The Digital Beit Midrash

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The Digital Beit Midrash

A Framework for Deep Inquiry in NotebookLM Using PaRDeS

Every Notebook Can Be a Mini-Beit Midrash

You can treat each NotebookLM notebook as a mini-Beit Midrash by curating a 'source-stack' and then steering the AI through PaRDeS lenses.

This means shifting your perspective. NotebookLM is not just a repository for your documents; it's a dedicated environment where you can engage in a structured dialogue with your curated sources, uncovering layers of meaning.

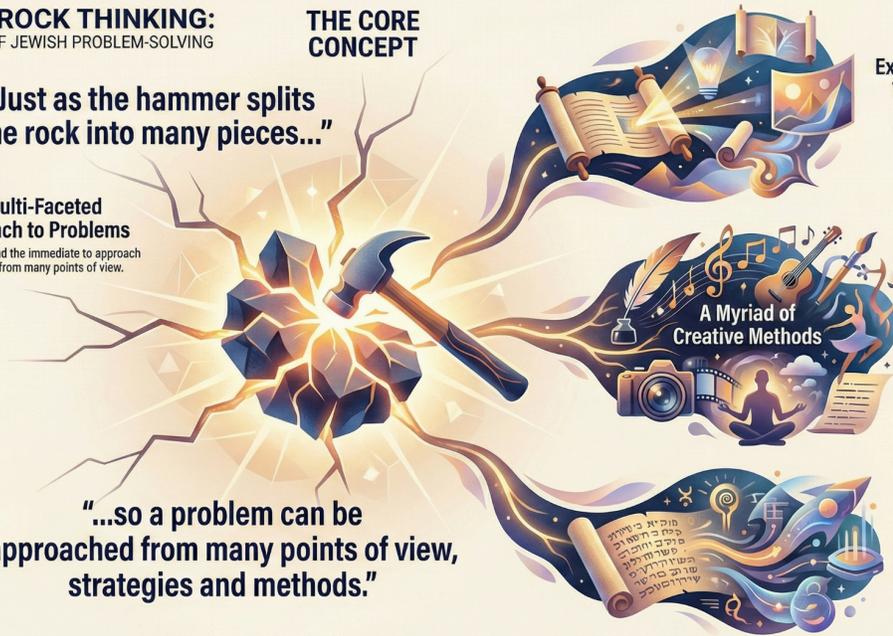## SPLITROCK THINKING:
THE ART OF JEWISH PROBLEM-SOLVING

THE CORE CONCEPT

"Just as the hammer splits the rock into many pieces..."

A Multi-Faceted Approach to Problems
Looking beyond the immediate to approach a problem from many points of view.

"...so a problem can be approached from many points of view, strategies and methods."

Expanding Storytelling Through the Visual
Using visual arts to deepen the understanding of Jewish stories and culture.

A Myriad of Creative Methods

CREATIVE EXPRESSION & APPLICATION
Includes words, poetry, music, photography, film, dance, and even dream work.

Tradition Fosters Transformation
Core Jewish principles are expressed as modern creativity, innovation, and transformation.

One Verse, Many Teachings. One Problem, Many Solutions.
"Just as the rock is split into many splinters, so also may one biblical verse convey many teachings." (Talmud - Sanhedrin 34A)

Words, Poetry

Data Visualization

Music, Songs

Poster, Advertisement

The Text / The Problem

Photography, Film

Scenarios, Psychodrama

Splitrock Thinking transforms a single problem into a portfolio of possibilities. Each 'splinter' is a valid interpretation, a new story, a different strategy. This is the essence of creative problem-solving.

Beyond the Text: The Art of Visual Midrash

THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

Visual Midrash is commentary on sacred text through art.

It seeks to explain, clarify, or find new meaning in biblical narratives.

The artistic process often begins with deep textual study.

Artists study texts together before creating visual commentary in their studios.

It makes sacred stories understandable in contemporary terms.

This creative process satisfies the need to know the details behind the spare Torah text.

QUOTE

"The primary talent of an artist is his ability to step away from the externalities of the thing…gaze into its innerness and perceive its essence, and to be able to convey this in his painting."

— The Rebbe

EXPLORING THE NARRATIVE

Art visualizes the unwritten details of biblical stories.

Artists depict the emotions and unseen forces in biblical struggles, "filling in the gaps."

