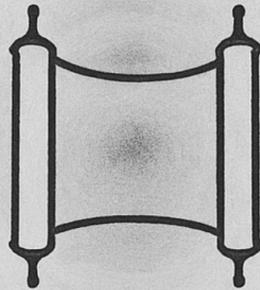


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodak
Parshas Beshalach**



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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Beshalach

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok, known as the Maggid of Horodok (eighteenth century), was a leading disciple within the early Chassidic movement and a close associate of the Maggid of Mezritch. His teachings are marked by a sweeping cosmic vision, reading Torah narratives not as episodic miracles but as revelations of the original intent embedded in Creation itself. In this maamar on the Song at the Sea, he reframes the splitting of the Sea of Reeds as the disclosure of a primordial order, where Israel's redemption and the song that follows emerge only once the full harmony of Creation is completed.

"Then Moses will sing," for it is not stated except in the future tense—From here, we learn of the resurrection of the dead from the Torah (Sanhedrin 91b).

אז ישיר משה, " שר לא נאמר אלא ישיר –
 (מפאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה (סנהדרין צא, ב

In the verse (Exodus 14:27): "And the sea returned at the turning of the morning לְאִיתָנוּ (to its strength)," our Rabbis of blessed memory said (Shemot Rabbah 21:6): "לְתַנְאוּ (to its condition)"—for the Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with the sea at the time of Creation that it would split before Israel.

בפסוק (שמות יד, כז): וישב הים לפנות בקר-
 "לְאִיתָנוּ", וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל (שמות רבה כא, ו):
 "לְתַנְאוּ" הָרֵאשׁוֹן כִּי תִנְאֵי הַתְּנָה הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
 בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית בְּתַחֲלַת הַבְּרִיאָה שִׁקְרַע הַיָּם
 לִפְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

But the matter is difficult: according to this, Scripture should have said at the time of the splitting of the sea, "לְתַנְאוּ (to its condition)," yet it says: "And the sea returned at the turning of the morning לְאִיתָנוּ (to its strength)."

וְהַעֲנִין קוּשָׁה, לְפִי זֶה הִיָּה צְרִיךְ הַמִּקְרָא לומר בְּשַׁעַת
 קְרִיעַת הַיָּם: "לְתַנְאוּ", וְהִנֵּה אָמַר: וישב הים לפנות
 "בקר" לְאִיתָנוּ

Also, the statement (Exodus 14:15): "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and let them journey" implies that this is a simple matter, and there is no reason for crying out. Yet, the sea was before them, and Egypt was behind them—where should they go? It would seem there was every reason for a great and bitter cry (Genesis 27:34).

גַּם מְאֹמֵר (שמות יד, טו): "מַה תִּצְעַק אֵלַי דְּבַר אֵל
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִסְעוּ" וּמִשְׁמַעוּ דְּבַר פְּשׁוּט הוּא וְאֵין
 שׁוּם מְקוֹם לְצַעֲקָה, וְהִלֵּא הַיָּם עוֹמֵד לִפְנֵיהֶם
 וּמִצָּרִים מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם וְלִהְיוֹן יִסְעוּ וְיֵשׁ לְצַעֲקַת צַעֲקָה
 (גְּדוּלָּה וּמְרָה (בראשית כז, לד

But in truth, it is known what our Rabbis of blessed memory said (Bereishit Rabbah 4:8): On the second day, the work of the waters was not completed, and it does not say regarding it "that it was good" until the third day, as it is stated (Genesis 1:9), "Let the waters be gathered... and let the dry land appear," where "that it was good" is stated twice.

