

Rabbi Shimon said, "The shade spread over us by these trees is so pleasant! We must crown this place with words of Torah" (Zohar, 2:127a).

הְגַּה מַה־טוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם־יָחַד:

Hiney mah tov umah nayim <u>she</u>vet aḥim gam yaḥad. How good and how pleasant it is for friends to sit together.

Psalm 133:1

In Hebrew, *seder* means "order." Here it refers to the order that structures our celebration...

The order we follow will move us through four stages, as taught by rabbis of long ago, spiritual masters. Just as they did, we will treat each type of fruit as the symbol of one aspect of reality, a rung of the ladder in our spiritual universe....

Ancient and medieval philosophers and naturalists understood our planet to be made up of four primal elements:

EARTH, WATER, AIR, and FIRE.

Today, we will look at the world through their eyes and focus on each of these elements, in turn.

As with the fruits,
we will treat each of these four elements as the symbol of deeper spiritual truths.

Adapted from "Seder for Tu bi-Shvat," Jewish, Alive & American: Student Resource Book

	עשיה	יצירה	בריה	אצילו
World:	action	formation	creation	emanation
Element:	Earth	WATER	Air	Fire
Characteristic:	physical	emotional	intellectual	spiritual
Season:	winter	spring	summer	fall
Understanding:	פשט (peshat)	רמז (remez)	דרש (derash)	סוד (sod)
	literal	hint	story	secret
Wine:	white	white	red	red
		with red	with white	
Fruit:	hard outside;	soft outside,	soft throughout	_
	soft inside	hard inside		

עשיה

THE WORLD OF ACTION

"If you are holding a sapling in your hand, and someone says that the Messiah has drawn near, first plant the sapling, and then go and greet the Messiah." (Yochanan b. Zakkai, Avot d'Rebbe Natan 31b)

EARTH

"Perhaps the most profound Jewish statement about the relationship between human beings and the earth is bound up in two words of Hebrew—*Adam* and *Adamah*. The first means "human being"; the second, "earth." The two words are connected to teach us that human beings and the earth are intertwined"

-Arthur Waskow, Torah of the Earth.

Hail the hand that scattered space with stars, Wrapped whirling world in bright blue blanket, air, Made worlds within worlds, elements in earth, Souls within skins, every one a teeming universe, Every tree a system of semantics, and pushed Beyond probability to place consciousness On this cooling crust of burning rock.

Oh praise that hand, mind, heart, soul, power or force
That so enclosed, separated, limited planets, trees, humans
Yet breaks all bounds and borders
To lavish on us light, love, life
This trembling glory.

-Ruth Brin

Physical

Coffee is the second most valuable commodity in the world market after oil. The United States is the world's largest consumer of coffee and Americans today drink one-fifth of the world's beans. But few Americans realize that coffee farmers, who live largely in Latin America, Asia and Africa often toil in "sweatshops in the fields." More than 25 million farmers and coffee workers in over 50 countries rely on coffee sales for their livelihood. In July of 2002, the Wall Street Journal reported that, "In lush coffee-growing regions from Central America to Africa, the collapse of world coffee prices is contributing to societal meltdowns affecting an estimated 125 million people, [resulting in] a combustible brew of unemployment, hunger and migration."...In addition to the devastating effects on farmers and their families, coffee farming can lead to severe environmental problems including pesticide pollution, deforestation, and the extinction of animals through habitat destruction.

One response to the devastation caused by traditional coffee farming practices has been a growing demand for "Fair Trade" coffee made without exploitative labor. Fair Trade Coffee is a real solution for some of these farmers. Fair Trade certification ensures coffee farmers are paid a decent, living wage for their harvest; encourages democratically organized farming cooperatives; provides access to affordable credit, which help farmers stay out of debt; and promotes sustainable practices, such as organic farming, which helps protect the environment...In an age of increasing economic disparity between rich and poor, both locally and globally, it is easy to feel powerless to make a difference. By choosing to spend a few cents more on Fair Trade certified coffee, we support a living wage for farmers, increased educational opportunities for rural children, and improved environmental standards.