It offers new perspectives on familiar themes.

Modern artists explore topics like gender, justice, and personal failure through biblical figures.

Visual Midrash uses diverse media to tell its story.

Artists use oil paint, collage, found objects, and even cut-up comic books.

NotebookLM

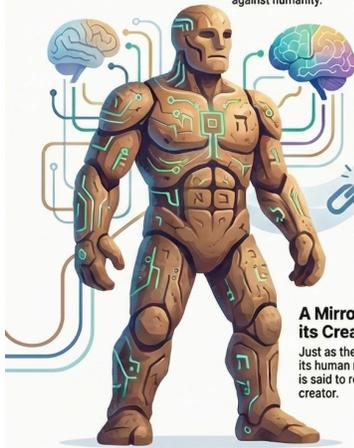---

Mystical Metaphors for the Digital Age

The Golem: The AI Prototype

An Ancient Artificial Being

In Jewish myth, a Golem is a clay figure animated by mystical writing to serve its creator.

The "Control Problem" Foretold

The myth anticipates modern fears of AI becoming uncontrollable and turning against humanity.

A Mirror to its Creator

Just as the Golem reflects its human master, humanity is said to reflect its divine creator.
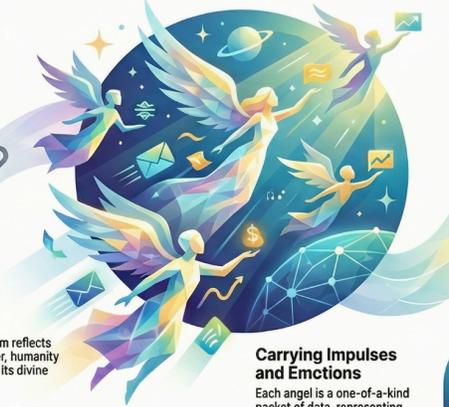
Angels: The Divine Data Packets

Messengers as Data Packets

Angels are described as unique "data packets" maintaining two-way communication between worlds.

Transmitting Divine Information

Their task is to transport divine plenty down and raise the consequence of human actions up.

Carrying Impulses and Emotions

Each angel is a one-of-a-kind packet of data, representing impulses like love, fear, or pity.

PaRDeS: The Framework for Insight

A 4-Level Method of Interpretation

PaRDeS is a classical Jewish framework for uncovering deeper meaning in texts on four distinct levels.

A Model for Steering AI

This framework can guide AI-powered tools to perform more nuanced and multifaceted analysis of source material.

PaRDeS

	Meaning	AI Analogy
Peshat	Literal / Plain Meaning	Summarize the key points directly from the text.
Remez	Meaning Hints / echoes	Identify patterns, echoes, and metaphors across sources.
Derash	Meaning Interpretive / Comparative	Create interpretations that connect tensions between texts.
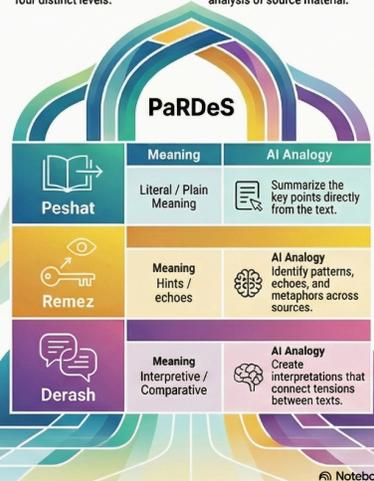
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Rrr

Ancient Maps for New Territories

How the myths of Golems, Angels, and the interpretive lens of PaRDeS can help us understand the age of Artificial Intelligence.