אָבֵל בְּאֵמַת יְדוּעַ מַה שֶּׁאָמְרוּ זְכוּרֵנָם לְבָרְכָה
 (בראשית רבה ד, ח): בְּשֵׁנֵי שְׁלֹא נִגְמַר מְלֶאכֶת
 הַמַּיִם וְלֹא נִאֶמַר בּוֹ "כִּי טוֹב" עַד יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי
 שֶׁנִּאֶמַר (בראשית א, ט) "יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם וְכוּ' וְתִרְאֶה
 הַיַּבְשָׁה" הַכֶּפֶל בּוֹ כִּי טוֹב שְׁנֵי פְעָמִים

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Beshalach

And it follows that there were two conditions with the waters: at the beginning of the creation of the waters, they spread out, as is known regarding the nature of water, and there was water over the entire earth.

וּנְמָצָא שֶׁהָיוּ שְׁנֵי תְנָאִים עִם הַמַּיִם, שֶׁתְּחִלַּת בְּרִיאַת הַמַּיִם הִתְפָּשְׁטוּת כִּידוּעַ מִעֲנֵן הַמַּיִם וְהָיָה מַיִם עַל פְּנֵי כָּל הָאָרֶץ,

Then, afterward, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "Let the waters be gathered... to one place" (Genesis 1:9), which was against their nature, as it is known that the sea is higher than the land, as stated (Amos 5:8): "Who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out."

וְאַחַר כֵּן תִּזְרַק הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָמַר "יִקְוּוּ הַמַּיִם וְכוּ' לְמָקוֹם אֶחָד" נֶגְדַ טְבָעָם, כִּידוּעַ שֶׁהֵימָּה הוּא גְבוּהָ מִן הַיַּבְשָׁה כְּמֵאמֶר (עֲמוֹס ה', ח): "הַקּוֹרֵא לַמַּיִם הַיָּם וְיִשְׁפְּכֵם"

And "pouring" is from a high place to a low place.

וְשִׁפְכָהּ הִיא מִמָּקוֹם גְּבוּהָ לְנִמּוּדָה-

And behold, our Rabbis of blessed memory said (Vayikra Rabbah 36:4): "In the beginning, God created"—for the sake of Israel, who are called 'the beginning.'"

וְהִנֵּה אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְ"ל (וַיִּקְרָא רַבָּה לו', ד): "בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא" בְּשִׁבִיל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּקְרָאוּ רֵאשִׁית,

And the entire world was in suspension until Israel accepted the Torah (Avodah Zarah 3a).

וְכָל הָעוֹלָם תְּלוּי עַד שֶׁיִּקְבְּלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַתּוֹרָה ((עֲבוּדָה זָרָה ג', א

And since the beginning of creation was for Israel to receive the Torah, nothing could stand in their way when they went to receive the Torah,

וְאַחַר אֲשֶׁר תְּחִלַּת הַבְּרִיאָה הָיָה בְּשִׁבִיל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁיִּקְבְּלוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה אֵין לָהּ דְּבָר עוֹמֵד לְפָנֶיהֶם, בְּעֲנֵן לְקַתֵּם לְקַבֵּל אֶת הַתּוֹרָה,

as it is stated (Exodus 3:12): "When you bring the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God."

כְּמֵאמֶר (שְׁמוֹת ג', יב): "בְּהוֹצִיאֶךָ אֶת הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם 'תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים" וְכוּ

And all the miracles and changes in nature that occurred were not truly changes, for the beginning of creation was already intended for this purpose.

וְכָל הַנִּסִּים וְהַשְּׁתַנּוּת הַטְּבַע שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה אֵינּוּ הַשְּׁתַנּוּת כִּי אִם תְּחִלַּת הַבְּרִיאָה הָיָה עַל דַּעַת כֵּן.

And behold, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds was included in the second condition that was made with the waters, that "the dry land shall appear," etc.

וְהִנֵּה קָרִיעַת יַם סוּף הָיָה נִכְלָל בְּתַנְאֵי הַשְּׁנֵי שֶׁהָיָה 'עִם הַמַּיִם שֶׁתְּרָאָה הַיַּבְשָׁה" וְכוּ

And the matter of the waters returning at the turning of the morning was included in the first condition that was made with the waters at the beginning of their creation, following the natural order of their spreading out.

וְעֲנֵן שׁוּב הַמַּיִם לְפָנוֹת בִּקְרֵי הָיָה נִכְלָל בְּתַנְאֵי הַרְאִשׁוֹן עִם הַמַּיִם בְּתְחִלַּת בְּרִיאָתָם כְּסֹדֶר הַתְּפִשְׁטוּתָם.

Therefore, initially, at the time of the splitting of the Sea of Reeds, it was a simple matter that it should split before Israel, for this was the original order of creation and not a change.

וְלִכּוֹן מִתְחִלָּה בְּשַׁעַת קָרִיעַת יַם סוּף, דְּבָר פְּשוּט- הִיא שֶׁיִּקְרַע לְפָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהָרִי הוּא סֹדֶר הַבְּרִיאָה, תְּחִלָּה וְאֵינּוּ הַשְּׁתַנּוּת,

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'Eretz
Parshas Beshalach

<p>And this is what is meant by: "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and let them journey" (Exodus 14:15).</p>	<p>"וַיִּזְהַר: "מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו"</p>
<p>However, the return of the sea at the turning of the morning upon the Egyptians, in its original manner of spreading out, was a miracle—that it returned to its original condition of spreading,</p>	<p>מה שאין פו שישוב הים לפנות בקר על המצרים כדרך הראשון בהתפשטות הים נס שיחזור לתנאו הראשון בהתפשטות.</p>
<p>for, after the dry land appeared, the rest of the waters did not return.</p>	<p>אשרי כל המים אחר שנתראה היבשה לא חזרו.</p>
<p>And this is the matter of "And He saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10), which was not stated on the second day regarding the spreading of the waters,</p>	<p>וזהו הענין "וירא כי טוב" שלא נאמר בשני בענין ההתפשטות המים,</p>
<p>just as our Rabbis of blessed memory said (Megillah 10b) regarding the splitting of the Sea of Reeds: "The ministering angels sought to sing a song—</p>	<p>כדרך שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל (מגילה י, ב) בקריעת - ים סוף: "בקשו מלאכי השרת לומר שירה</p>
<p>but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: "The works of My hands are drowning in the sea, and you would sing?"</p>	<p>אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא מעשי ידי טובעים 'במים' וכו</p>
<p>And the recitation of the song is the statement "that it was good," which was not stated on the second day.</p>	<p>ואמירת השירה - היא מאמר "כי טוב" שלא נאמרה בשני</p>
<p>And the Torah does not speak of "the dead, the wicked like those slain, who lie in the grave" (Psalms 88:6); these were the Egyptians who drowned in the sea.</p>	<p>ולא דברה תורה "במתים רשעים כמו חללים שכבי קבר" (תהלים פח, ו) המה המצרים שטבעו במים</p>
<p>For indeed, "When the wicked perish, there is joy" (Proverbs 11:10), and "I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously" (Exodus 15:21).</p>	<p>אשרי "באבד רשעים רנה" (משלי יא, י) ואשירה, (לה' כי גאה גאה" (שמות טז, כא</p>
<p>But regarding Israel, it is said that they were judged in the water due to the accusations of the ministering angel of Egypt: "These worship idols, and these..." (Zohar Terumah 170b).</p>	<p>אבל על ישראל נאמר שהיו ישראל נדונים במים מטענות שר של מצרים "הללו עובדי עבודה זרה (והללו' וכו' (זוהר תרומה קע, ב</p>
<p>And this is what is meant by: "And they did not approach one another all night" (Exodus 14:20), which is mentioned in the Holy Zohar (ibid.),</p>	<p>וזהו: "ולא קרב זה אל זה כל הלילה" (יד כ) המזכר בזהר הקדוש (שם) במאמר</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Beshalach

that these were the angels who "call to one another and say a song" (Isaiah 6:3), but they did not draw near to sing the entire night,

שְׁהֵמָּה הַמַּלְאָכִים שִׁ"קוֹרְאִים זֶה אֶל זֶה לֵאמֹר שִׁירָה
"(ישעיהו ו. ג) לֹא קָרְבוּ לֵאמֹר שִׁירָה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה

for Israel was passing through the sea, and they were under judgment, as mentioned above.

שִׁהְיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבְרִים אֶת הַיָּם, שִׁהְרִי הָיוּ נִדּוּנִים,
כַּנְזָכָר לְעֵיל,

And this is why "it was good" was not stated on the second day—because it was not completed in its goodness and fullness, as explained by Rashi (Genesis 1:7).

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁלֹּא נֶאֱמַר "כִּי טוֹב" בַּשֵּׁנִי - שֶׁלֹּא נִגְמַר בְּטוֹבוֹ
(וּבְמִלּוּאוֹ כִּפְרוּשׁ רַשִׁ"י ז"ל (בראשית א, ז

"And the sea returned at the turning of the morning to its strength" (Exodus 14:27) — the morning of Abraham,

וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לְפָנֹת בֹּקֶר לְאַיְתָנּוּ" - בְּקָרוֹ שֶׁל
אַבְרָהָם

as explained in the Holy Zohar (ibid.), that it refers to kindness and expansion,

כַּמְבֹאֵר בְּזִהַר הַקְדוּשׁ (שם) שֶׁהֵמָּה חֲסִדִּים,
וְהַתְּפִשּׁוּת,

for in truth, all are worlds and attributes.

כִּי בְּאֵמֶת הַכֹּל הֵם עוֹלָמוֹת וּמִדּוֹת

However, when descending into this lowly world, "darkness covers the earth" (Isaiah 60:2), and this is called night.

רַק כִּי בְהִשְׁתַּלְשֵׁל לְזֶה הָעוֹלָם הַשְּׁפָל "הַחֹשֶׁךְ תִּכְפֹּה
- אֶרֶץ" (ישעיהו ס. ב) נִקְרָא לַיְלָה

"For he was a son of the night" (Jonah 4:10), while "the morning is light," which represents kindness.

אֲשֶׁר בֶּן לַיְלָה הָיָה" (יונה ד. י), וְ"הַבֹּקֶר אֹר" -
- וְהַחֲסִדִּים

And "the men were sent" (Genesis 44:3) and crossed to the dry land.

וְ"הָאֲנָשִׁים שְׁלָחוּ" (בראשית מד, ג) וְעָבְרוּ לַיַבֶּשֶׁת

"And the sea returned at the turning of the morning" upon the Egyptians, and then they sang a song.

וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לְפָנֹת בֹּקֶר" עַל מִצְרַיִם וְאָז אָמְרוּ
שִׁירָה.

For indeed, "Then Moses will sing" (Exodus 15:1) comes after everything was completed in its fullness and goodness.

שִׁהְרִי "אָז יִשִּׁיר" אַחַר שֶׁנִּגְמַר בְּמִלּוּאוֹ וְטוֹבוֹ

And this is the meaning of "that it was good," which was doubled on the third day—because the work of the waters was completed.

וְזֶהוּ "כִּי טוֹב" שֶׁתְּכַפֵּל בְּשְׁלִישֵׁי - שֶׁנִּגְמַר מְלֵאכֶת
הַמַּיִם,

And the concept of this doubling is similar to all songs, which are structured in a doubled form,

וְעִנְיָן הַכֶּפֶל - כְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל הַשִּׁירוֹת שֶׁהֵמָּה כְּפוּלִים

either in repeated words, as in "for He has triumphed gloriously" (Exodus 15:1),

"אוּ בְּמִלּוֹת, כְּמוֹ: כִּי "גָּאָה גָּאָה

or in the repetition of the concept using different words, though all refer to the same idea.