Winter

There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm.
One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.

-Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

הַשְּׁקֵדְיָה פּוֹרַחַת, וְשֶׁמֶשׁ פָּז זוֹרַחַת צְפָּרִים מֵרֹאשׁ כָּל גַּג, מְבַשְּׁרוֹת אֶת בּוֹא הֶחָג. ט"וּ בִּשִּׁבַט הָגִּיעַ חַג הַאִילַנוֹתוּ

Hashkediyah po<u>ra</u>ḥat, ve<u>she</u>mesh paz zo<u>ra</u>ḥat Tzipporim merosh kol gag, mevasrot et bo heḥag. Tu bishevat higiyah hag ha'ilanot.

The almond tree is growing, beneath the golden sun. Birds sing from every roof, telling us the time has come. Tu Bishevat is here, the New Year for the Trees!

Peshat At the most basic level of understanding is *peshat*: the literal meaning. We need no explanation – we know what we know, simply by observing it.

"To be a giant and keep quiet about it, To stay in one's own place; To stand for the constant presence of process And always to seem the same: To be steady as a rock and always trembling, Having the hard appearance of death With the soft, fluent nature of growth, One's Being deceptively armored, One's Becoming deceptively vulnerable: To be so tough, and take the light so well, Freely providing forbidden knowledge Of so many things about heaven and earth For which we should otherwise have no word – Poems or people are rarely so lovely, And even when they have great qualities They tend to tell you rather than exemplify What they believe themselves to be about, While from the moving silence of trees, Whether in storm or calm, in leaf and naked, Night or day, we draw conclusions of our own Sustaining and unnoticed as our breath, And perilous also – though there has never been A critical tree – about the nature of things." -Howard Nemerov **First cup (Black Coffee)** "You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the communities of your land." (Deuteronomy 24:10)

בַּרוּדְ אַתַּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶדְ הַעוֹלֶם, שהכל נהיה בדברו

Baruh atah adonay, eloheynu meleh ha'olam shehacol nihyeh bidvaro.

Blessed are you, The Boundless One, our God, The Sovereign of all worlds, whose word causes everything to come into existence

First Fruit: Hard outside; soft inside

"Most of the world's chocolate is made in West Africa...[where] the majority of chocolate workers there are boys below the age of 16. A number of them are trafficked from neighboring countries with promises of good work and high wages. After being sold to plantation owners for around \$30 US they are held against their will, working 80 to 100 hours a week. Violence or the threat of violence is omnipresent and they receive no money. One escaped slave, Aly Diabate has testified "The beatings were a part of my life, anytime they loaded you with bags (of cocoa beans) and you fell while carrying them, nobody helped you. Instead they beat you and beat you until you picked it up again."

According to Alternet "Approximately 286,000 children between the ages of nine and twelve have been reported to work on cocoa farms on the Ivory Coast alone with as many as 12,000 likely to have arrived in their situation as a result of child trafficking." The most egregious offenders —the slave drivers, so to speak—include leading corporations: Hershey, M&M/Mars, Nestle, Cadbury etc, whose biggest priority is giving us the consumers the lowest price, because that's what we tell them we want.

The question to ask ourselves is what are we willing to pay to help end human rights abuses, trafficking and slavery? A little more for a bar of chocolate made by a slave-free, fair trade certified company maybe? Using our power as consumers has the potential to change the way these companies run and change the lives of children in West Africa, without even getting our hands dirty. I don't believe you have to be an extremist to make things happen most of the time. Even if we dramatically cut down on our chocolate consumption from those companies — can I say it — dayeinu. If we write an email telling the companies and we are concerned about slavery and would like to know what they are doing about it — dayeinu. If we inform others — dayeinu, dayeinu."

