

presuppositions may introduce a bias in the study, e.g., the source of an oracle suggesting the notion of "casting lots" or the idea of "oracle, especially of hepatoscopy." Also, there is a question raised as to the relation of *hôrâ* and *yrh*.⁹ Is it possible that lexicographers have mistaken a Qal imperfect for a Hiphil? It may be possible that *hôrâ* "to show, teach" is derived from a different root. BDB subsumes *tôrâ* under *yarâ* "to throw, shoot" with a Hiphil meaning which includes "to direct, teach, instruct." We conclude that *tôrâ* is related to *hôrâ* "to show, teach, direct, instruct" but more precise derivation seems elusive.

Usus Loquendi

Far more important for our study is the *usus loquendi* at various stages of inscripturization. In this connection, we take the traditional position of authorship and dating rather than the modern form-critical views, recognizing that we may gain insights from scholars with whom we differ.¹⁰ We propose to see how *tôrâ* is used in a variety of contexts, i.e., covenantal, priestly, wisdom, juridical and prophetic.¹¹

Tôrâ in Covenantal contexts:

The very first occurrence of *tôrâ* in the Pentateuch is found in Gen 26:5. It is significant that this first use is found in a context of God's covenant promises being reiterated. The promised blessings are expressly renewed to Isaac "because Abraham obeyed (*tsama'*) my voice and kept (*tsamar*) my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." The verbs in the result clause need to be noted: *tsama'* has the basic meaning "to hear" effectively, hence "to listen to, pay attention," or "hearing with the intention to do," hence "to obey." It is used in the notable passage of Deut 6:4 to introduce the great confession that "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one." The second verb, *tsamar*, has the basic idea "to exercise great care over," hence "to give heed to do or understand, to diligently do" or "to keep carefully" from the depths of one's heart (cf. Prov 4:20-23). The covenantal context points to the maintenance of a personal relationship rather than to obligations to a code of ethics. The use of *tsamar* for tending or keeping a garden, flock or house, ¹² underscores the idea of careful cultivation and maintenance.

One may also discern the meaning of *tôrâ* from its connection with the other nouns associated with it. The usual translation "because Abraham obeyed me" obscures the Hebrew noun *qôl* "sound, voice." Two earlier usages of God's *qôl* are instructive: in Gen 3:8 and 10 it is the sound of God walking in the Garden, but when God verbalizes his intention, he calls to fallen Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" (v9). This is the voice expressing divine initiative implying grace and mercy. The other passage is Gen 22:18 where the promised blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are confirmed to Abraham "because you have obeyed My voice." The immediate context points back to God testing Abraham and commanding