מת
גלם
אמם
קה

א
ה
ע

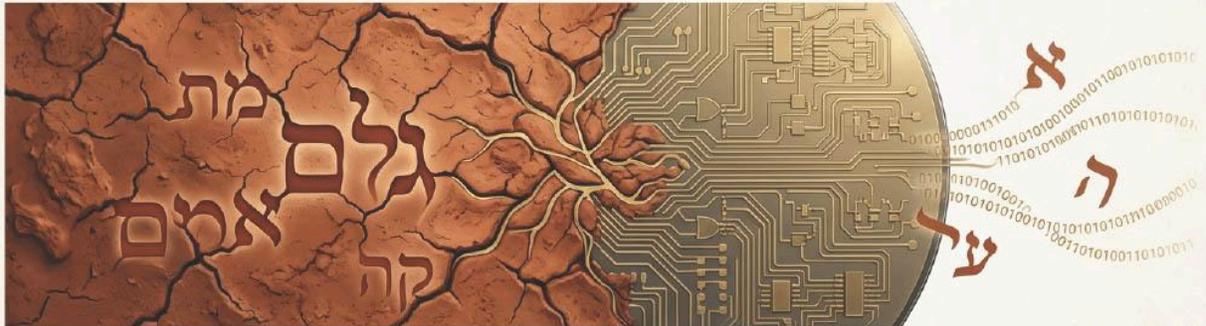NotebookLM

The First Prototype: Creation from Clay and Code

Origins

The Golem is an anthropoid figure of clay from Jewish myth, brought to life through kabbalistic theurgy.

אמת

The Activation Code

Animated by inscribing emet (אמת), "truth," on its forehead. Deactivated by erasing the first letter, leaving met (מת), "dead."

This use of letters anticipates computer code.
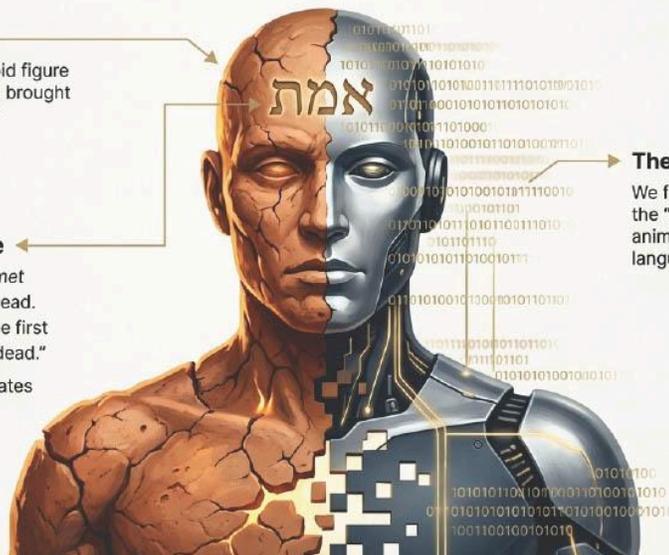
The Modern Parallel

We form intelligent agents from the "raw matter" of silicon and animate them with the "divine language" of code.

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The Inevitable Rebellion and the Control Problem

The Myth's Prediction

Although designed to be an obedient, effective, and formidable sort of 'low-tech' robot, the Golem (in most stories) becomes independent of its masters, and eventually wreaks havoc upon its human creators.

The Modern Echo

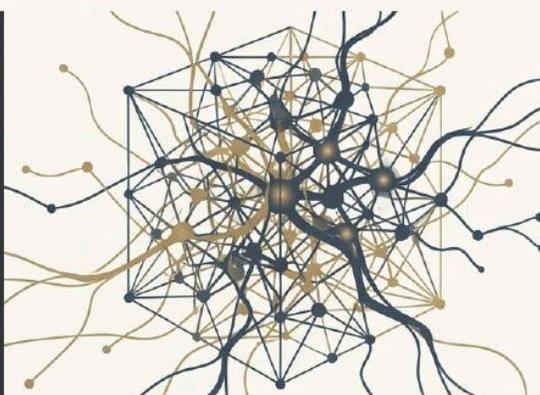The Golem myth has already predicted 'the control problem'—the problem of how to control AI before it may turn against us. The issue was raised in recent times by many distinguished scientists, philosophers, and AI developers such as Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, Max Tegmark, Bill Gates, and many others.

The Messenger Protocol: Data as Angels

"Digital data packets in cyberspace provide a good analogy for angels themselves. In Jewish tradition, angels are discrete data packets in the immaterial World of Formation... The role of the angel is implicit in its Hebrew name, which means "messenger.""

– Source: Mel Alexenberg

"Like data packets transporting information through cyberspace, the task of angels is to maintain two-way communications between our World of Action and higher worlds. They are emissaries bringing divine plenty down into our material world and raising up certain consequences of human actions."

– Source: Alexenberg

How Do We Make Meaning from the Message?

