

Turning

סוּר מִרַע וַעֲשֵׂה-טוֹב בְּקִשׁ שְׁלוֹם וְרַדְפָּהּ

Sur may-ra va'aseh tov ba-keish shalom v'rod-fayhu

Turn away from evil and do good;

Seek peace/wholeness and go after it. (Psalm 34:15)

With a discerning heart, I see my life divided into two categories — that which drains my energy and separates me, (which here is called evil) and that which gives me energy and connects me to the wholeness of Life.

My spiritual practice is to turn away from the seduction of evil because I know its power to sap my strength and love... And then to counter the pull of “evil” with an action that brings goodness into the world — an act of kindness, a gesture of compassion, a deed of justice-making. When I glimpse the possibility of Shalom (peace or wholeness), then I must go after it, like a detective searching out clues, like a warrior facing the enemy-within that is reflected in my world.

The practice is to first ask the question, “What is it that separates me or drains me of strength, love or compassion?” It may be a habit or thought or something you do without ever questioning its place in your life. As you chant, use the power of the words to turn away from that which you have discerned to be the “evil” in your life. Let the chant strengthen your commitment towards good. At the end of the chant, make a commitment towards one specific action that represents “good.” And do it.