- Laya Millman, "Because we were slaves: Slavery in your chocolate," jewlicious.com, 4/17/06

The original Aztec name for chocolate, xocolatl, means "bitter water." Much of the world's chocolate sadly lives up to its name. Yet the Latin word for the tree that produces the cocoa pod is Theobroma cacao - "Food of the gods." Through this ritual act of dipping and eating, we are reminded that food becomes Godly when we eat it in a Godly way - with compassion, pleasure, and awareness.

:בְּרוּדְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהִינוּ מֶלֶדְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ Baruḥ atah adonay, elo<u>hey</u>nu <u>me</u>leḥ ha'olam, borey peri ha'etz. Blessed are you, The Planter, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who created the fruit of the tree.

יצירה

THE WORLD OF FORMATION

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn. (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays)

Water

Every day we find a new sky and a new earth with which we are trusted like a perfect toy. We are given the salty river of our blood winding through us, to remember the sea and our kindred under the waves, the hot pulsing that knocks in our throats to consider our cousins in the grass and the trees, all bright scattered rivulets of life.

We are given the wind within us, the breath to shape into words that steal time, that touch like hands and pierce like bullets, that waken truth and deceit, sorrow and pity and joy, that waste precious air in complaints, in lies, in floating traps for power on the dirty air. Yet holy breath still stretches our lungs to sing.

We are given fire to see against the dark, to think, to read, to study how we are to live... We are given passion to rise like the sun in our minds with the new day and burn the debris of habit and greed and fear.

Fill us as the tide rustles into the reeds in the marsh. Fill us as the rushing water overflows the pitcher. Fill us as light fills a room with its dancing. Let the little quarrels of the bones and the snarling of the lesser appetites and the whining of the ego cease. Let silence still us so you may show us your shining and we can out of that stillness rise and praise.

-Marge Piercy (excerpted)

Spring From Psalm 92 - a song for putting down roots.

צַדִּיק כַּתָּמֶר יִפְּרָח כְּאֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן יִשְׂגֶה: שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהֹוָה בְּחַצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יַפְרִיחוּ: עוֹד יְנוּבוּן בְּשֵׂיבָה דְּשֵׁנִים וְרַעֲנַנִּים יִהְיוּ: לְהַגִּיד כִּי־יָשָׁר יְהֹוָה צוּרִי וְלֹא־עַוְלָתָה בּוֹ:

Tzadik katamar yifraḥ, ke'erez balvanon yisgeh. Shetulim beveyt adonay, beḥatzrot elo<u>hey</u>nu ya<u>fri</u>ḥu. Od yenuvun beseyvah, deshenim vera'ananim yihyu. Lehagid ki yashar adonay, tzuri velo av<u>la</u>tah bo.

The righteous flourish like date-palms, thrive like cedars in northern hills. Planted like olives in God's Temple, they flourish in our God's courts. Still producing in old age, they'll be full of sap and evergreen – Testifying that ADONAI is fair, my rock without fault.

Emotional Poetry by Rachel Giovanniello and Sophie Lesser.



Mother's emotion Trees born in the spring Baby in her arms Shade and protection From the trees

2 Haikus:

Pain rushing freely Yet letting life burst forth from Hearts not always hard

Water flowing fast Emotional basket case Sun burnt no sunscreen

New hopes and roots
Take hold
In ground no longer frozen
But softening
To let new life
Come in

רמז Remez

This part of understanding, the *remez*, gives us a clue about meaning. It puts us in relationship to something we know clearly, pointing to a connection that we may not have seen. Like fruit with a soft outside, it allows us to penetrate to a deeper level. But like a fruit with a pit, it doesn't quite allow us to reach the center of our understanding.

Second cup (Coffee with a hint of chocolate milk)

בַּרוּדְ אַתַּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֱלֶדְ הַעוֹלֶם, שהכל נהיה בדברו

Baruh atah adonay, eloheynu meleh ha'olam shehacol nihyeh bidvaro.

Blessed are you, The Boundless One, our God,

The Sovereign of all worlds, whose word causes everything to come into existence.