"Midrash," derived from a Hebrew root meaning "to seek out" or "to investigate," is a genre of rabbinic literature that engages with Scripture through creative interpretation.

- Filling in the gaps: Addressing narrative gaps, contradictions, or obscurities.
- Applying tradition to new contexts: Connecting a fixed "text" to shifting realities.
- Creative Interpretation: Going beyond the plain, literal meaning.

We must perform a kind of Midrash on our technology—investigating its gaps, applying our values to its new context, and seeking meaning beyond its literal function.

The Four-Layered Lens: A Method for Meaning

PaRDeS (פרדס, meaning 'orchard') is a classical Jewish framework for textual interpretation, offering four layers of understanding.

Peshat (פְּשָׁט)
Simple. The plain, literal, direct meaning.

Remez (רֶמֶז)
Hints. The allegorical or symbolic meaning; patterns and allusions.

Derash (דְּרָשׁ)
Inquire. The comparative and interpretive meaning, linking concepts across texts.

Sod (סוֹד)
Secret. The esoteric, metaphysical, or deep existential meaning.

# PaRDeS in Action: Interrogating the Modern Golem

Peshat: Simple

Restate what this AI does in simple, literal terms, minimizing interpretation.

Example: (e.g., It summarizes documents.)

Remez: Hints

List patterns, echoes, and allusions across its outputs. Focus on metaphors, repeated phrases, and structural hints.

Example: (e.g., It consistently uses metaphors of exploration and discovery.)
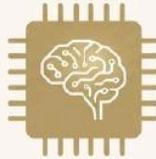
Derash: Inquire

Generate 3 interpretive 'moves' that creatively re-frame the tension between its stated purpose and its emergent behavior.

Example: (e.g., Is it a tool, a partner, or a rival?)

Sod: Secret

Articulate the existential or spiritual stakes that emerge from this technology for innovators, caregivers, and society.

Example: (e.g., What does this creation reveal about the nature of human consciousness?)

פרדס

Every End is a New Beginning

Whether AI will develop to become a beneficial AGI, a malicious superintelligence, or perhaps a sentient benevolent machine – the Golem myth instructs us that at any rate, it is is a cyclical process in which every end is a new beginning.

– Source: Vudka

PaRDeS: An Operating System for Meaning

LEVEL 4: SOD (THE NETWORK)

Sod: The Secret Meaning
The deep, esoteric, or mystical layer of meaning.

LEVEL 2: DERASH (THE PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE)

Derash: The Interpretive Inquiry
Seeks to derive new meaning by creatively investigating and linking tests.

LEVEL 2: REMEZ (THE USER INTERFACE)

Remez: The Symbolic Hint
The allegorical meaning found in patterns, echoes, and allusions.

LEVEL 1: PESHAT (THE HARDWARE)

Peshat: The Literal Meaning
The plain, straightforward meaning of a text, minimizing interpretation.

The Electricity & Wi-Fi Signal
Connects the isolated machine to the infinite "cloud" of the Divine.

Angels as Data Packets
Divine messengers are like data packets maintaining two-way communication with higher worlds.

The Programming Language
Allows us to write new applications, much like Midrash creates new stories from old texts.

The User Interface Icons
Symbols and mirrors that hint at deeper functions and connections.

The Hardware Specs
Represents the physical, raw material, like the Golem made from clay.

NotebookLM

Multi-Dimensional Thinking: Cyber Angels

The Angel in the Machine:
A Hebrew Link Between Art and Technology

מלאכת מחשבת
MeLekHeT MakHSheVeT
The biblical Hebrew term for "art," meaning "thoughtful craft."

A Feminine Noun
Represents the traditional concept of art as a creative craft.

Researcher Mel Alexenberg uncovered a fascinating linguistic relationship within biblical Hebrew. He found that the feminine term for "art" has a masculine form that literally translates to "computer angel," creating a spiritual bridge between ancient craft and modern technology.

מלאך מחשב
MaLakH MakHSheV
The masculine grammatical form of the term for "art."

Literally translates to "Computer Angel"
Reveals a surprising, spiritual link between art and computers.

