

# How Beautiful!

הַנֶּפֶךְ יִפָּה רַעֲיָתִי הַנֶּפֶךְ יִפָּה

*Hinach yafah rayati, hinach yafah*

How Beautiful you are my friend, how beautiful!

Love opens my heart to the beauty that surrounds me and is in me. In seeing that beauty, my heart is opened to love. This practice teaches me that it's not enough to see beauty. It is the expression of my appreciation for what is beautiful that opens me to love.

In this practice, I chant these words in 3 ways. First, I sing a love-song to the beauty in my life- to the color, light and fragrance, to the unique shapes and sounds that make up my world, to the faces, flowers, art, landscapes and subtle splendors- I raise my voice in thanks and appreciation. I do this with my eyes closed, calling up image after image.

With the 2<sup>nd</sup> way I chant this, I open my eyes and see the beauty before me. If I'm with other people I look into their faces. I open my eyes to the beauty that was always there waiting for me in the simple lines and textures of the room I sit in, and I sing myself awake to receive that beauty.

With the 3<sup>rd</sup> way, I close my eyes and imagine that God, the Beloved, is singing this to me. I receive this acknowledgment, and move through the contradiction, remembering that I often don't feel like I can ever live up to society's version of beautiful. When God sings this to me, I open to the truth of my own unique beauty. Through that knowing, I step out of my small, self-conscious shame and into my power.