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’lakahiti . . .* 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.*

© Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, Rabbi David J. Zucker

This Torah Reflection was written by Rabbi David J. Zucker, PhD, BCC, author of The Torah: An Introduction for Christians and Jews (Paulist Press, 2005; [www.davidjzucker.org](http://www.davidjzucker.org)), and recently retired Director of Chaplaincy Care at Shalom Cares, a senior continuum of care center in Aurora, Colorado. The Torah Reflections series is published by the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties. More information and healing-oriented resources can be found at [www.JewishHealingCenter.org](http://www.JewishHealingCenter.org).