



Climate Justice

Prepared by Rabbi Michael Namath

So God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to till (L'aved) it and tend (L'shmreh) it. *Genesis 2:15*

1. What might Eden represent for us today?
2. What does it mean to till and to tend?
 - a. If both words are there do they have unique meaning?

The terms *avodah* (till) and *shmirah* (tend) include not only the direct work and care of the ground, but also the whole moral behavior of Man in acting and refraining from acting in accordance with his duty. Indeed, as already indicated, Nature itself finds its appointed purpose promoted, as well as the necessary condition for its continuance. *Rabbi Sampson Rafael Hirsch, The Pentateuch. Vol.1. Genesis*

1. What does this text tell us about the meaning of *avodah* and *shmirah*?

The undefiled world was given over to man 'to work it' to apply to it his creative resources in order that it yield up to him its riches. But alongside the mandate to work and subdue it, he was appointed its watchman to guard over it, to keep it safe to protect it even from his own rapaciousness and greed. Man is not only an *aved*, a worker and fabricator: his is also a *shomer*, a trustee who according to halachah, is obligated to keep the world whole for its true Owner. *Rabbi Norman Lamm*

1. What does this text tell us about the meaning of *avodah* and *shmirah*?

The language has no instruction but rather a specific purpose for the human in the garden: to till and tend it. The Hebrew offers the impression of serving and guarding the land. There is no hierarchy. Instead, there is an attitude. Humans must take care of it and all that it contains. *Rabbi Elaine Zecher, Shabbat Awakenings*

1. What does this text tell us about the meaning of *avodah* and *shmirah*?
2. How does all of these texts compare with one another?
3. How can these texts be applied today?
4. What is our role?