

## Genesis, Chapter 1

In the Beginning, God created Heaven and Earth. The earth was without form and empty, with darkness on the face of the depths, but God's spirit moved on the water's surface. God said, "Let there be Light" and there was Light. God saw that the Light was good, and God divided between the Light and the Darkness. God named the Light, Day and the darkness, Night. It was evening and it was morning the first day.

And would you believe it? It's still the first day.

You might be led to believe that Creation is something that happened, that it's done and set and we are now celebrating or sometime lamenting this done deal. But no, there is one line in the story of Creation that alerts us to the fact of its ongoingness. Yes, it's still happening. In the present tense it says:

### Opening to the Source of Flow

אֶת־הַגֵּן לְהַשְׁקוֹת מֵעֵדֶן יֵצֵא וְנָהָר

*V'nahar yotzei me'Eden, l'hashkot et haGan.*

(A river comes forth from Eden to water the garden.) Genesis 2:10

**There is a river, a constant flow from Source that we must open to and receive and channel. This flow is grace. Our receptivity to this flow must be carefully cultivated. At this very moment, the Source of all delight is flowing to water the garden of our lives, the garden of this world. To be a Kabbalist is to learn how to receive this flow.**

**When we notice and appreciate the beauty around us, we are receiving this flow. When we are given a glimpse of the Divine spark in others, through their kindness or wisdom or humor, we are receiving that flow from Eden. And then we have a choice. We can hoard those riches, or we can transform our receptivity into generosity, extending the flow of delight into the garden of this world.**

**The trick is we can only receive this grace, this flow from Source, when we are awake, aware and conscious. Consciousness is fundamental and it is the prerequisite to both our receptivity and our generosity. The biblical word for consciousness is LIGHT. When God says "Let there be Light!" this is the Light of awareness. The Light of this first day comes before the light of the**

sun , moon or stars... and it isn't neutral. God said it was good, which means it can open us to ultimate goodness, love and infinite possibility. In this light of awareness, our eyes are opened to beauty; our hearts are opened to the possibility of love.

And it is always still the first day of Creation, because we are opening to Light, to consciousness, and continually discerning the division between our dark fear and the wisdom of wide perspective and enlightened compassion, flowing love. In fact we all came here to learn how to love and be loved, to step onto the Path of Love and be transformed by every step.

“God saw that the Light was good,” that the Light of awareness can open us to that goodness.

And yet there are times when we go unconscious, when we are ruled by habit, when we are blind to the beauty before us, when we live on automatic, when we are ensnared by judgement or prejudice. The Light of awareness is oftentimes dimmed and darkened by our conditioning, our irritability, by our limiting beliefs, and by the trauma that we have suffered or inherited from our ancestors.

Without the Light of consciousness, we become prisoners of the dark, prisoners of fear. In the darkness, we are easily manipulated, and our own deep reservoirs of love become inaccessible. We forget how integral we are to the whole of Creation. We forget how precious and unique and necessary and beloved we are.

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The core practice of mystics from every religion, is to remember that the flow of grace is always available. And in receiving that flow, we are finally able to love fully, “with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.”

As a young child I was fascinated, intrigued and then flummoxed by the central commandment that says, “You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.” I wanted to know, How do you do that? And then I discovered The Song of Songs which showed me how. I understood through the Song, that we love God through this world, through each other, through the majesty of Nature, through the mystery of Death,

**through beauty and friendship, through the twists and turns of losing love and finding it again.**

**The Song speaks in the language of kisses, arousal, intoxication and intimacy. It calls us out of our complacency and numbness; it calls us into our passion and aliveness. And it celebrates the beauty in our midst. We let that beauty open our hearts to love. And the expanded loving heart can open us further to beauty.**

**As we listen to the Song, we are reminded to release the shame of the past; we are reminded to play, and to savor each moment of sweetness. The Song lures us into a radical vulnerability and inspires us to risk everything for love, expressing the unspeakable in ways that stretch the imagination and defy convention.**

**As we listen to the Song, can we let these words awaken in us the capacity to love God/Reality/our world/ and this life we have been given “with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might.” ???**

## **SONG OF SONGS CHAPTER 1**

*Oh, give me the kisses of your mouth,  
For your sweet loving is better than wine,  
Your juices are fragrant,  
Your essence pours out like oil,  
This is why all the young women want you.  
Take me with you, let us run together!  
The King has brought me to his chambers.  
Let us delight and rejoice in your love,  
Enjoying each caress more than wine,  
They are right to love you so.  
I am dark and beautiful, Oh Daughters of Jerusalem  
Dark as the tents of Kedar, lavish as Solomon's tapestries,  
Do not see me only as dark,  
for the sun has stared at me,  
My brothers quarreled with me,  
They made me guard the vineyards.  
I have not guarded my own.  
Tell me my only love,  
Where do you pasture your sheep,*

*Where do you rest them in the heat of noon?  
Why should I wander among the flocks of your companions?*  
**Loveliest of women,  
If you wander,  
Follow in the tracks of the sheep,  
Graze your goats in the shadow of the shepherd's tents,  
I see you, my love, as a mare,  
Among Pharaoh's chariots.  
Your cheeks as beautiful as jewels  
Your throat encircled with beads  
I will make you golden earrings studded with silver.**  
*When the King lay down beside me,  
My perfume gave forth its sweetness,  
All night my beloved sleeps between my breasts,  
A cluster of myrrh,  
A spray of henna blossoms,  
from the vineyards of Ein Gedi.*  
**How beautiful you are my friend,  
Your eyes are doves.**  
*And how beautiful you are, my beloved,  
And how gentle,  
Wherever we lie, our bed is green,  
Our roofbeams are cedar, our rafters, fir.*

## How Beautiful!

**הִנֵּה יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי הִנֵּה יָפָה**

*Hinach yafah rayati, hinach yafah*

How Beautiful you are my friend, how beautiful!