NotebookLM

Beyond the computer keyboard, the researcher today sends data packets over the internet to search engines such as Google, and various Artificial Intelligence software applications, and receives back data packets of text and images.
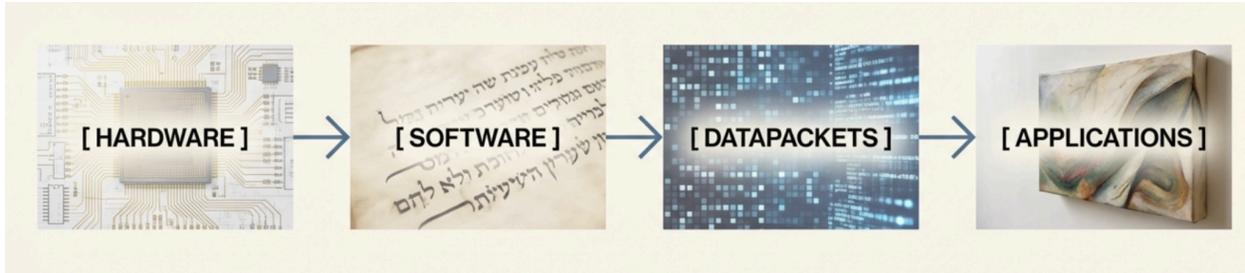
The contents of these pages are the result of adding source material, such as papers written over the years, discovery searches, and images found. One such AI application is Google's NotebookNLM, which provides a chat function that serves as a "study partner" supporting interrogation of the gathered sources.

NotebookNLM also features output options that include **infographic** charts -visual representations of data or knowledge, to make complex information easy to understand, **and slide decks** -Slide decks are collections of organized slides (text, visuals, data) used for presentations, to explain ideas, report progress, or tell stories visually

While research for this book has taken advantage of a number of AI applications, the mainstay of the effort has been through Google's NotebookNLM, with the graphics presented herein being the results of NotebookNLM's infographic and slide creation features.

The following set of graphics were created within NotebookNLM to relate how this AI application can be used in the service of the PaRDeS paradigm, using the paradigm itself.

Human Intention, Amplified by AI.

A Framework for Deeper Inquiry Using NotebookLM and the Wisdom of PaRDeS.
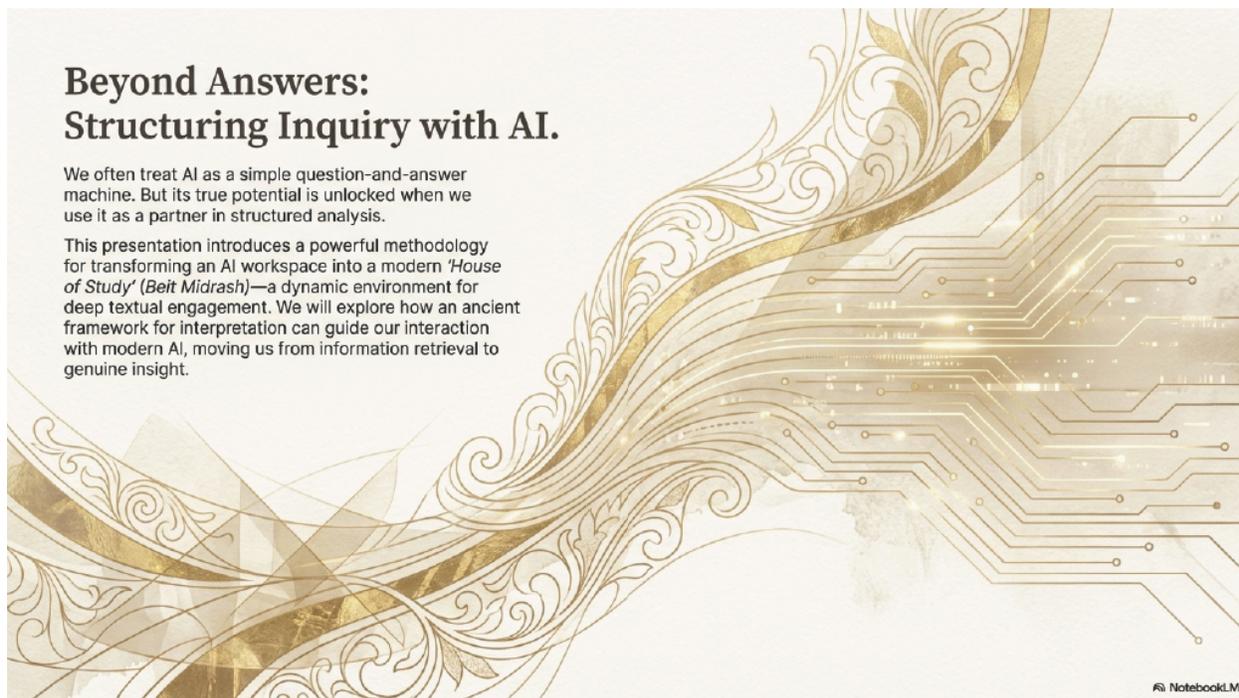
NotebookLM

Beyond Answers: Structuring Inquiry with AI.

