

## These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Yisrael... between Paran and Tofel and Lavan, and Chatzeiros and Di Zahav. (1:1)

A person goes through life living his allotted sum of years – then he passes from this world into the world of eternity. Those who remain, his family and friends, are left with one thing: memories. Yes, all that remains of a person's life are the memories that he leaves behind. This will endure the test of time. How he wants to be remembered – how he will be remembered – is determined by the way he has lived, by the legacy that he has imparted. Some leave a material/physical legacy – this is how they will be remembered. Others leave a spiritual/ethical-moral legacy – this is how they will be remembered. How do you want to be remembered?

Moshe *Rabbeinu* left this world after a life that can best be described as extraordinary, one-of-a-kind, seminal. Yet, no physical monument exists to his having lived: no memorial; no visible reminder of his presence among us. All we have, as noted by *Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl*, is the precise geographical location of the places where he spent his final weeks, doing what he did best: teaching Torah and giving *mussar* to his flock, *Klal Yisrael*. With the passing of Moshe, all of his physical personality departed. All that was left was a description, in the most precise terms, of where the people heard the last of his faithful words. The description of the place was recorded in the Torah for posterity and will be transmitted throughout the generations. Why? *Rav Hirsh* explains that, if one day one of the descendants of that generation (who heard Moshe) would come to this place (described by the Torah), it may echo for him these parting words of our quintessential leader. They will hopefully inspire him to follow these words faithfully.

Knowing that at this specific place Moshe *Rabbeinu* spoke his last words to the people, reviewed the Torah, and gave them guidance for the future is enough to guide his descendants toward maintaining a faithful relationship with Hashem. The “place” is suffused with the holiness of Moshe's teachings. We do not require monuments, because Moshe's words are the greatest monument to his life. It is not the physical entity that impresses, but rather, the spiritual teachings. Years ago, I remember visiting Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, where *Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl*, taught Torah and from where his teachings were disseminated out to the world. Someone pointed out *Rav Moshe's* chair to me. I was overwhelmed with the knowledge that, from here, this chair, in this *bais hamedrash*, the *gadol hador* taught Torah. I feel it to this very day. A person's greatest monument is his legacy. Moshe *Rabbeinu's* legacy was Torah. We, who study Torah, comprise his monument.