

OzTorah

Three Paths up the Mountain

B'har – “On the Mountain” is not only the name of the weekly portion.

It is also, though probably metaphorically (but possibly in a literal sense, since the psalm describes pilgrims on their way up to the Temple), a key word in the Psalms.

Psalm 24 asks (verse 3), *mi ya'aleh b'har HaShem*, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?”

The answer (verse 4) is threefold: the person who has clean hands and a pure heart, and has not sworn deceitfully.

Three human faculties are the sign of a good person - their hand, their heart and their mouth.

What you do, what you feel, and what you say, are the key to ascending the Divine mountain - and like the four elements in the *arba'ah minim* on Sukkot, all must be taken together. As Kohelet says at the end of his book, *sof davar, hakol nishma* – “The end of the matter (is) that hakol, ‘everything’ is heard”.

A person can't be good with only one or two parts of their being. The whole person is what is assessed from On High - the whole person working together as one.

The heart feels, the mouth articulates the thought, the hand carries it out. The holistic life is the way up the mountain.

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