

And the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and bad. (2:9)

Sforno explains that daas, knowledge, means to focus one's heart on (what is) good and evil. This explanation of the word daas, is also found in the phrase v'haAdam yoda, "and Adam knew," i.e., he

became aware and now concentrated his heart on her (Chavah). This is also why a relative is called a moda, as it says in Rus 2:1, moda l'ishah, "a relative of her husband," for it is natural that one concerns himself with the needs of his relative. Horav Shmuel David Walkin, zl, infers from here that a relative is a moda, because the foundation of closeness and love is the knowledge and concern for the needs of his relative. This is also why a friend is referred to as meyuda, as it is written in Tehillim 31:12, u'fachad l'myudoai, "and a fright to those who know me (my friends)." A friend is someone who understands my needs and focuses upon them.

Any love, any relationship in which the two parties are not sensitive to the needs of one another, is not a relationship. Love cannot exist unless there is an awareness of each other's needs and sensitivities. Horav Moshe Leib Sossover, zl, was wont to say that he learned ahavas Yisrael, love for all Jews, from an itinerant farmer. A farmer who was totally inebriated asked his friend, "Do you love me?" The friend responded, "Of course I do," and he immediately proceeded to demonstrate his affection by embracing and kissing him. The drunken farmer continued, "Do you know what I am missing? Do you know what I need?" "How should I know what you need?" the other farmer/friend retorted. "Well, if you are not aware of my needs, how can you say that you are my friend?"

This story sums it up. A friend is aware; a friend cares. One who is not aware of his friend's needs is not much of a friend.