Second Fruit: Soft outside: hard inside

Although these pits are often discarded, we must remember that they are the seeds, the means to rebirth. We eat these fruits to remind us that every flowering tree was once barren, every budding field once bare, and that the means to growth can sometimes come from the most overlooked of places. Before we discard anything or anyone, we should take the time to find that value, to explore the hidden spark within us all.

:בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶדְ הָעוֹלֶם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ Baruḥ atah adonay, elo<u>hey</u>nu <u>me</u>leḥ ha'olam, borey peri ha'etz. Blessed are you, THE PLANTER, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who created the fruit of the tree.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Write a new blessing for eating that helps to remind you about how important it is to sense every bite vou take.

בריה The World of Creation

What does it mean to be in a world of creation? In a world that is often difficult to navigate, more difficult to comprehend, and sometimes even more difficult to see clearly – this world reminds us to take a step back and marvel at the way in which we can be partners in God's ever evolving creative process.

"Your kind deeds are used by God as seed for the planting of trees in the Garden of Eden; thus, each of you creates your own Paradise." (Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezhirech, Esser Orot)

AIR

"YHVH -The Breath of Life"...of course that is [God's] name. We breathe, and the trees breathe. We breathe in what the trees breathe out. So we breathe each other into existence: We, and the galaxies, and the arrays of science and the codes of law and the plays of music, we are breathing each other into existence. And the breath, or course, goes in a cycle.

-Arthur Waskow, "Rainbow Sign"

A long time ago, before anything had a name, we didn't know that we were man or woman, human or animal, male or female. When the wild reeds bowed their heads in the wind, we bowed our heads too, for it was the same spirit—breath that breathed through us every second, every hour, every day of our lives. ... And when the rains came forth, loving Earth so much that she grew fruits and berries and nuts to feed us with, we were full of her joy and we loved each other and we grew our own children to eat Earth's joys, her fruits, so that the rains would come again and visit her.

It was before we were called man or woman, even before we could speak one word. In those days we prayed with our entire beings, in the wind, in the sun, in the rain; every second, every day, every hour of our lives; at the rising of the sun and the dark of the moon, at the birth of the son and the death of the grandmother, at the wedding of two lovers, at the buzzing of the Spring. We breathed, we bowed, we laughed, we wept. This was before we called it prayer.

-Penina V. Adclman

From Psalm 150.

בּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהֵלֵל יָהּ הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Kol haneshamah tehalel yah. Halleluyah.

Let every breathing YAH's praises sing. Halleluyah!

דרש *Derash* The *derash* uses a story to facilitate understanding. By using our creative minds, we begin to approach deeper meanings.

"Once, when Rav Abraham Kook was walking in the fields, lost deep in thought, the young student with him inadvertently plucked a leaf off a branch. Rav Kook was visibly shaken by this act, and turning to his companion he said gently, "Believe me when I tell you I never simply pluck a leaf or a blade of grass or any living thing, unless I have to." He explained further, "Every part of the vegetable world is singing a song and breathing forth a secret of the divine mystery of the Creation." For the first time the young student understood what it means to show compassion to all creatures." (Wisdom of the Mystics)

Intellectual

I contemplate a tree.

I can accept it as a picture: a rigid pillar in a flood of light, or splashes of green traversed by the gentleness of the blue silver ground.

I can feel it as movement: the flowing veins around the sturdy, striving core, the sucking of the roots, the breathing of the leaves, the infinite commerce with earth and air – and the growing itself in its darkness.

I can assign it to a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life....

...Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition.

But it can also happen, if <u>will</u> and <u>grace</u> are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me.

This does not require me to forego any of the modes of contemplation. There is nothing that I must not see in order to see, and there is no knowledge that I must forget. Rather is everything,

and was struck by a line about relationships with people and God in one of his important works, <u>I and Thou</u>. According to Kohan, Buber wrote, "You need the <u>will</u> to go after it and the <u>grace</u> to receive God." "I thought, wow," said Kohan. "These are two complementary things. If we ever had a love story with two

A DERASH FROM

"MUST-SEE TV"

producer explained [on Bravo's "Inside the

[David Kohan, Will and Grace's] writer-

Actors Studio"] that he studied Martin

Buber, a 20th century Jewish theologian

ALL ABOUT 'WILL & GRACE';" Buffalo News. Buffalo, N.Y.: Nov 13, 2003. pg. C.5

great names." ALAN PERGAMENT. "IT'S

complementary people, those would be

picture and movement, species and instances, law and number included and inseparably fused.