אוּ כְּפֶל הָעִנְיָן בְּמִלּוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת, וְכֻלָּם לְדַבָּר אֶחָד
מִתְּפוּנִים,

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Beshalach

And the matter is well known—that this expresses the revelation of unity.

וְהַעֲנִין יְדוּעַ שֶׁהוּא הַהִתְגַּלּוּת הָאֶחָדוּת

And so Rashi of blessed memory explained in another place (Rashi, Exodus 16:1).

וְכֵן פִּרְשׁ רַש"י ו"ל בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר (רש"י ישן שמונת טז, א).

[NOTE Summary:

The maamar opens with the Talmudic teaching that the verse “Then Moses will sing” is written in the future tense, teaching resurrection from the Torah. Song belongs not merely to a historical moment but to a state of ultimate completion. The Maggid then turns to the verse “And the sea returned at the turning of the morning to its strength,” and the Midrashic reading that this means “to its condition,” referring to a stipulation made with the sea at Creation that it would one day split before Israel. The difficulty is clear: if so, why does the Torah emphasize the sea’s return to its strength only afterward, rather than describing the splitting itself as a return to its condition?

A second difficulty arises from God’s words to Moses: “Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and let them journey.” From a human perspective, Israel stood trapped between the sea and the Egyptians, a situation that seemingly demanded a bitter cry. How could this be called a simple matter?

The Maggid resolves both questions through a profound rereading of Creation. The work of the waters was not completed on the second day, and therefore “that it was good” is absent until the third day, when the waters were gathered and dry land appeared. From this, he explains that two conditions were embedded in the waters at Creation. The first followed their natural tendency to spread everywhere, covering the earth. The second was contrary to their nature: that they would be gathered so that dry land could appear, even though the sea stands higher than the land.

Since the entire purpose of Creation was Israel, who are called “the beginning,” and since the world itself stood in suspension until Israel would accept the Torah, nothing in Creation could truly obstruct them on their path to redemption. All later “miracles” were already included in the original design. Accordingly, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds was not a rupture of nature at all, but the fulfillment of the second condition of the waters, that dry land should appear. This is why Moses is told not to cry out: Israel is simply moving along the original trajectory of Creation.

The true wonder, then, was not the splitting, but the return of the sea upon the Egyptians. The verse “And the sea returned at the turning of the morning to its strength” refers to the first condition of the waters, their original spreading nature. After dry land had appeared, the waters generally did not return to their former state. That they did so here, and only to destroy the Egyptians, constitutes the genuine miracle.

This explains why “that it was good” was not stated regarding the waters on the second day, and why the angels were prevented from singing while the Egyptians drowned. Song, which is itself the declaration of “it

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Beshalach

was good," cannot be uttered when Creation's process is incomplete or when judgment is still unfolding. Israel themselves were under scrutiny as they passed through the sea, due to accusations that they too had engaged in idolatry. Thus, the angels "did not draw near to one another all night" to sing, because the moment was one of $\eta\eta$ and unresolved tension.

Only afterward, when the sea returned "at the turning of the morning," identified with the morning of Abraham, the quality of kindness and expansive light, did completion emerge. Night represents concealment and constriction, while morning signifies revelation and chesed. Once the Egyptians were judged and Israel emerged fully redeemed, the process of the waters reached its final perfection. This is why the Torah doubles "that it was good" on the third day, and why song itself is characterized by doubling, whether through repeated words or parallel expressions. Such doubling reveals unity, the convergence of all strands of Creation into a single harmonious truth.

Practical Takeaway:

The Maggid teaches that what appears to us as crisis or rupture may in fact be the unfolding of a deeper order already woven into reality. Our task is not always to cry out in panic, but to move forward in trust, recognizing that the path of Torah and redemption is built into Creation itself. True song, inner wholeness and clarity, comes only after patience through judgment and concealment, when the process is allowed to reach its full completion.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok once encountered a disciple who was overwhelmed by fear in the face of upheaval and uncertainty. The student lamented that everything seemed inverted, that the world no longer followed its expected order. The Maggid responded gently that the student was mistaken: the world was following its truest order, but one that could only be seen from above. What felt like chaos from below was, from the vantage point of faith, the precise unfolding of a plan set in motion long before. "When the morning comes," he said, "you will see that nothing was out of place." The disciple later recalled that this teaching gave him the strength to walk forward without despair, trusting that clarity and song would come when the time was ripe.

