



s lá fala

Vamos lá fala



AMERICAN
JEWISH
WORLD
SERVICE

Pursuing Global Justice
Through Grassroots Change



ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה Reflect. Aspire. Pursue Justice.

We encourage you to incorporate this reading into your High Holiday celebration.

*Who shall live and who shall die:
Who shall perish by sword and who by beast,
Who by hunger and who by thirst,
Who by earthquake and who by plague;
Who shall become poor and who shall become rich...*

Over and over again in the High Holiday liturgy, we admit our vulnerability before the great forces of the universe — violence and war, hunger, natural disaster, disease and poverty. We acknowledge that our individual fates during the coming year are, to a large extent, subject to forces beyond our control.

But we follow each of these pronouncements of helplessness with a declaration of potency:

*U'tshuvah, u'tfilah u'tzedakah ma'avirin et ro'a ha'gezeirah.
Repentance, prayer and charity avert the severe decree.*

Traditionally, we read these as mitigating practices — perhaps if we repent, pray and give *tzedakah*, we will be spared. But this year, what if we read this trio of **tshuvah**, **tfilah** and **tzedakah** differently? Instead of seeing these as ways of avoiding personal punishment after the fact, what if we look at them as ways to make a better world going forward:

*A world in which more people live full lives and fewer die unnecessary deaths;
A world in which there is less bloodshed in war
and fewer deaths at the hands of beastly rulers;
A world in which hunger is less persistent and no one dies of thirst;
A world in which the aftermath of earthquakes is alleviated,
and natural disasters are anticipated and addressed;
A world in which no one is forced to live on less than \$1 a day,
and in which we close the distance between the rich and the poor?*

This year, let us read **tshuvah**, **tfilah** and **tzedakah** also as reflect, aspire and pursue justice, our three vehicles for repairing the world and ourselves.