters in your life.

CONNECT WITH YOUR SONG

Every soul has its own unique song.

One way to connect to your own special song is through the Psalm that corresponds to your age—the new Psalm that you begin reciting on your birthday, when your soul returns to the point when it first entered this world and began singing its own melody.

Every year on your birthday a new dimension of your song emerges. You access that energy by mindfully reading your new Psalm each day of the year.



What is the Book of Psalms?

The Book of Psalms (Hebrew: Tehillim) is a collection of 150 songs compiled by King David that people around the world have been reciting for centuries in times of praise, thanksgiving, crisis, prayer, and need.

Find your Psalm:

Take your age, add one, and that is the number of your Psalm. Example: If you are turning 32, you begin reciting Psalm 33 on your birthday and every day henceforth until your next birthday when you begin Psalm 34.

Each day, preferably in the morning (after prayers), designate time to recite your Psalm, concentrating on the message that most relates to your state of mind on that day.

NEXT STEPS



Allow your Psalm to help you find your voice and sing your song.

On your birthday, read your new Psalm.

Familiarize yourself with its general theme, and the message of each verse. Look for parallels between your life and your Psalm.

Begin a daily journal to document how your Psalm speaks to and helps you deal with your experiences and challenges.

THROW A PARTY!

Celebrate meaningfully by bringing family and friends together in honor of your birthday to share in deep conversation and manifest genuine joy.

THE MEANINGFUL BIRTHDAY PARTY PLANNER

- Pick a location where you can create sacred space.
- Choose a time and date as close to your birthday as possible.
- Look up your Hebrew birthday.
- Write your guest list.
- Email/send out your invitations.
- Make a menu—just snacks are fine!
- Optional: Invite someone who inspires you to share a story or lesson at your party.

PLAN THE MEANINGFUL DIMENSION OF YOUR PARTY

- Brainstorm meaningful conversation topics.
- Prepare some insightful stories to tell, from your own life or someone else's.
- Learn a lesson about living a conscious life with the intention of sharing it with your guests.
- Ask your guests to bring a favorite spiritual saying or lesson.
- Prepare a prayer or blessing for each of your guests—on your birthday you have extra prayer-power!
- Have a charity box at the party, and give all your guests coins place a coin into the charity box.

THROW YOUR SPIRITUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY!

- An hour before guests arrive, set a beautiful table.
- Spend the moments before your guests arrive in quiet contemplation in order to set your intention for your gathering.
- Welcome your guests with warmth and joy!
- Enjoy your birthday gathering by singing, dancing, and having meaningful conversations with your guests!
- Announce to your friends and family your commitment to a new good deed! (Encourage them to do so as well!)
- If you choose to have a candled birthday cake at the party, light the candles, instead of blowing them out.

DO YOU MATTER?

Would the world be any different if you weren't born? Do you wake up in the morning feeling like you have an important role to play in the grand scheme of things?

Most of us grow up in a world where life is dispensable, where our individual contributions go unrecognized, where there is no real sense that life—ours or anyone's—is significant or meaningful.

At the root of this restlessness and discontent is the deep-seated conviction that “I Don't Matter.” It is a belief that if I were to show up someplace or not, or make some kind of contribution or not, it would not fundamentally affect the world or the people that live in it. Think about that for a minute. If you don't feel like you make a difference in the world, how excited can you be about the things you do and the choices you make? When you wake up in the morning and you feel like what you do that day doesn't matter anyway, how committed or passionate can you be?

But here is a message that will change your life forever:

Birth is G-d's way of saying “you matter.”

This means you are absolutely necessary. You are indispensable to G-d's vision of the world, chosen to fulfill a mission in this world that you and only you can accomplish. Like musical notes in the grand Divine composition, each of us has our unique music to play.

We must each challenge and ask ourselves: Do I really matter?

I have posed this question to audiences across the country. The knee-jerk response is usually: Of course I matter—I feel that I am important. My family, friends and work colleagues value me. But let me rephrase the question: **Would it make a difference if you were never born?** Remember, before you were born, it would not have been a catastrophe if you did not appear; no one would miss you because no one was expecting you. Of course, we can justify our existence once we are born. But does our existence have any merit beyond our justifications?

**You are an indispensable musical note in life's symphony.
Irreplaceable. Period. The world would be different if you
were not here or if you do not fulfill your calling.**

The only absolute reason why you truly matter is because you were chosen by G-d to come to this world. The words "Birth is G-d saying you matter" are not my own. They are taken from the Torah, which states the single most important truth you will ever hear: Yes, you matter, not because you think you are important, or because others tell you that you are, or because of your buying power, monetary value, looks, performance or productivity level. You are important because G-d put you here.

You are an indispensable musical note in life's symphony. Irreplaceable. Period. The world would be different if you were not here or if you do not fulfill your calling. You have been allotted a certain section of this globe, with certain talents; people you will meet; experiences you will have; places you will go; objects you will obtain—all are allocated to you in order for you to transform them, to leave them differently from how you found them. And this changes lives forever. Eternally. When you know that you and your contribution are crucial, it infuses all that you do with a compelling sense of urgency.

