Yale University
The Program in Judaic Studies
presents

When a Word becomes a Concept:
An unknown conversation (ca 1120) about the role of reasoning in law and in scriptural exegesis

presented by

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Joseph David

Many methodological approaches, per-modern and modern alike, presume a similarity between legal reasoning and hermeneutics. Accordingly, drawing answers to legal cases is comparable to textual interpertation. The present WIP discusses a correspondence, not yet published or studied, between Karaite jurists from the middle of the 12th century on the relations between 'legal reasoning' (Usul al-Fiqh) and 'hermeneutical reasoning' (Usul al-Tafsır). This text is a rare opportunity to look closely on an intellectual endeavor to refine and redefine the methodological principles of Halakhic reasoning. Joseph will introduce this text and its significance to the history of Jewish jurisprudential thought. He will also describe briefly his forthcoming book (below) which is a backdrop for this project.

Joseph E. David is a Visiting Professor in Law and Judaic Studies at Yale University. He is a Professor of Law at Sapir Academic College in Israel. His research focuses on Law and Religion, Legal History, Comparative Law, and Jurisprudence.

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