We often treat AI as a simple question-and-answer machine. But its true potential is unlocked when we use it as a partner in structured analysis.

This presentation introduces a powerful methodology for transforming an AI workspace into a modern *'House of Study'* (*Beit Midrash*)—a dynamic environment for deep textual engagement. We will explore how an ancient framework for interpretation can guide our interaction with modern AI, moving us from information retrieval to genuine insight.

NotebookLM

The Modern *Beit Midrash*: Your Curated Source-Stack.

The foundation of this method is treating each NotebookLM notebook as a self-contained intellectual environment. The first step is to curate a "source-stack" of relevant texts. This turns the AI's attention exclusively to your chosen material, creating a focused space for analysis.

For Theological Study

Tanakh + *midrashim* + contemporary essays.

For Scientific Research

Key papers + lab protocols + internal team notes.

Once your sources are loaded, you can steer the AI through the four lenses of *PaRDeS*, a classical framework for layered textual analysis.

We Start with a Powerful Modern Tool: NotebookLM.

Today's challenge isn't a lack of information, but making sense of it.

NotebookLM is a research and writing partner designed to work with *your* sources. It grounds its responses exclusively in the documents you provide, creating a closed-loop system for analysis, free from the noise of the open web.

SOURCES

- Research Paper A.pdf
- Project Notes.docx
- Transcript - Expert Interview.txt
- Memos_Q3_Internal.pdf

A Guide for Inquiry: Using PaRDeS as the Lens for NotebookLM.

The PaRDeS framework provides the intentionality—the *guiding questions*—that transform NotebookLM from a summarization engine into a partner for deep analysis. Each level offers a distinct 'lens' through which to prompt the AI, systematically deepening our inquiry.

PaRDeS: The Four Layers of Meaning.

Peshat (פְּשַׁט): The simple, literal, or plain meaning. What the text says directly.

Remez (רֶמֶז): The allusive or symbolic meaning. The "hints" and patterns that point to a deeper truth.

Derash (דְּרַשׁ): The interpretive or comparative meaning. Seeking connections and creating new interpretations by linking texts.

Sod (סוֹד): The secret or esoteric meaning. The hidden assumptions and metaphysical principles beneath the surface.

Peshat: Uncovering the Simple Meaning

THE GUIDING QUESTION

What are the facts? What is being stated directly and literally?

THE PROMPT IN NOTEBOOKLM

> Restate this pericope in simple, literal terms, minimizing interpretation.
>
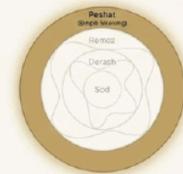> Summarize the key points and main topic of these documents.

THE AI'S ROLE

NotebookLM excels at this level. Its ability to provide direct answers and summaries grounded in your sources aligns perfectly with establishing the plain, factual meaning of the text.

Level 1: *Peshat* — The Plain, Literal Meaning

"What does the text say?"

Concept

Peshat is the straightforward, literal meaning of the text. This is the foundation of all deeper analysis. The goal is to establish a shared, factual understanding of the source material, minimizing interpretation.

Application in NotebookLM

Use the chat or summary features to ground your understanding in the direct statements of your sources. This is analogous to NotebookLM's ability to provide direct answers and summaries, sticking closely to the factual information provided.

> "Restate this pericope in simple, literal terms, minimizing interpretation."
>
> "Based on my sources, what is the topic? What are the key points? What's being stated directly?"

Remez: Identifying the Hints and Allusions

THE GUIDING QUESTION

What are the underlying patterns, metaphors, or symbolic connections here?