I believe that this simple, clear message is preventive medicine for much of the tragedy and suffering that plague our world today—the shootings, the hatred, the suicides, the wars. We need to reach to every person, to every child, every parent, every educator, every leader, with the message: You matter. Your life and what you do with it matters. You are indispensable to G-d and to this world.

Wishing you a deeply meaningful and joyous birthday,
Simon Jacobson

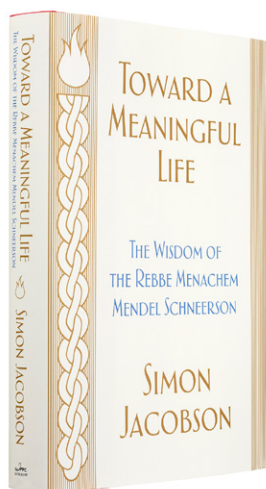


If you enjoyed reading this short guide and started to implement some of the ideas, you will begin to see changes in your life fairly quickly. Stay open and present to your life and mindfully watch the possibilities unfold.

If you would like to delve deeper into life's most profound truths, we have a special offer for you right now.

For a limited time, Simon Jacobson's **best selling book** *Toward a Meaningful Life* is available to you for **30% OFF!**

Fresh perspectives on every aspect of your life—from birth to death, youth to old age; marriage, love, intimacy, and family; the persistent issues of career, health, pain, and suffering; and education, faith, science, and government.



~~\$24.99~~ **\$17.99**

HARDCOVER

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~~\$16.99~~ **\$11.99**

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COUPON CODE: BIRTHDAY

What people are saying...

“This was by far the most life-changing book I’ve ever read. It put to words so many things I’ve felt in life. The lessons I learned from this book have inspired me and informed my life on a daily basis.”

Simone Kboundion

“This is not only a good read but a great resource to go back to when you are looking for another perspective to what is going on in your life and how to change your paradigm. It really is about living your purpose.”

Michael Horwitz

“Wish i read this book 40 years ago! A plus!!”

Jeff Ketzman

Who we are.

The Meaningful Life Center (MLC) is a spiritual health center that empowers you to find meaning in everything you do, and discover your personal mission in life. Through a wide variety of live and published programming, videos, webcasts, podcasts, articles and personally customized counseling and materials, the MLC offers you empowering and potent life skills that improve every aspect of your life. From love and relationships to work and finance, from fear and anxiety to joy and celebration, from birth to death, and all the life cycles in between, you can look forward to an exhilarating journey, which will both stimulate and provoke you to actualize your enormous potential and reach unprecedented heights.

MLC presents the universal teachings of Torah as a blueprint for life, to people of all backgrounds. Called a “Spiritual Starbucks” by the *New York Times*, it is an outgrowth of Rabbi Simon Jacobson’s teachings which have captured the hearts of thousands of participants over the last 25 years with their spiritual message and profound insights into the human condition.

The Meaningful Life Center is built on the belief that life is precious and that every individual has a unique and indispensable contribution to make. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: “Alas for those that never sing, but die with all their music in them.” The MLC is dedicated to assuring that you find and sing your special song.

We extend an invitation for learning and growing to everyone! Come, explore, and discover how to live a truly happy and amazing life...living up your highest potential.

Rabbi Simon Jacobson heads The Meaningful Life Center and is the author of the **best-selling book *Toward a Meaningful Life***, a *William Morrow* publication that has sold over **300,000 copies** to date and has been translated into twelve languages.



Rabbi Simon Jacobson is one of the greatest scholars and sought after speakers in the Jewish world today. He has lectured to diverse audiences on six continents and in forty states on psycho-spiritual issues and applying Jewish thought to contemporary life. His voice is rooted in the timeless teachings of Torah, yet at the same time is profoundly timely, relevant, unique, and cutting edge. He has been interviewed on over 300 radio and TV shows, including **CNN** with **Larry King**, the **Charlie Rose Show**, and the **CBS News Show *The Best of Us***.

WANT MORE?

You are now one year older and wiser! What is your vision for the coming year?
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Personal Coaching with Rabbi Jacobson

If you have a personal issue that you need guidance for, if you want guidance that is sensitive, in-touch and contemporary, and sourced in the timeless divine wisdom of the Torah, you want a personal appointment with Rabbi Jacobson. Renowned for his unique approach in addressing psycho-spiritual issues and applying Jewish thought to contemporary life, his voice is rooted in the timeless teachings of Torah, and is uniquely in-touch, relevant and cutting edge. The deeper and more personal an issue is, the more Rabbi Jacobson's unique approach stands out and shines. Some of the many issues that people regularly seek Rabbi Jacobson's life-changing guidance for are:

- *Mental, emotional and spiritual health and stability*
- *Dating, marriage and relationships*
- *Recovering from physical, emotional and sexual abuse*
- *Clarifying your specific purpose in life*