

Dear Chavraya,

The changes have swirled with the speed of light today from east to west. The beginning of this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Tetzaveh*, is about the raising up of light. As we kindle Shabbos candles, may it be as the light of freedom for Egyptians and for all people. May it be the light of truth and seeking, a light to illumine the path of peace and understanding. Most of *Parashat Tetzaveh* concerns the clothing of the *kohanim*, the priests who served in the ancient temple. The word for garment that is used throughout the portion is *beget*. The same root forms the word *boged*, which means deceit. When the light of truth reveals the deceit that lies beneath the robe of tyranny, it is the beginning of change. I share with you below a prayer that I have written, changes occurring even as I wrote.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Victor

A Jewish Prayer for Egypt

Holy One of Being, Who freed our ancestors long ago, the Exodus seared into our consciousness, ours to remember and to tell, let my people go

Reminding for all time in the first of the Ten Commandments, *I am God, your God, Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves*

Our freedom struggle a model and an inspiration for those downtrodden in every generation, our own song be strong upon our lips

Free now the Egyptian people that they shall overcome, spirit of freedom rising, a Pharaoh's tyranny endured so long, a night of watching, dawn has come

Guide them on the path to freedom without resort to arms, neither by the state nor by the people, from shackles of violence all to be released

Help change to come without the painful prodding of plagues, all to suffer for the leader's sins, heart hardened to the people's cries

A journey just begun, give Your blessing to their striving, and let not their revolution descend from noble cause to enmity and strife

Your word as revealed in the Holy Quran concerning Israel's oppression in that ancient land, speaks now as though to Egypt's own people

And we wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors (Sura 28:verse 5); so may it be

It is our story to embrace; of histories entwined they are like us and we are like them, open our hearts to share in joy the freedom they have won

Returned to our land, help us to do what is right and just, reaching out to them
and they to us, nurturing peace with all the children of Hagar

Help us to look beyond fear and lead us out from the narrow place within, with
breadth of vision and hope renewed to pursue what can be when people are free.