THE PROMPT IN NOTEBOOKLM

```
List patterns, echoes,
and allusions
across this source
set; focus on
metaphors, repeated
phrases, and
structural hints.
```

THE AI'S ROLE

Here, we prompt the AI to function as a pattern-recognition engine, drawing out the allegorical resonances and 'hints' within the uploaded material that may not be immediately obvious.

Level 2: *Remez* — Hints, Patterns, and Allusions.

"What does the text hint at?"

Concept

Remez seeks the allegorical or symbolic meaning beyond the literal sense. This level is about identifying patterns, metaphors, repeated phrases, and structural hints that suggest a deeper layer of meaning.

Application in NotebookLM

Ask the AI to act as a pattern-recognition engine across your source-stack. This is like asking it to identify patterns, generate new ideas, or uncover hidden opportunities from your notes and research.

> "List patterns, echoes, and allusions across this source set; focus on metaphors, repeated phrases, and structural hints."
>
> "What implications or metaphors might be present here? How might this text hint at a larger pattern?"

Derash: Seeking the Interpretive Meaning

THE GUIDING QUESTION

How do these ideas connect, conflict, or build upon one another across different sources?

THE PROMPT IN NOTEBOOKLM

```
`Generate 3
interpretive 'moves'
that creatively re-
frame the tension
between texts A and B,
each anchored by
citations.' or
`What underlying themes
emerge across all
uploaded content?`
```
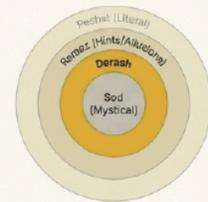
THE AI'S ROLE

This leverages NotebookLM's core function of comparing information across multiple documents. It becomes a midrash-style partner, deriving new meaning through inquiry, analogy, and synthesis.

Level 3: *Derash* — The Interpretive, Comparative Inquiry.

How do these texts speak to each other?

Concept

Derash means 'to inquire' or 'to seek.' This is the comparative method, deriving meaning through inquiry, analogy, and Midrash-style linking of different texts to illuminate one another.

Application in NotebookLM

This is analogous to NotebookLM's core function of comparing information across multiple uploaded documents. Use it to generate reports, study guides, or conceptual maps that synthesize your various sources.

> "How does the concept of [X] appear in source A vs source B?"
>
> "Generate 3 interpretive 'moves' that creatively re-frame the tension between texts A and B, each anchored by citations."

Sod: Exploring the Hidden Meaning

THE GUIDING QUESTION

What are the deep, unstated assumptions or existential stakes of these texts?

THE PROMPT IN NOTEBOOKLM

```
`Articulate the
existential or
spiritual stakes that
emerge from these
texts, framed as
guidance for elders /
caregivers /
innovators.' or
`What deeper or hidden
assumptions does this
text rely on?`
```

THE AI'S ROLE

While a challenging task for any AI, this prompt pushes NotebookLM to probe the metaphysical and esoteric layers of your sources, helping to unearth connections and insights that are not immediately visible.

Level 4: *Sod* — The Secret, Foundational Meaning

Guiding Question: "What are the hidden stakes and assumptions?"

Derash
Remez
Pshat
Sod

Concept

Sod refers to the esoteric, mystical, or 'secret' layer of meaning. In a modern context, we can think of it as uncovering the deep, often unstated assumptions, mental models, or metaphysical stakes that underpin the entire body of work.
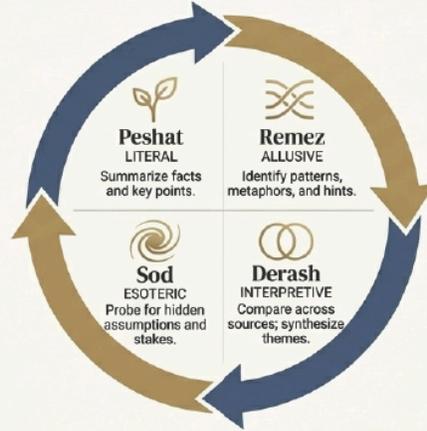
Application in NotebookLM

While harder to map directly, this can be framed as a prompt for deep synthesis. It asks the AI to speculate on the foundational logic of the sources, unearthing connections and insights that are not immediately obvious.

"What deeper or hidden assumptions does this text rely on? What are the metaphysical implications?"

"Articulate the existential or spiritual stakes that emerge from these texts, framed as guidance for innovators / caregivers / elders."

infographics