

Hosea 4:6

Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge,

I also will reject you from being priest for Me;

Because you have forgotten the law of your God,

I also will forget your children.

**848c** דָּעַת (*da'at*) **knowledge**.

**848d** יִדְעֹנִי (*yiddē'ōnī*) **familiar spirit**.

**848e** מוֹדָע (*mōda'*), מוֹדָע (*mōda'*) **relative**.

**848f** מוֹדָעַת (*mōda'at*) **kindred, kinship**, only in Ruth 3:2.

**848g** מַדְדָּע (*maddā'*) **knowledge**.

**848h** מַדְדֵּעַ (*maddūa'*), מַדְדֵּעַ (*maddūa'*) **why?**

This root, occurring a total of 944 times, is used in every stem and expresses a multitude of shades of knowledge gained by the senses. Its closest synonyms are *bîn* “to discern” and *nākar* “to recognize.” The root is found in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and the Qumran materials. In addition to “know,” the KJV uses the archaic forms “wot” and “wist.”

*yāda'* is used of God’s knowledge of man (Gen 18:19; Deut 34:10) and his ways (Isa 48:8; Ps 1:6; 37:18), which knowledge begins even before birth (Jer 1:5). God also knows the fowl (Ps 50:11).

*yāda'* is also used for man’s knowledge and for that of animals (Isa 1:3).

The participle occurs in phrases describing skill in hunting (Gen 25:27), learning (Isa 29:11–13), lamentation (Amos 5:16), sailing the sea (II Chr 8:18), and playing an instrument (I Sam 16:16).

In certain contexts it means “to distinguish.” “To know good and evil” (Gen 3:5, 22) is the result of disobeying God. To distinguish between these is necessary for the king (II Sam 19:36). A child cannot distinguish between the left and right hands (Jon 4:11) nor between good and evil (Deut 1:39; Isa 7:15). The context of the latter passage and the similar statement in Isa 8:4 may indicate that the reference is to a child’s not being able to distinguish what is beneficial and

harmful. While ordinarily gained by experience, knowledge is also the contemplative perception possessed by the wise man (Prov 1:4; 2:6; 5:2; Eccl 1:18).

*yāda'* is used to express acquaintance with a person in such statements as “do you know Laban?” (Gen 29:5; Ex 1:8; II Sam 3:25). The Pual participle designates kinfolk (II Kgs 10:11, etc.) and acquaintances (Job 19:14; Ruth 2:1, etc.).

*yāda'* is also used for the most intimate acquaintance. God knows Moses by name and face to face (Ex 33:17; Deut 34:10). He knows the Psalmist’s sitting and arising (Ps 139:2).

*yāda'* is also used for sexual intercourse on the part of both men and women in the well-known euphemism “Adam knew Eve his wife” and its parallels (Gen 4:1; 19:8; Num 31:17, 35; Jud 11:39; 21:11; I Kgs 1:4; I Sam 1:19). It is used to describe sexual perversions such as sodomy (Gen 19:5; Jud 19:22) and rape (Jud 19:25).

In addition to knowledge of secular matters *yāda'* is also used of one’s relation to the divine, whether acquaintance with other gods (Deut 13:3, 7, 14) or with Jehovah (I Sam 2:12; 3:7). The heathen do not know God (Jer 10:25) and neither does Israel, according to the prophets (Jer 4:22). The plagues of Egypt were sent so that the Egyptians might know that Jehovah is God (Ex 10:2, etc.). He will destroy (Ezk 6:7) and restore Israel so that they may know that he is God (Isa 60:16). The prophet Ezekiel, in particular, uses the phrase “that you may know” in his threats (Ezk 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27, etc.).

דַּעַת (*dē'ā*). **Knowledge**. This feminine noun is translated *gnōsis* in the LXX, and *scientia* in the Vulgate. The Lord is a God of all knowledge (Job 36:4; I Sam 2:3). The wicked question his knowledge (Ps 73:11). He is the object of man’s knowledge, and Isaiah envisions an earth full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9). The prophet preaches knowledge (Isa 28:9) and the ideal ruler rules by it (Jer 3:15). The noun may be only another form of *da'at* (see below). The masculine noun *dēa'* is quite similar.

דַּאֲת (*da'at*). **Knowledge, cunning** (ASV and RSV similar). This feminine noun is from the root *yāda'* “to know.” The root expresses knowledge gained in various ways by the senses. The noun occurs ninety-three times in the Old Testament, most frequently in the wisdom literature, with forty-one instances in Prov, ten in Job, and nine in Eccl. It is used forty-two times in the Qumran materials and is also used in Ugaritic and Akkadian.

*da'at* is a general term for knowledge, particularly that which is of a personal, experimental nature (Prov 24:5). It is also used for technical knowledge or ability such as that needed for building the tabernacle and temple (Ex 31:3; 35:31; I Kgs 7:14). *da'at* is also used for discernment (Ps 119:66). Both deeds committed unintentionally (Deut 4:42; 19:4; Josh 20:3, 5; *bēlīda'at*) and mistaken opinions are “without knowledge” (*lō' da'at*, Prov 19:2).

*da'at* is possessed by God (Job 10:7; Ps 139:6; Prov 3:20), from whom nothing can be hidden (Ps 139:1–18). He teaches it to man (Ps 94:10; 119:66; Prov 2:6). It appears parallel with wisdom

(*hōkmâ*) and understanding (*těbûnâ*), instruction (*mûsâr*), and law (*tôrâ*). Wisdom is used in series with “science” (*maddâ*, Dan 1:4) and is the opposite of “folly” (*iwwelet*, Prov 12:23; 13:16; 14:18; 15:2). Hence *da’at* is the contemplative perception of the wise man (Prov 1:4; 2:6; 5:2; Eccl 1:18).