TPX: When the Sea Is Not a Crisis, but a Process

What feels most terrifying in life is often the moment when all exits seem blocked. Sea in front. Egypt behind. No visible path forward. From the inside, this is panic. From the outside, it looks like catastrophe. From the Maggid of Horodok's lens, it is neither. It is alignment.

The core psychological move in this teaching is radical: the splitting of the sea was not an emergency intervention. It was not a deviation from reality. It was reality doing exactly what it was designed to do.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'Eretz
Parshas Beshalach

Most anxiety comes from assuming that the present obstacle should not be here. The nervous system reads blockage as danger. But the Maggid reframes the moment entirely: Israel is not trapped. They are simply reaching a layer of reality where the original design becomes visible. That is why Moses is told, "Why do you cry out to Me?" Crying assumes rupture. The instruction to move forward assumes coherence.

This is a powerful therapeutic distinction. Panic emerges when a person believes that something has gone wrong. Trust emerges when a person senses that something is unfolding.

The waters, according to this teaching, always contained two conditions. One condition allowed for contraction, order, boundaries, dry land. The other allowed for expansion, flooding, return to origin. Both are true. Both are necessary. And both already exist long before the moment they are activated.

Psychologically, this mirrors the way a person oscillates between structure and overwhelm. During growth, we often need boundaries to appear. At other times, those boundaries must dissolve. The mistake is assuming that either state is a failure. The Maggid insists they are both built in.

What is striking is that the real miracle is not the opening, but the closing. The sea opening aligns with purpose. The sea returning, flooding again, represents judgment and consequence. And that is precisely why song cannot happen yet. Song requires integration. You cannot sing while parts of the system are still under accusation, still unresolved, still drowning.

This explains a subtle emotional truth: premature celebration feels hollow. Relief that arrives before integration never settles the nervous system. Only when the process completes can the body exhale. Only then does song become possible.

The angels, who normally sing automatically, are silenced here. Why? Because singing is not decoration. It is a declaration that reality has reached coherence. As long as Israel is still under scrutiny, still passing through, still between night and morning, the system is incomplete.

Night, in this teaching, is not evil. It is constriction. It is limited perception. Morning is not just daylight. It is chesed, expansion, emotional safety, and restored meaning. Trauma lives in night. Integration lives in morning.

Only after the sea returns "at the turning of the morning," meaning once kindness and expansion reassert themselves, can song emerge. "Then Moses will sing" is future tense not only because of resurrection, but because true song always waits for wholeness.

From a TPX perspective, this reframes growth entirely. The goal is not to avoid the sea. The goal is not to eliminate fear instantly. The goal is to keep moving when the path feels impossible, trusting that the system already knows how to open. Song is not the tool that gets you through. Song is the result of having gone through.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'Eretz
Parshas Beshalach

And the doubling of song, the repetitions, the mirrored phrases, reflects psychological integration. The same truth is felt emotionally and understood cognitively. The body and the mind finally agree. That is unity.

Modern Story

A therapist once worked with a man who kept saying, "I just want things to go back to normal." Every session circled that sentence. Eventually, the therapist asked him to describe what "normal" meant. After a long silence, he realized that "normal" was a version of himself that no longer existed.

The breakthrough came when he stopped trying to restore the old shoreline and instead allowed the waters to move. Months later, he said something unexpected: "I wouldn't undo what happened. I finally understand who I am."

That was his song.

Not sung at the moment of fear. Not while the waters were still parting. But only after the morning came.

END NOTE]