

Summary: AI and the Rabbi Webinar

Webinar Host: Rabbi Menachem Penner

Presenter: Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn

Focus: Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance rabbinic work, Torah study, and synagogue leadership.

Key AI Applications Mentioned

1. Obsidian

- **Purpose:** Advanced note-taking and organizational platform.
- **Best Uses:** Helps rabbis organize ideas for drashot (sermons), Torah classes, and personal study. Integrates AI for tasks like generating content, summarizing notes, and linking related ideas.
- **Features:**
 - Ability to structure and visualize connections between notes.
 - Audio transcription using OpenAI's Whisper model for precise Hebrew and English recognition.
 - Plugins for additional customization, such as connecting with multiple AI systems or creating interactive graphs.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn demonstrated creating a network of Torah ideas, showing how Obsidian visualizes connections between topics like "Beira Dolekes" and Avraham Avinu's journey.
- **Cost:** Free for basic use; syncing between devices requires a subscription (≈\$10/month).
- [Learn more](#)

2. ChatGPT (OpenAI)

- **Purpose:** Content generation, brainstorming, and idea refinement.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Drafting sermons or Torah insights by generating creative angles.
 - Summarizing parshiyot or identifying key themes.
 - Constructing engaging topics for podcasts or classes.
- **Features:**
 - Subscription plan (≈\$20/month) allows access to advanced models for superior performance.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn used ChatGPT to generate 20 creative sermon topics from the parsha "Toldot," including a focus on sibling rivalry and the theme of divine design.

- **Strengths:** Rapidly generates ideas and provides structured outputs, useful for rabbis short on time.
- [Learn more](#)

3. Claude by Anthropic

- **Purpose:** Sophisticated language model focused on deeper, more nuanced outputs.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Refining ideas generated by other tools like ChatGPT.
 - Providing more “sensitive” or emotionally-aware responses.
- **Example from Webinar:** Claude was used to explore themes such as "prayer and patience in facing life's challenges," derived from Yitzchak and Rivka's 20-year wait for children.
- **Cost:** Free and professional subscription options available.
- **Strengths:** Balances creativity and emotional intelligence, suitable for sensitive community interactions.
- [Learn more](#)

4. Canva

- **Purpose:** Visual design platform with AI tools for text and layout generation.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Creating visually appealing handouts, flyers, and presentations.
 - Organizing sermon ideas visually with templates and color-coded elements.
 - Utilizing “Magic Write” for drafting content directly in the app.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn designed a sample flyer for a Chanukah event, integrating AI-generated text and graphic elements to quickly build an engaging layout.
- **Cost:** Free tier with premium features available (≈\$12.99/month for Pro).
- **Strengths:** User-friendly interface and strong visual tools make it accessible for non-designers.
- [Learn more](#)

5. Arena

- **Purpose:** Comparative evaluation of multiple language models.
- **Best Uses:**

- Testing responses from various AI systems to select the most suitable for a specific question.
 - Generating multiple perspectives on a single topic for Torah discussions.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn compared different AI outputs for a question about Yaakov's taking of the birthright, showing how different models (Claude, GPT, etc.) approach the topic with varied sophistication.
- **Features:** Allows rabbis to compare outputs from GPT, Claude, and others.
- **Strengths:** Provides diversity of thought and ensures robust preparation for classes or sermons.

6. Google's NotebookLM

- **Purpose:** AI-enhanced note-taking system by Google.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Centralizing and querying personal Torah notes.
 - Creating study guides or FAQs based on uploaded content.
- **Features:**
 - Integrates with user-uploaded documents to generate custom outputs.
 - Ensures that generated content is rooted in personal or trusted sources.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn showed how uploading personal Chanukah notes allowed NotebookLM to generate a detailed FAQ-style summary of related halachot.
- **Strengths:** Ensures accuracy by limiting AI to specific, pre-approved sources.
- **Cost:** Free with a Google account.
- [Learn more](#)

7. MyMind

- **Purpose:** Personal knowledge management tool.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Capturing and organizing inspiration from online content.
 - Tagging and categorizing ideas for future use in sermons or classes.
- **Features:** AI integration for organizing and retrieving saved items with ease.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn demonstrated saving a secular article about longevity into MyMind and tagging it for later use in a dvar Torah about "life and wisdom."

- **Cost:** \$10/month.
- [Learn more](#)

8. Serendipity

- **Purpose:** Idea-generation platform.
- **Best Uses:**
 - Providing creative prompts or unexpected insights for sermons and Torah study.
- **Features:** Uses saved data to recommend related content.
- **Example from Webinar:** Rabbi Einhorn showcased how Serendipity surfaced a forgotten idea about Chanukah's spiritual symbolism, sparking new sermon concepts.
- **Strengths:** Encourages out-of-the-box thinking.
- **Cost:** Varies.

Workflow Recommendations for Rabbis

1. Content Preparation:

- Use **ChatGPT** to generate initial ideas or outlines for sermons.
- Refine and deepen ideas with **Claude** or **Google's NotebookLM**.

2. Note Organization:

- Centralize notes in **Obsidian** or **NotebookLM** for long-term accessibility.
- Use **Canva** to create visual aids or handouts.

3. Brainstorming:

- Generate diverse perspectives with **Arena**.
- Explore creative angles using **Serendipity**.

4. Idea Management:

- Capture inspiration on-the-go with **MyMind**.
- Tag and categorize content for future reuse.

General Observations

The webinar emphasized the potential of AI to revolutionize rabbinic work by saving time, sparking creativity, and enabling more effective community engagement. Rabbi Einhorn's suggestions cater to both seasoned and new users, stressing the importance of selecting the right tool for each task. As AI evolves, its applications for Torah study and synagogue leadership will likely expand, offering rabbis even greater opportunities to innovate.