How Do You Say "Law" in Hebrew?

Hebrew	Usual translation	Meanings and contexts
torah	law, law of Moses	teachings, instructions
mishpat	judgment	pronouncement of a verdict, standards of behavior
huqqah	statute, ordinance	custom, manner, decree, portion, order, prescription, limit
hoq	statute, ordinance	the masculine form of *huqqah,* used in place of *huqqah* (note: *statute* and *ordinance* do not appear together in the Book of Mormon)
mitzvah	commandment	frequently signifies divine commandments, *bar mitzvah* = "son of the commandment"
edut	testimony, witness	often a monument, stele, or book of the law

Chart 119

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Key Scriptures   2 Nephi 5:10; Mosiah 6:6; Alma 8:17; 30:3; 58:40; Helaman 3:20; 15:5; 1 Kings 2:3

Explanation   The Hebrew language uses at least six different words that are translated into English as the word *law. Torah* refers to the law, especially the law of Moses, while *mishpat* signifies judgment or standards based on the law. *Huqqah* and *hoq* are similar in meaning, suggesting not only formal ordinances but also general codes of behavior. *Mitzvah* denotes divine commandments in general, and *edut*, while a more ambiguous term, often signifies a written law. For example, King David counseled Solomon to keep God's "statutes *[huqqot],* and his commandments *[mitzvot],* and his judgments *[mishpatim],* and his testimonies *[edut],* as it is written in the law *[torah]* of Moses" (1 Kings 2:3). Similarly, Nephi states that his people observed "the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses" (2 Nephi 5:10). The striking similarities between these texts reveal that the Hebrew-speaking Nephites and the ancient Israelites conceived law in much the same way.

Source   John W. Welch, "Statutes, Judgments, Ordinances, and Commandments," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 62–65.