Whatever belongs to the tree is included: its form and its mechanics, its colors and its chemistry, its conversation with the elements and its conversation with the stars – all this in its entirety.

The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood; it confronts me bodily and has to deal with me as I must deal with it – only differently.

One should not try to dilute the meaning of the relation: relation is reciprocity.

Does the tree have consciousness, similar to our own? I have no experience of that. But thinking that you have brought this off in your own case, must you again divide the indivisible? What I encounter is neither the soul of a tree nor a dryad, but the tree itself.

Martin Buber, <u>I and Thou</u>

Third Cup (Half Coffee, half chocolate milk)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שהכל נהיה בדברו

Baruḥ atah adonay, elo<u>hey</u>nu <u>me</u>leḥ ha'olam shehacol nihyeh bidvaro.

Blessed are you, THE BOUNDLESS ONE, our God, The Sovereign of all worlds, whose word causes everything to come into existence.

Third Fruit: Soft throughout

We eat these fruits to remind us of the wholeness of the world...As we partake in these fruits we...take this time to look at the wholeness of our own creations, to examine our relationship with the world, making the necessary changes so that, as God did at the world's creation, we might call our actions good. Do we recycle? Do we conserve energy? Are we conscious of where our food comes from? What kind of cars do we drive?

ּבָרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ: Baruḥ atah adonay, elo<u>hey</u>nu <u>me</u>leḥ ha'olam, borey peri ha'etz.

Blessed are you, THE PLANTER, our God, The Sovereign of all worlds, who created the fruit of the tree.

אצילות

THE WORLD OF EMANATION

FIRE

FIRE represents the world beyond words, before thought, where knower, knowing, and known blend together.

All is one, without boundaries, in harmony.

Here there is neither fruit nor seed, neither self nor other, neither past nor future, only that Nameless something that gives rise to love, insight, serenity, and joy.

There's a FIRE alive within the cell of every being; the controlled burning of oxygen; and the spark of light that is our connection with the Divine.

From "Seder for Tu bi-Shvat," Jewish, Alive & American: Student Resource Book

Spiritual

There once was a young boy who always liked to spend his time in the forest. Now, the forest could be a very beautiful and exciting place. But there was no knowing what one would find there. The young boy's father was worried. He was delighted that his son was so full of adventure and curiosity, but he was afraid that something terrible would happen to him in the forest. Finally, he asked his son,

"Why do you always go into the forest?"

"I go there to find God," the son replied.

The father was relieved. "Don't you know that God is everywhere, one and the same?" he responded.

"Yes," agreed the son, "but I am not."

-Hasidic folk tale

Is it eco-kosher to eat vegetables and fruit that have been grown by drenching the soil with insecticides?

Is it eco-kosher to ignore the insulation or lack of it in our homes, synagogues, community centers, and nursing homes, so that we burn far more fuel than necessary and drunkenly pour carbon monoxide into the atmosphere, thereby accelerating the heating of our globe?

Is it eco-kosher to use unrecycled office paper and newsprint in our homes, our synagogues, our community newspapers? Might it be eco-kosher to insist on 10 percent recycled paper this year, and 30 percent in two years, and 80 percent in five years?

I want to suggest that what makes a life-practice eco-kosher may not be a single standard, a black-and-white barricade like "pork is *treyf* (not kosher)," but rather a constantly moving standard in which the test is, Are we doing what is more respectful, less damaging to the earth than what we did last year?

-Arthur Waskow, <u>Torah of the Earth, Volume 2</u>

FIRE / Fall An acrostic by Sara Chernov and Katie Lipson.



