

## **And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Yisrael. (34:12)**

And so ends the Torah. Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest leader of Klal Yisrael dies, and nothing is known of his grave. We have no place to go to say Tehillim. What is left over from Moshe? With what do we memorialize him? His glory for all time is “van vag rat,” “that which Moshe performed.” The memory of Moshe is his achievement. The things that he did, his great accomplishment, that is his greatest glory. We respect the dead--but we venerate the living. By not revealing the site of Moshe’s grave, the Torah implies the significance of his life.

**Horav Moshe Swift, zl**, cites Koheles 4:2 where Shlomo Ha’melech says, “I praise the dead who are already dead from the living, who are still alive.” The only praise one can give the dead is “from the living,” to see what kind of living men they left behind. Are their generations still alive? If they are alive, then the dead are exalted. For this reason, we recite Yizkor on Shemini Atzeres, which is a festival, a happy day, when we culminate reading the Torah. It is not a contradiction. When we see the glories the dead have left behind, when we look upon the living, then Yizkor is no longer a mournful ritual, but rather an uplifting one. We are filled with rapture at the accomplishments of our ancestors, especially in light of their descendants.

Yes, Moshe Rabbeinu died, but his gravesite is not known. We are to remember him by his achievements; we are to think of him as the Lawgiver who gave and taught us the Torah. To focus on his gravesite would place too much emphasis upon his death. We want to emphasize his life.