In my language — Shabbat Shalom Umevorach!

Before I begin, I would like to just warn you that this will not be the typical *dvar Torah* that you are likely accustomed to hearing in this neighborhood. I am quite aware that most of you, if not all of you, know that I have a unique fascination with certain rabbinical authorities and that I hold a particular interest in a certain “*medina*” in the Middle East. In all, that is the reason we are gathered here together today. If not for my peculiar obsessions, we would not be here celebrating.

While we are indeed gathered here to celebrate my departure from Cleveland, to wish me good luck, to reflect on all the cherished times spent together, and to recall all my many years spent in Cleveland gone by, we are also here to rejoice in this bold move for my future, one that affects all of *your* futures as well.

For many years, I have been negatively affected and tarnished by the unclear and blurry thought process of the exile in a most discombobulated state.

Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hacohen Kook, *zecher tzadik l’vrachah*, writes in *Orot Eretz Yisrael* (Perek Daled) — “It is impossible for a person to be considered truthful and trustworthy regarding his thought process, reasoning, ideas, and vision in Chutz La’aretz, in the same form as he considered truthful for all of this in Eretz Yisrael.”

Harav Shlomo Aviner, *shlita*, comments: “It is specifically in Eretz Yisrael that all those thoughts, reasonings, ideas, and visions, are truthful to the inner, spiritual soul of the Yid, and these, however, in Chutz La’aretz, are confused and flawed.”

Simply put, our thought process is clear in Eretz Yisrael while our thought process in Chutz La’aretz is not.

So, you may ask, if one does not have full clarity in Chutz La’artez, how is one clear enough to decide to leave the exile — while in the exile — and make Aliyah?

Rav Kook has the answer: to paraphrase, he explains that when one has a yearning while in the exile for Eretz Yisrael, he then becomes connected to Eretz Yisrael so much so that the clarity of his thought process is on par with that of those in Eretz Yisrael!

I will add — it is not enough to yearn —who here in this room does not yearn for Eretz Yisrael? One must make a conscious and continuous effort to move in that direction. After all, what is it to yearn for something without taking the initiative and doing one’s *hishtadlus*?

As you all know and are quite aware, I have been involved with my *hishtadlus* for Eretz Yisrael for many years, both in my efforts to make Aliyah, my efforts in helping others make Aliyah, and my efforts in donating thousands of hours of my time, translating, editing, writing, and publicizing for numerous causes and organizations that promote Eretz Yisrael, whether it be in the religious sphere or the political arena.

With these substantial endeavors and with all the toil in hard work, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, after many years of saying that it was not yet the time for my departure to the Holy Land, has now bestowed me with His blessing. Moreover, it is the clear thought process that I initially received from Hashem —the clear thought process due to my yearning along with my *hishtadlus* for Eretz Yisrael — that has helped and guided me to this point. As Shlomo Hamelech wrote in *Koheles*: “*Lakol zman v’eis l’chol cheifetz tacahs hashamayim* — for everything there is a season and there is time for every purpose under the heaven.” Before today it was not the proper time; now the time has arrived.

And now that I have that clarity to understand this process along with soon having the opportunity to inhale from the “*avira de’Eretz Yisrael*,” which will undoubtedly bring me even more clarity, I will leave you, my dear friends, with this:

*Eretz Yisrael nikness b’yisurim* — Eretz Yisrael is acquired with hardships” — and many of you know what I have gone through in the last ten to twenty years for this —my *brachah* to you is that when, not if, you make your decision to join me, you will only have an easy process navigating these channels along with much *hatzlachah,* and especially clarity in all your thoughts.

In **our** language — Shabbat Shalom Umevorach!