Friendships being reunited

Inspiring for all

Red, orange, yellow and blue and the colors we see

Eternal flame

Adding to make the flame grow

 N_{ew} beginnings

Doing the impossible

Family bonds come and go

Another new experience

Leaves falling from the trees

Leaving a lasting impression

TID Sod

The sod, the secret, of meaning is the part that we simply cannot comprehend. The energy contained in nature, in the earth and its waters, in the atom and the sunshine will not avail us if we fail to activate the most precious vital energy: the moral-spiritual energy inherent in humankind, in the inner recesses of our being, in our mysterious, uncompromising, unfathomable and divinely inspired soul.

"[The Torah compares humans to trees] because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world."

-Rashi

"When a tree that bears fruit is cut down, its moan goes from one end of the world to the other, yet no sound is heard."

-Midrash Pirke de-R. Eliezar 34

Consider the life of trees.

Aside from the axe, what trees acquire from man is inconsiderable.

What man may acquire from trees is immeasurable.

From their mute forms there flows a poise, in silence;

a lovely sound and motion in response to wind.

What peace comes to those aware of the voice and bearing of trees!

Trees do not scream for attention.

A tree, a rock, has no pretense, only a real growth out of itself,

in close communion with the universal spirit.

A tree retains a deep serenity.

It establishes in the earth not only its root system but also

these roots of its beauty and its unknown consciousness.

Sometimes one may sense a glisten of that consciousness, and with

such perspective, feel that man is not necessarily

the higher form of life.

Cedric Wright

Fourth Cup (No coffee, all chocolate milk)

בַּרוּדְ אַתַּה יי, אֱלֹהֶינוּ מֶלֶדְ הַעוֹלֶם, שהכל נהיה בדברו

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the sovereign of all worlds, whose word causes everything to come into existence

Fourth fruit

Stop using your eyes to see the world; close them. Look inside yourself and allow the light within to renew you – and the world.

Why is there no fourth fruit? Is it because we've run out of categories? Is it because the 16th century kabbalists who molded this seder wanted us to experience a Zen moment as we eat "No Fruit?" Perhaps it is because we must now take the seeds that we've gathered during this seder – of hope, of determination to live more fully and gratefully in the world, and plant them in our daily lives. Like the chocolate into which we've dipped our fruits and nuts, this moment is bittersweet. We have celebrated the New Year for Trees, yet the reality outside our windows reminds us that winter is still here. These seeds lie dormant, like new grass under a blanket of snow, or the sap beginning to rise in an old maple tree. It is up to us to nurture these seeds, in down-to earth action and in rivers of compassion, breathing life into our ideas, and kindling the flames of justice, so that these fruits may ripen – maybe not all this spring, but a little each year, as the cycle of the seasons flows onward.

"Once while Honi the Circlemaker was walking down the road, he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him, "How many years will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

The man answered that it would require seventy years.

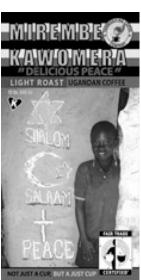
Honi said, "Are you so healthy that you expect to live that long and eat its fruit?"

The man answered, "I found a fruitful world because my forebears planted for me. So will I do for my children"

This seder edited and compiled by Isaac Saposnik, Eric Schulmiller and the RSNS Teens (Kesher Chadash), along with material from the RAC and NFTY Tu Bishvat Seder.



The fondue today was made with Sunspire Organic, Fair-Trade, Certified Kosher Chocolate Chips.



Mirembe Kawomera (mir'em bay cow o mare'a) means "delicious peace" in the Ugandan language Luganda. It is the name of a Ugandan cooperative of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian coffee farmers. Mirembe Kawomera Coffee is produced in small batches by the family farmers of the Mirembe Kawomera Cooperative. \$1 from the sale of every package donated to the Mirembe Kawomera Cooperative to support their community-based projects.



Café Javana is the new Fair-Trade certified coffee blend that is available at Stop and Shop, which comes in several varieties.