*da’at* is also used for moral cognition. Thus the tree in the Garden of Eden was a tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9, 17). By eating its fruit man came to know in a way comparable to the knowledge of God (see above). This important reference may also be taken as the figure of speech known as merism to indicate objective awareness of all things both good and bad. In this sense the sinful pain did become like God (Gen 3:22). Cassuto says, “Before they ate of the tree of knowledge, the man and his wife were like small children who know nought of what exists round them” (U. Cassuto, *Genesis*, vol. I, p. 112).

Particularly distinctive is the prophetic concept of “knowledge of God” (*da’at’ ălōhîm*) which is particularly prominent in Hosea (4:1, 6; 6:6; cf. Prov 2:5). Knowledge of God is derived from those outstanding historical events in which God has evidenced and has revealed himself to chosen individuals such as Abraham and Moses. These revelations are to be taught to others. “Knowledge of God” appears in parallel with “fear of the Lord” (*yir’at YW* Isa 11:2; cf. 58:2; Jer 22:16) as a description of true religion. The man who has a right relation with God confesses him and obeys him. To do justice and righteousness and to judge the cause of the poor and the needy is to know God (Jer 22:15–16). On the other hand where there is no knowledge of God there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery and breaking all bonds (Hos 4:1–2). Such will bring destruction upon a people (Hos 4:6; cf. Isa 5:13). Knowledge of God is more pleasing to him than sacrifice (Hos 6:6). The prophetic view of the messianic age is of a time in which the knowledge of God covers the earth as water covers the sea (Hab 2:14; cf. Isa 11:9).

יִדְדֵּ־וֹנִי (yiddě’ōnî). **Wizard** (KJV and some modern translations): **fortune-teller** (Berkeley Version, NAB); **familiar spirit** (JPS, NEB); **spirit** (NEB, NAB); **magician** (JB); and **sorcerer** (JB). Since the root of *yiddě’ōnî* is the verb *yāda’* “to know,” implied in the title, therefore, is esoteric knowledge not available to the ordinary person.

*yiddě’ōnî* always occurs parallel to *’ôb* (witch, q.v.). It may be a description of an *’ôb* or it may be the masculine counterpart. (Similarly, “witch” and “wizard” are a feminine and masculine pair in English.) As the Hebrew word *yiddě’ōnî* is related to knowledge, so the English word “wizard” is related to wisdom.

God forbid his people to consult the *yiddě’ōnî* (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11) as well as other diviners. Despite the fact that Saul outlawed them, he still consulted an *’ôb* “spirit” according to I Sam 28. How the Israelite kings dealt with these spiritists was a significant factor in characterizing the king as good or evil (II Kgs 21:6; 23:24; II Chr 33:6). Isaiah spoke of them with utter scorn (8:19; 19:3).

מֹדָעַ (mōdaʿ). **Kinsman**. The LXX follows the *Kethib*, rendering this feminine noun as *gnōrismos* “acquaintance,” from a Piel participial form. The Vulgate and English versions follow, the context where Boaz is a kinsman (Ruth 2:1; cf. 2:20; 3:2, 12; 4:3).

*mōdaʿ* is used figuratively in Prov 7:4, paralleling sister, to describe wisdom.

מֹדָעַת (mōdaʿat). **Kindred, kinsman**. The LXX renders this feminine noun as *gnōrismos* “acquaintance,” but the Vulgate translates *propinquus* “kindred.” The English versions follow the Vulgate and context (Ruth 3:2; cf. 2:20; 4:3). For the Levirate marriage custom, see Gen 38; Deut 25:5; Mt 22:23, and cf. *yābam*.

מַדָּעָ (maddaʿ). **Knowledge, science, thought**. This masculine noun is used in contexts with wisdom (*ḥokmâ*). Solomon’s request was for wisdom and knowledge (II Chr 1:10–12). The Hebrew children surpassed others in knowledge (Dan 1:4, 7; KJV and ASV, “science”; RSV, “learning”). It is paralleled with that done in secret, hence “thought” (Eccl 10:20). It also occurs in Sir 3:13; 13:8.

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מַדָּעָא (maddûaʿ). **Why? wherefore? on what account?** (ASV and RSV are similar.) BDB and KB suggest that it is a contraction of *mâ yadûaʿ* “what being known,” i.e. “from what motive.” It is variously translated in the LXX by *tís, dia tí, hína tí, hína tí toûto, tí hotí, hōs tí*. Hence, this interrogative adverb is used to inquire about a motive (cf. Gen 26:27), as an indirect question (cf. Ex 3:3), or as a rhetorical device, as in Isa 5:4f., “When I looked for good grapes, why did it only yield bad?” (NIV).

**Bibliography:** Baumann, E., “*yadaʿ* und seine Derivate,” ZAW 28:25–41, 110–41. Davies, T. W., *Magic, Divination and Demonology*, reprint, KTAV, 1969. Dentan, Robert C., *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel*, Seabury, 1968. McKenzie John L., “Knowledge of God in Hosea,” JBL 74:23ff. Piper, O. A., “Knowledge,” in IDB, pp. 42–44. Richardson, TWB, pp. 121–22. Thomas, D.W., “Additional Notes on the Root *ydʿ* in Hebrew,” JTS 15:54–57. TDOT, I, pp. 696–703. THAT, I, pp. 682–700.

P.R.G.

יִדְדֵ־וֹנִי (yiddēʿōnî). See no. 848d.<sup>[1]</sup>

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[1] Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K. (Eds.). (1999). [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#) (electronic ed., pp. 366–368). Chicago: Moody Press.