

**Multiple Verbs Highlight Different Possibilities:  
Torah Reflections on *Parashat Va-era*  
Exodus 6:2 - 9:35  
January 12, 2013      Rosh Hodesh Shevat, 5773**

The Torah portion *Va-era* contains some familiar verses that are preserved and expanded in the Passover Haggadah. In verses Exodus 6:6-7 God tells Moses that redemption is at hand for the enslaved Israelites, and in that explanation, God uses four verbs: *v'hotzeiti . . . v'hitzalti . . . v'ga-alti . . . v'lakalti . . .* I will free you . . . deliver you . . . redeem you . . . take you . . . . Then, in verse 8 we read an additional verb, *v'heiveiti* – I will bring you . . . . Generally, these verbs are understood to mean that God acted, and continues to act, in multiple and cumulative ways to help us.

There is another way to interpret these verbs: they represent different possible approaches to an issue or a problem.

God is saying to us, just as I am offering various ways of describing – if you wish, reframing – what I am doing, so it is important to realize that there is more than *just one way* to achieve a goal. There are multiple valid paths to see a course of action.

Whether at home or in another setting, we often face difficult decisions about care, or about how to adjust to a new, and often unwanted, life situation.

At times we are sure that we are on the right path, but then we run up against a roadblock. At these moments, it is hard to believe that there are alternative avenues. Further, others may have ideas or compelling reasons to propose a different solution

The multiple verbs in Exodus 6:6-8 teach us that though we may not initially understand or appreciate it, often there are many possibilities before us. There are various viable options; the challenge for us is to recognize and consider them, and then to choose from among them.

*May the Source of many possible blessings in our lives grant us the patience and wisdom to discern the viable options before us and guide us to make wise choices. Amen.*

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