**Miller’s Musings פרשת קֹרַח**

It’s not every day that a great chasm in the ground opens up and swallows a group of people alive.  When Moshe warns of its arrival as proof to the inaccuracy of the claims of Korach and his followers, he designates this phenomena as a “creation (that) Hashem will create”, seemingly for this one-off occurrence.  This however needs clarification, as we are told in Pirkei Ovos (Ethics of our Fathers) that this immense cavity in the earth was actually one of the entities brought into being on the first Erev Shabbos of the world’s existence. So how can this be deemed a new creation?

One method to understanding this, brought by Reb Shimon Schwab zt’l, is in making a distinction between the actually physical reality of the pit, something which was formed soon after the dawn of time, and the event that took place, which contained within it something heretofore never having taken place.  There were of course many who, after their day of judgement, had entered the realm where punishment and purification takes place, but none who had done so, until now, whilst alive.  Korach and his cohort were the first to have endured such a fate, as witnessed by those in the Talmud who were said to hear their pleas from the abyss, and this was the new creation first fashioned at this time.

If we can extract a message from this idea, perhaps it is in understanding the distinction between something being truly new and an altered version of something already in existence.   The manner in which they met their end may have been simply an altered version of what was already there, but it was still given the status of being a new creation. In practice this is of relevance when there are those who seek to find new paths in Judaism.  There is a world of difference between finding new ways in which to convey the same eternal message of Hashem and modifying the message itself in order to fit in with our own biases and predilections.  Looking for new and exciting ways to present Judaism is acceptable and perhaps necessary, if they do not take us away from the timeless truths expressed in the Torah.  But if those ideas contradict and pervert the integrity of these messages, they are creations of destruction to the intentions of our Creator.

May your Shabbos be one that is true and pure.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם

