

Chapter 1 : BBC - Religion: Rastafari

Rastafari is an Abrahamic new religious movement that accepts Haile Selassie I, the Ethiopian emperor from to as God incarnate and the Messiah who will deliver believers to the Promised Land, identified by Rastas as Ethiopia. It has its roots in black-empowerment and back-to-Africa.

Very few people outside of Rastafarian communities know anything about this complex and inspirational faith. Where Did Rastafarianism Come From? Most Rastafaris trace the beginning of their religion back to a prophecy made by Jamaican Black nationalist Marcus Garvey. Garvey famously told his followers that a Black king would soon arise in Africa. However, the majority of Rastafaris have no problem with drinking organic herbal teas. The word Nyabingi is used to describe a musical celebration; so if Rastafaris only sing and dance at their Reasoning session, they sometimes call it a Nyabingi session. Oftentimes Rastafaris use marijuana aka ganja to aid them in meditative practices, heighten their sense of community, and calm the mind. According to Rastafarian beliefs, marijuana is a sacred herb that helps them transcend the corrupting influences of this physical world. They use various sections of the Bible to justify their consumption of marijuana such as Psalm The key verse quoted in defense of this practice is Leviticus Rastafarian Beliefs On Race A few traditional Rastafarian beliefs about race are that members of the Black race are the descendants of the Biblical Israelites and that they are the superior race on this planet. Many also believe that Jesus was actually a Black man and that the forces of Babylon have kept vital information out of the Bible to keep Blacks in a subordinate position. Rastafaris see the White race as the greatest example of the evils of worldly Babylon throughout history. Rastafaris believe that the Black race will take its rightful place as the supreme race on this planet after the Black diaspora repatriate to Africa. Symbolism of Rastafarian Flag The Rastafarian flag is composed of the following three colors in horizontal lines: On the top, the green line symbolizes the vegetation of both Jamaica and Ethiopia. The middle gold line symbolizes the future wealth of the African nation. Finally, the bottom red line represents the blood spilled by ancestors and martyrs for the Rastafari cause. Some Rastafari flags also have the Lion of Judah in the center. However, the Ethiopian flag also has a blue circle in the middle with a yellow pentagram. Amharic is classified as an Afro-Asiatic language and is primarily used by residents in central Ethiopia. Today, Amharic is the official language of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. According to Rastafarian beliefs, Amharic is a holy language uncorrupted by European colonialism. Learning Amharic is supposed to help members of the Black diaspora connect with their African roots and drive off the forces of Babylon. Many Rastafaris regard English a decadent and even demonic language inspired by Babylon. People practicing Lyaric change certain words and grammatical structures in English to better facilitate spiritual growth and understanding. Major Rastafarian Holidays Every major religion annual celebrations and Rastafarianism is no different. One unique holiday to Rastafarianism is Groundation Day on April 21st. Usually Rastafaris meet on this day and perform a Nyabingi session to recall this joyous occasion. Usually Rastafaris recite uplifting poetry, sing, and dance on this holiday. Hopefully this article has helped you understand some of the core Rastafarian beliefs and customs. As you can see, Rastafarianism is far more than just an excuse to smoke pot. People who are serious about their commitment to the Rastafarian path are just as dedicated to communion with the divine as other spiritual seekers around the world.

Chapter 2 : Rastafarian Religion Beliefs And Practices

Rastafarian Practices The two main Rastafari rituals are reasonings (an informal gathering involving cannabis and discussion) and nyabingi (a festive dance). Most Rastafarians are vegetarians or vegans, and the most observant Rastas follow a dietary law called *ital*, which is based on natural vegetarian food.

In proclaiming Selassie a messianic figure, they pinned on him their longing for liberation from the legacy of slavery and colonialism. From the activities of these founding personalities there emerged a set of religious, social, and political beliefs known as Rastafari or Rastafarianism, the adherents of which are termed Rastas or Rastafarians. From its beginning, Rastafari represented a fundamental critique of the values and institutions of Jamaican society. From the 1950s to the 1970s, conflict characterized the relationship between Rastafari and Jamaican civil authorities. The charismatic Rastafarian leader Leonard P. Howell exemplified this conflict in the early decades. For inveighing against the British colonial government, he was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned. Law enforcement also repeatedly raided Pinnacle—the commune he established—and eventually demolished it in 1978. The authorities concluded that Howell was demented and committed him to a mental institution. After his release, Howell lived in relative obscurity until his death in the mid-1980s. These young Rastas were even more radical than their elders. They elevated the smoking of ganja marijuana to a personal and communal ritual, which they believed aided them in the discovery of their spiritual and cultural identity by breaking through the mental confines imposed by Babylon. They adopted the dreadlocks hairstyle to accentuate their Africanness and to symbolize their rejection of European standards of beauty favoring fine, straight hair. They are also credited with the development of dreadtalk, an argot that made their speech often unintelligible to outsiders. For their marijuana use, dreadlocks hairstyle, and general insubordination, Rastas became subjected to the ire of the agents of social control and public opinion: They suffered frequent arrests on drug charges, scapegoating that saw them blamed for a range of criminal activities, and characterizations in the media as lazy, demented, and disposed to violence. When a few weapons were found in the compound of Claudius Henry, a Rastafarian elder, and when his son was implicated in an alleged plot against the Jamaican government, the repression escalated into indiscriminate harassment, arrests, and forced cutting of the locks of Rastas. Smith, Roy Augier, and Rex Nettleford effectively debunked myths about the mental deficiency, laziness, and criminality of Rastas, negative views of Rastafari persisted. These prejudices reached a boiling point in 1978, when an attempt to keep Rastas out of the area surrounding the Rose Hall Great House a tourist attraction escalated into a virtual riot in which several people were killed. In an attempt to deal with what it considered entrenched Rastafarian criminality, the government bulldozed the entire shantytown where Rastas and others had constructed shacks on an urban dump. The official report indicated that these countries were only willing to welcome educated and skilled workers. The Rastas of the delegation issued their own report, however, painting a picture of African countries waiting to receive their diasporic children with open arms. Jamaica gained its independence in 1962 under a new Jamaican Labor Party JLP government that was less disposed to pursue repatriation for Rastas. Though some Rastas formed their own delegation to make another trip to Africa in 1978, no official repatriation ever took place. Another measure growing out of the study was a concerted effort by the Jamaican government to establish cultural and political ties with African countries. This included an invitation to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to establish itself in Jamaica, and an exchange of visits by Jamaican and African dignitaries. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church eventually established a congregation in Kingston in 1978, and has established further congregations in several other towns since then. Many Rastas identify with or have become members of this church, but they have often come into conflict with its orthodox teachings. From his arrival until his departure, he was greeted at every public appearance by throngs of Jamaicans, including a multitude of Rastas decked out in their symbolic colors of red, green, and gold. Rastas were among the invited guests at the Vale Royal residence of the prime minister and at fancy hotels where events were held in honor of Selassie. According to reports, some members of the movement were even granted a private audience with the emperor. While Selassie publicly declared that he was not a divine personage, Rastas reported that he confirmed his divinity to them in private, and requested that they work for

the liberation of Jamaica before repatriating. Despite the new emphasis on the need for liberation, the visibility and civility of Rastas at public and private functions conferred a measure of legitimacy on the Rastafarian movement. By the late s, signs of the changing perception and fortunes of Rastafari were becoming evident. One sign was the diffusion of Rastafarian perspectives and symbolism throughout society and particularly among young people and radical intellectuals. Many black intellectuals, who had adopted the black nationalism of the Black Power movement in the United States , found a vernacular expression of such nationalism in Rastafari and established dialogue with the movement. Another sign was the growing influence of Rastafari on local popular music. In the s, Rastafari adopted an African drumming style that had been preserved in Jamaica by a cultural group called the Burru. Rastas made this style into their ritual music and regarded it as having mystical power for use in the fight against oppression. For the first time, Rastafarian rhythms were incorporated into popular music. These and other musicians began to incorporate Rastafarian rhythms into reggae music, and they eventually reproduced the whole range of Rastafarian rhythms on modern instruments. The incorporation of Rastafarian rhythms into Jamaican popular music was followed by the insertion of Rastafarian spirituality and social criticism into the lyrics of popular songs. Lyricists, whether they were Rastas or not, tended to aim their barbs at the establishment, employing the verbal tools and the critical perspective of Rastafari. No one did this with more clarity and consistency than Bob Marley. His growing social consciousness and his proximity to his Rastafarian neighbors eventually led him to embrace Rastafari. In a short time, Marley made himself the public persona and international ambassador of Rastafari and reggae. Despite their activism around issues relating to poverty, the importance of African heritage, repatriation of blacks to Africa, and the legalization of ganja, Rastas have traditionally despised politics, calling it politricks, to indicate their belief that it was marked by deception and trickery. In all instances, Rastafarian candidates received minimal support at the polls. Nevertheless, Rastafarian ideas, symbols, and lingo and Rastafari-inspired songs have been tools of political electioneering in Jamaica, as was particularly evident in the s. During the lead-up to the Jamaican general election, the PNP leader, Michael Manley, presented himself as the champion of the poor masses. A central symbol in this political drama was a walking stick continuously brandished by Michael Manley. Manley claimed to have received the stick from Haile Selassie during a visit to Addis Abba. Probably the most effective electioneering tool in Jamaica in the s was reggae music, with its Rastafari-inspired lyrics. While the PNP referenced elements of Rastafari more extensively and managed to win the and elections, the JLP was also quick to invoke the vernacular culture deeply influenced by Rastafari. Its campaigners made liberal use of reggae songs, and its leaders, such as Hugh Shearer and Edward Seaga, gave speeches that were laced with Rastafari-inspired street lingo. By the election, which was won by the JLP, the overt use of Rastafarian references and language was clearly on the wane in political campaigning. Seaga had been a promoter of Jamaican folk culture since the s, had done ethnographic research on Revivalism, and had been rumored to be a secret practitioner of its healing arts. Though politicians may have been self-serving when they co-opted Rastafarian lingo and symbolism as electioneering tools, they unwittingly bestowed legitimacy on both. Since then, reggae and Rastafari have become a source of inspiration for artistic and cultural production in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and beyond. From its inauspicious beginnings among the marginalized in Jamaica, Rastafari has blossomed into a global religious and cultural movement. The spread of Rastafari has been facilitated by international travel and migration and by the worldwide distribution of reggae via the global music industry and communication technology. Students from other Caribbean islands studying in Jamaica, and Jamaicans traveling to and studying in other parts of the Caribbean, were the main agents of the spread of Rastafarian ideas and practices throughout the Caribbean, especially to Barbados, Cuba, Dominica , and Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years, Rastas have traveled far and wide throughout the world, taking their message with them, and visitors to Jamaica from around the world have also contributed to the dispersal of the Rastafarian message. Probably even more important than travel and migration has been the spreading of the Rastafarian message through reggae music. Through the global marketing of reggae and the ubiquity of modern communication technology, even people who have never seen a Rasta in the flesh have come in contact with the message of Rastafari and have found resonances with their own experiences and aspirations in the music. Thus, we find reggae and Rastafari inspiring the struggles of people around the

world: The earliest studies on Rastafari tended to focus on its rejection of Jamaica, its call for repatriation, and its deification of Haile Selassie. Using a label commonly applied to new religious movements in colonial or former colonial societies, these studies identified Rastafari as an example of messianic millennialism Simpson ; Barrett ; Kitzinger The next wave of studies tended to highlight the political dimensions and revolutionary potential of Rastafari and hence saw Rastafari as a call for social change in Jamaica Nettleford ; Owens The third wave was more serious about taking an ethnographic approach and about exploring the character of the Rastafari movement. These scholars described the contours of the movement, highlighting its cultural, social, and spiritual beliefs and practices Chevannes ; Yawney Into the twenty-first century, the output is almost too varied for categorization. The spread of Rastafari and its growing globalization have led to mutations and transformations. Most academic studies have built upon the second and third waves mentioned above. In addition, many Rastas have written accounts and interpretations of their experiences; numerous studies of reggae and its relationship to Rastafari have been published; biographies of Rastafarian reggae artists, chiefly Marley, abound; and various studies of Rastafari in a range of locations Britain , West Africa, South Africa , Brazil, Trinidad, Dominica, Cuba are now available. This Is Reggae Music: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney. From Outcasts to Culture Bearers. For the Healing of the Nation. The Ras Tafari Cult in Jamaica. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 8: From Babylon to Rastafari: Origin and History of the Rastafarian Movement. Research Associates School Times Publications. Identity, Race, and Protest in Jamaica. The Rastafarians of Jamaica. Political Cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica. Social and Economic Studies 4 2: The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica. Rastafarian Ritual in West Kingston, Jamaica. In Ritual Symbolism and Ceremonialism in the Americas: Studies in Symbolic Anthropology, ed. Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado. Edmonds Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Rastafarian Religion: Beliefs And Practices Rastafarianism is an Abrahamic religion that developed in Jamaica during the s. The Lion of Judah, representing Emperor Haile Selassie, is a prominent Rastafarian symbol.

Index of the Hymns and Carols of Christmas. All links open in a The Rastafarian. There is no hair policy for federal prisoners. Among other things, it is open to people from all races in the belief that both whites and. The Associated Press reported in May that 10 Rastafarian. Supreme Court has said rights, such as that to practice. The scholar of religion Ennis B. Edmonds described Rastafari as having "a fairly cohesive worldview"; however, Cashmore thought that its beliefs were "fluid and open to. Indigenous Afro-Caribbean Religions are those traditions that have combined beliefs and practices initially brought to the. Another prominent indigenous Afro-Caribbean religion is Rastafarianism, which is most popular on the island of. Amish religious beliefs are virtually the same as that of the Mennonites and other Protestant Christians. They believe in the importance of individual Bible study and the necessity of living a life free of sin after adult baptism. Religion is very broadly defined under Title VII. For some the use of marijuana is not for medicinal or recreational reasons. For some it is inclusion within their religious practices. Most known is perhaps the Rastafari movement. It is, however, not alone. In India and Nepal, cannabis has. West and Central Africa. The West African area is important because this is where the majority of slaves departed for the New World. Chambers argued that cutting his dreadlocks would violate his religious beliefs as a Rastafarian, who grow their hair long. A religion with deep political convictions, Rastafarianism began in the slums of Jamaica in the s and 30s. International World History Project. Academics believe at least 1 million people practice it worldwide. I am covering the conference for the church press. And yet, the politics of consumer capitalism and muckraking media have tainted the remembrance of a potent religious and social activist. Howell provided Rastas with an early statement of beliefs and practices in *The Promised Key*, An overview of the Rastafari religion. Rasta teachings, culture and spiritual practices. Rastafarianism history and doctrines. Download Bon Jovi Livin On A Prayer Mp3 Automobile offers a rich and varied examination of the automotive universe in all its forms delivered by our stable of first-class editors and freelance contributors and illustrated with vibrant photography. Original and cover music for drums: Rastafarianism is now one of 18 religions recognised in prison The new rules were put in place in November last year. An overview of the Rastafari religion. Religious discrimination involves treating a person an applicant or employee unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. They draw on the theology of Rastafarianism to demonstrate that they too are human. They draw on the morals and virtues taught in the Rastafarian Bible, called the Holy Piby, that is transmitted through oral literacy, as well as draw. Are Rastafarians misunderstood where you are?. Now, a scientific study suggests there may be earthly benefits to that belief. Hindus and Buddhists in the United States. Religion and obesity Researcher Ken Ferraro compared the religious practice and.

Chapter 4 : Rastafarianism - ReligionFacts

The Rastafari religion is an Ethiopian-Hebrew spirituality that developed in the s, in Jamaica, a Caribbean island located in the Greater Antilles, south of Cuba. The members of the religion are called Rastafaris or Rastas, and make four percent of the total Jamaican population.

When one does this they run into many problems. This is because Rastafari is much more than a religion. It is a way of life, a social movement, as well as a mind set. Another reason why western people have a hard time understanding Rastafari is because the movement lacks the structure that the western world is use to. These people do not begin to think what is behind the movement. The idea that Rastafari is strictly Jamaican is also very wrong. Since the origination of Rastafari, the Rasta movement has expanded far beyond the island of Jamaica. The Development of Rastafari The Rastafari movement stems from the teachings of the great Jamaican leader and motivator of masses, Maces Garvey. Garvey told the African people of the world to unite and to return to African, the homeland. Garvey created the U. These people tuned to the Bible and through literal translation of the documents found much correlation into what had taken place. An important correlation to the Bible is the fact that Selassie claimed to be a direct descendent of King David. By Selassie claming his relation to David, he had made a coalition to Revelation 5: To some Jamaicans this meant their Messiah had arrived. In Jamaica some people such as Leonard P. Hibert, and Archibald Dunkle, began to spread the word of the Messiah coming to save the African people. The people who listened to this soon began to call themselves Rastafarians. The Rastafari religion would continue to follow this trend of interpreting the Bible literally which lead to practices that make the Rastafari religion unique from any other. To many, any one who has dreads, smokes ganja, and plays Reggae music is a Rasta. There is much more than those three elements to being a Rasta. Rastafari is more than just a religion. It is a movement and a way of life. The Rasta life style is one of peace, or at least it seeks to be one of peace. It is important when reading this section of the paper that one understands that the Rastafari has no set book of rules. Ganja Smoking One of the first aspects of Rastafari that come to mind when people hear of Rastafari is their use of marijuana. The smoking Ganja for a Rasta is a special experience. They use the Ganja to help enlighten their mind so they can correctly reason the ways of the world. The Ganja is always smoked in a ritual way. The Rasta call them reasoning sessions when they use Ganja for Nyabinghi. A Nyabinghi session is much different from a casual marijuana smoking session that western people take part in. People in the west smoke marijuana for social and entertainment reasons. In the west smoking the weed may lead to a silly time of laughing and horse play. This differs greatly from what takes place during a Nyabinghi. A Nyabinghi is a taken very seriously. Acting silly would be considered disrespectful to a Rasta. Before Rasta smoke the ritual plant, they say a prayer to their god Haile Selassie. Unfortunately for the Rasta, the smoking of Ganja has become one of the Rasta biggest struggles. This is due to the fact that Ganja smoking is illegal in almost every country in the world with the exception of two. Throughout the world, from South Africa to Jamaica the Rasta are constantly at court with the government trying to fight for the legalization of Ganja for religious purposes. The countries that they have tried to fight for the right to smoke Ganja in include: In one of the early teachers of Rastafari, Leonard P. This community was named Pinnacle. At Pinnacle, Howell grew Ganja as a cash crop. It was during this time that Rasta discovered the properties of Ganja that helped their reasoning process. The Rasta soon turned to the Bible and found reverence to the use of this holy plant. From this Ganja was born into the Rastafari culture. Dreadlocks are another well-known part of Rastafari. The name dreadlock comes from the locks of hair deemed dreadful as Dubb explained. This comes again from interpreting the Bible literally. Due to this belief they do not believe it is right to shave or comb their hair. The lion is significant because the lion is the respected king of the animal kingdom, as well as humble animal. The dreadlock is also a natural state of the African person hair, and by being natural the Rasta feels they are more connected to Jah. The wearing of the dread first appeared in the Rasta Community at the original Rasta community of Pinnacle. At Pinnacle Howell was growing Ganja as a cash crop and the police where constantly raiding the farms. Because of this and other border problems at the Rasta community, Howell was forced to create a group of guards to protect the area.

With this and the reasons given in the previous paragraph, the Dreadlock became the hairstyle of the Rasta. Just like the smoking of Ganja, the dreadlock hairstyle has lead many problems for the Rasta. In the early days of Rastafari, Rasta who wore their hair in dread form where brutalized by the police for no reason. This pushed many Rasta into the bush of Jamaica so that they could live in peace. Things have not gotten a whole lot better for dreadlocked people. In Jamaica and other parts of the world children who have dreads are not allowed to attend some schools. Just like the Ganja issue the, the dreadlock school issue is constantly being fought in courts throughout the Rasta world. It came up lately in a South African school where a young child was not given the right to go to school because of her dreads and the issue had to be fought in court. The Rastafari diet is something that is often overlooked by many people who do not know a great deal about Rastafari. The Rasta has a very interesting belief in their thoughts about dead beings. This idea stems into their diet. The Rasta believes that it is wrong to eat animals that have died because then you are turning your body into a cemetery. This does not mean that a Rasta will not eat dairy products. However the Rasta will not eat shellfish. This stems from more readings in the Bible. Some but not all Rasta will go as far as to not t eat fruit that has been altered from its original form. This means they would not eat fruit that has been peeled, cut, or smashed. There is also a large number of Rasta that will not eat any processed food. Rasta Dialect The dialect of the Rasta reflects their beliefs in many ways. Their speech uses a literal translation of words, just like their beliefs use a literal translation of biblical readings. Their speech reflects their protest against oppression, as well as their protest against authority. The Rastafarian rhetoric changes the English language in a way that helps them make more sense of the world, as well as to protest against what the Rasta believe to be unjust. Rasta will often change word from a negative meaning to a positive meaning. A Rasta will almost never use a negative term. They will always replace it with something positive. This is a great reflection on how the Rasta always sees things positively. The Rasta use the word to connect themselves to god, to show that that god is always part of them. The Rasta does this to show that god is part of him, and that he is not separate from any other person. The Rasta believes in peace and they are constantly trying to preach down violence. The Rasta fear world wars, and especially Nuclear war. One of the most important parts of Rasta thought is the protest against authority and structure. This rejection of authority can be seen in how Rastafari has no rules like many other religions do. There is not one thing that Rasta has to do to be a Rasta because that would defeat the whole purpose of being a Rasta. Burn the Pope manâ€¦. The Pope is a vampire, wants our blood. Selassie I is the head. To a Rasta Communism would be too structured. They would also reject the idea of a leader telling them what to do. Instead they either live in a place where they can survive on what they can grow or they take part in the informal economy and survive through street vending. One unfortunate part of Rastafari is their negative attitude toward females. They believe that a good woman must always respect men and do what they ask. This is very contrary to much of their other beliefs about people being equal. Rasta men often beat their wives for being lazy. Rasta men believe that being naked is good because you are closer to god in your natural state.

Chapter 5 : A Summary of Rastafarian Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Culture

Rastafari often rely heavily on the Bible when it comes to their religious beliefs and yet have their own idea of a paradise. Members of the Rastafari movement feel that they are in a sort of hell or purgatory as their ancestors were removed from their homeland against their will.

Modern Rastafarian beliefs From the s until the mid s most Rastafarians accepted the traditional Rastafari beliefs. But in Joseph Owens published a more modern approach to Rastafari beliefs. In Michael N. The key ideas in contemporary Rastafari are: The humanity of God and the divinity of man This refers to the importance of Haile Selassie who is perceived by Rastafarians as a living God. Likewise it emphasises the concept of God revealing himself to his followers through his humanity. God is found within every man Rastafarians believe that God makes himself known through humanity. According to Jagessar "there must be one man in whom he exists most eminently and completely, and that is the supreme man, Rastafari, Selassie I. Salvation on earth Salvation for Rastafarians is an earthly idea, rather than heavenly. The supremacy of life Human nature is very important to Rastafarians and they should preserve and protect it. Respect for nature This idea refers to the importance and respect Rastafarians have for animals and the environment, as mirrored in their food laws. The power of speech Speech is very important to Rastafarians, as it enables the presence and power of God to be felt. Evil is corporate Sin is both personal and corporate. Judgement is near This corresponds to the nearness of judgement for Rastafarians when they will be given greater recognition. The priesthood of Rastafarians Rastafarians are the chosen people of God and are on earth to promote his power and peacefulness. Joseph Owens The Rastafarians of Jamaica, pp. To modern Rastafari the most important doctrine is belief in the divinity of Haile Selassie I. Although some Rastafarians still regard Haile Selassie as the black messiah, many modern adherents do not see this as central to their faith. Following his death and the increased acceptance of Jamaican culture in society many Rastafarian beliefs have been modified. According to Nathaniel Samuel Murrell: The previous belief that white people are evil has diminished and is no longer central to Rastafarian belief systems. The idea of Babylon has also developed to represent all oppressive organisations and countries in the world.

Chapter 6 : BBC - Religions - Rastafari: Original and modern beliefs

Rastafarians acknowledge that their religion is the blending of the purest forms of both Judaism and Christianity; they also accept the Egyptian origins of both these religions.

Basically, they think of Bob Marley. In fact, Rastafari is a very serious philosophy that takes much direction from the Bible. While there are some people who claim to be Rastafari just as an excuse to do drugs, there are many true believers, and the public idea of them is often quite inaccurate. Some Rastafari simply choose not to smoke weed at all. Rastafari already have trouble getting people to take them seriously due to the stereotypes, they likely fear a well-known stoner like Snoop Dog representing them will only spread that misperception more widely. Learn more about Rastafarian beliefs with Rastafari: Roots and Ideology at Amazon. In the early s, Marcus Garvey prophesied that a new black king would soon come to Africa and that man would be the messiah. Not too long after this, in Ethiopia, a new king was crowned and his name was Haile Selassie I. Seeing this as a sign of what was prophesied, the burgeoning Rastafari movement took this man as the second coming of Jesus. They point to other evidence as well, particularly the claim that Haile Selassie is related to King Solomon, giving him a connection to Jesus. If Haile Selassie I was the messiah. He himself always denied being a reincarnation of Jesus. Christina Xu Rastafari have a specific diet called Ital, a word that stems from vital. Many people confuse Ital with vegetarianism or veganism. For this reason they refuse any processed foods. Many will still eat fish because they believe that it is supported as being all right by the Bible. However, some refuse to eat fish, and others will remove dairy from their diet and go closer to full-vegan. The main idea of course is simply to eat natural foods that are good for you. Part of this can be seen in the philosophy of the Ital diet. However, it goes much further than just eating good food to take care of your health. Rastafari believe that they should let their hair grow long and not taint it with anything unnatural. This all comes down to respecting your body and what it is. The reason for this stems from their philosophy. Considering themselves a religion or an ism of any sort is seen as accepting a system that is anathema to what they believe. This means that some Rastafari will actually be quite unhappy with you if you call them a Rastafarian or say that they practice Rastafarianism. The movement was started as a means of empowerment. As such, it may not be too surprising that Rastafari as a belief system completely rejects the standards and structure of western society. For a people who had been oppressed by Western society and colonialism, the Rastafari movement was a way to claim back their own way of life. You see, the movement was shaped very much in the beginning by the words of Marcus Garvey who would later on be considered a prophet in Rastafari beliefs. Garvey may never have identified as a Rastafari but he was very vocal when it came to black empowerment and inspired a great many people. Members of the Rastafari movement feel that they are in a sort of hell or purgatory as their ancestors were removed from their homeland against their will. Africa is their version of Zion. It is a paradise on Earth , and the goal of many Rastafari is to move back to Africa. This is more of a cultural yearning than it is a solely religious belief and makes perfect sense after the colonialist oppression that so many black people faced. For this reason, it is about more than just returning to Africa for most Rasta. It is actually very much about building Africa into something even better, preserving African culture, and celebrating a way of life that many feel the Babylonian society tried to take away from them. Jamaican Creole was originally derived from English by African slaves who had been brought to the island of Jamaica. The Rastafari as an empowerment movement took the language and modified it both in dialect and philosophy to meet their needs, forming a new dialect known as Lyaric. One of the most important concepts is the use of pronouns. Rastafari also prefer positive expressions whenever possible. As we mentioned earlier, Rastafari believe that Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia was the second coming of Jesus Christ, and thus they are pretty big fans of the guy. During his life back in the s, he decided to visit Jamaica. The official line was that it was a diplomatic visit, but some people believed he wanted to meet the Rastafari and learn about the people who worshiped him as another coming of the messiah. The crowds were enormous and made an incredible amount of noise, and this delayed him coming off his plane for quite a while, likely due to safety concerns. During his time there, he did meet with some of the leading members of the Rastafari movement.

Since his visit, April 21 has been known to Rastafari as Grounation Day and is observed as one of the most important holy days. The movement took much influence from Marcus Garvey, and the colors of his own movement were red, green, and black. The Rastafari later saw Haile Selassie I as Jesus, and the colors of the Ethiopian flag were red, green, and yellow, so another addition was made, with four colors in total. These colors all have symbolic significance in Rastafari beliefs. The yellow color is said by some to refer to the wealth of their homeland in Africa. The red is perhaps unsurprisingly symbolic of blood and the martyrdom of past Rastafari. The color black is an obvious reference to the black people who originally started the Rastafari movement in order to return to their roots, and the green is related to the abundant plant life of their native homeland. You can follow Gregory Myers on Twitter.

Chapter 7 : 8 Rastafarian Beliefs and Practices Still Alive Today

These religious beliefs and practices clearly have implications for mental health practice. The general believe in the Rastafarian religion is peace and their denouncement of violence. Sometimes this non-violent way of life is highly unachievable due to their socioeconomic strata and the militant affiliation of one section of the religion, the.

Check new design of our homepage! SpiritualRay tells you all you need to know about the "Ganja" people, and their way of life - the history, the customs, the beliefs, the language, the diet, and much more. SpiritualRay Staff Last Updated: Mar 26, Did You Know? The Rastafari vocabulary substitutes most negative words in the English language with positive ones. For example, "dedicated", "oppressed", and "understand" are substituted with "lavecated", "downpressed", and "overstand" respectively, in the Rastafari dialect. The Rastafari religion is an Ethiopian-Hebrew spirituality that developed in the s, in Jamaica, a Caribbean island located in the Greater Antilles, south of Cuba. The members of the religion are called Rastafaris or Rastas, and make four percent of the total Jamaican population. Although the religion might sometimes be referred to as "Rastafarianism", the term is frowned upon by the Rastas, who consider "ism" as a part of the Babylon culture, which is rejected by the Rastafari way of living. History The religion was inspired by the Africa Movement of Marcus Garvey, an intellectual leader who promoted self-awareness among the Africans in the Americas, in the early 19th century. The religion is based on Christianity but followers worship the former Ethiopian ruler Haile Selassie. They believe that he was the Christian messiah who was sent back to earth, thus giving rise to the belief that both Jesus and God, are in fact, black. They believe they should return to Africa, their ancestral home, and that the African descendants live in an exile, so as to achieve redemption from white oppression, which they call "Babylon". The Lion of Judah, which is a part of the Imperial Ethiopian flag, is the most important symbol for the Rastafaris. The vocabulary has been developed by the Rastas themselves, and strongly rejects the Babylonian language conventions. The language developed around the s to describe the Rastafarian way of living in a better way. It is more of a different set of vocabulary than a dialect. The dialect strongly reflects the Rastafarian beliefs, and replaces most of the negative words with the positive ones. The Rastas believe that most African languages were lost when the Africans were enslaved, and are of the belief that English is an imposed colonial language. They, therefore developed their own dialect and modified their vocabulary, as a way to fight the corrupted society of Babylon. Diet The Rastafarian diet is called I-tal, believed to have stemmed from vital. Rastas follow the dietary laws of the old testament and avoid all kinds of meat and fish. This is due to the belief that touching meat is very much like touching death, and that the meat rots inside your body, which is considered as a temple in the Rastafari culture. This is, however, limited to those who have taken the Nazirite vow. Many Rastas may adopt a complete vegan or vegetarian diet though. Rastas believe that the abstinence cleanses their body to serve in the presence of the Ark of Convent. Alcohol, too, is prohibited while following the I-tal diet. All kinds of processed foods are prohibited, allowing Rastas to eat only what is natural, considered "pure" food. Alcohol, coffee, and drugs except for ganja are looked down upon as the Babylonian way of polluting and confusing people. Marijuana Rastas give religious significance to Marijuana, and consider its use to be sacred, believing that the following biblical text justifies it. He causeth the grass of the cattle, and herb for the services of man. Rastas commonly refer to the marijuana as "wisdom weed" or "holy herb", and pray before using it. They consider it as a meditative tool which opens up the mind, and lets one feel connected to Jah. However, other drugs like cocaine, heroin, alcohol, tobacco, and even caffeine are against the religion, and are believed to be poisons that destroy the body. Clothing and Colors The Rastafarian clothing is made out of natural fabric, and is required to be simple. Clothing made out of any kind of animal skin is strictly prohibited in the religion. Some Rastafarians will wear long African-style outfits to represent their African roots, as well as use medallions of Ras Tafari, the lion which is the symbol of the Ethiopian throne. Some branches of the religion may have more restrictive dress codes which may prohibit tattoos, and wearing bare backs or even shorts. Rastas usually wear the traditional colors of the Ethiopian flag - red, gold, green, and black; or gold, green, and black, which are the national colors of Jamaica. Each of the colors has a symbolic meaning attached to it. Gold symbolizes faith and prosperity, green symbolizes the land

and all that it produces, and black represents the color of African-descended people. Although their everyday dress code is quite colorful, the Rastas wear white for ceremonies. Dreadlocks Rastas can often be recognized by their particular way of styling the hair. They usually grow their hair long, and knot them into dreadlocks. They can either be allowed to become that way naturally, by not combing the hair for several days, or be accomplished by backcombing and with the help of commercial products. The Rastas see it as a way of getting the hair to its more natural and purer state by rejecting the artificial way of grooming oneself. The belief comes from the Biblical text "During the entire time of his dedication, he is not to allow a razor to pass over his head until the days of his holy consecration to the LORD have been fulfilled. He is to let the locks on his head grow long. The hair is sometimes worn in knitted caps called "Rastacaps" or "tams". These are brightly colored, rounded, crocheted caps, and are used simply to tuck the locks, or during religious ceremonies, to cover the head. The women are supposed to cover their heads for all Rastafarian celebrations, and those from the Nyabinghi and Bobo shanti are required to do so, anytime they are in public. The Reasoning sessions, as they are called, include discussions, chanting, praying, and singing. To go into a deeper spiritual state, marijuana may also be smoked. The music is known as Nyabinghi, the reason why the meetings may also be called Nyabinghi meetings. More and more people are adapting to the Rastafari way of living, and it is more than a religion today. It is more like a worldwide movement whose tenets advocate the importance of love and peace.

Chapter 8 : Beliefs, Practices, and Sacraments of Rastafari

The religion was largely practiced in south-east Jamaica's Saint Thomas Parish, where a prominent early Rasta, Leonard Howell, lived during the period he was developing many of Rastafari's beliefs and practices.

Jamaican preachers began promoting the ruling authority of Selassie over King George V Jamaica was then a colony of England and by the mids the Ethiopian emperor was regarded by followers as the living embodiment of God. Their movement reflected a range of influences, including Old Testament instructions on avoiding certain foods and a local belief in the spiritual powers of marijuana. Preachers such as Robert Hinds, Joseph Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley achieved prominence in the decade, but to many scholars the most important figure in early Rastafarianism was Leonard Howell. Considered a dangerous, subversive figure by the Jamaican government, Howell was arrested several times and his followers subjected to persecution. Set in the mountains of Saint Catherine, Pinnacle became an autonomous community for thousands that cultivated marijuana for its spiritual sessions and economic sustainment. In May , police arrested more than residents and destroyed some 3 tons of marijuana, effectively wiping out the commune. New Developments In the late s, a radical version of Rastafarianism, known as the Youth Black Faith, emerged from the slums of the Jamaican capital of Kingston. A precursor to the existing Nyahbinghi Mansion, or branch, the Youth Black Faith became known for an aggressive stance against authorities. Although he reportedly rejected the Rastafarian depiction of him as a deity, Emperor Selassie in seemingly embraced their cause by donating acres to the development of an Ethiopian community named Shashamane. The land grant confirmed in , Shashamane offered the opportunity for Jamaicans and other blacks to fulfill their long desired hope of returning to the homeland. Over the next two decades, additional branches of Rastafarianism gained devoted followers. In , Prince Emanuel Charles Edwards created the Ethiopian International Congress, or Bobo Ashanti, which ascribes a separation from society and strict gender and dietary laws. Acceptance in Jamaica Although a new chapter of Jamaican history commenced with its formal independence from England in , lingering negative attitudes and governmental oppression of Rastafari remained. A visit by Emperor Selassie in April seemed to foster an improved perception among non-believers, though there were still ugly moments, such as the Rastafarian involvement in the riots over a ban of professor and activist Walter Rodney. By the early s, it was clear the movement had become entrenched among the youth of Jamaica. Music, Bob Marley and Globalization While Rastafarian practices spread with the migration of Jamaicans to England, Canada and the United States from the s into the s, its worldwide growth was aided by the influence of adherents on popular music. An early contributor in this field was Count Ossie, who began drumming at Nyahbinghi spiritual sessions and helped develop the style that became known as ska. Later, the movement found its most important ambassador in Bob Marley. A convert to Rastafari and founder of reggae music, the charismatic Marley unabashedly referenced his beliefs in his songs, achieving widespread acclaim in the s through universally appealing themes of brotherhood, oppression and redemption. Marley toured widely, bringing his sound to Europe, Africa and the U. Meanwhile, the growing popularity of Rastafarianism among people of differing races and cultures led to changes in some of its stricter codes. Modern Rastafarianism A turning point for Rastafarianism came in , when Emperor Selassie died and forced his followers to confront the contradiction of a living deity passing away. In , the movement lost its second major figure with the death of Marley from cancer. Smaller divisions, such as African Unity, Covenant Rastafari and the Selassian Church, emerged around the turn of the millennium, the same period which brought the passing of longtime leaders Prince Emanuel Charles Edwards and the Prophet Gad As of , it was estimated that there were approximately 1 million Rastafarians throughout the world. Its traditions continue in communities in the U. Attempting to make amends for past transgressions, the Jamaican government decriminalized marijuana in , and in Prime Minister Andrew Holness formally apologized to Rastafarians for the Coral Gardens debacle.

Chapter 9 : Rastafari - Wikipedia

A religion with deep political convictions, Rastafarianism began in the slums of Jamaica in the s and 30s. African religious tradition has heavily influenced the culture of Rastafarianism and biblical themes have heavily influenced the religion's belief system.

Beliefs And Practices Rastafarianism is an Abrahamic religion that developed in Jamaica during the s. Rastafarianism is one of the Abrahamic religions practiced around the world. Members of the Rastafarian religion are known as Rastas while the beliefs that they prescribe to is called Rastalogy. The Reggae genre of music is inspired by Rastafarianism and was instrumental in the global popularity of the religion. There are an estimated 1 million followers of the religion around the world, and majority resides in the western hemisphere.

History of Rastafarianism The origin of the Rastafarian religion can be traced back to the early 20th century in Jamaica, which was then a British colony. The religion grew from the impoverished black community in Jamaica who were inspired by earlier ideologies and movements such as Ethiopianism. However, the popularity and following of Rastafarianism tumbled in the s after the deaths of Emperor Haile Selassie and Bob Marley. The media attention the religion received through music was also suppressed by the emergence of new genres such as dancehall.

Denominations In the Rastafarian religion, the different denominations in which the religion exists are known as mansions. House of Nyabinghi The House of Nyabinghi is the oldest of the three mansions and represents the earliest form of Rastafarian religion. The House of Nyabinghi is also the largest of the three mansions based on number of followers. Followers of the House of Nyabinghi follow strict rules and are extremely anti-white, with some critics even viewing the mansion as racist. It is one of the strictest mansions, with adherents following a strictly vegan diet, as well as following other dietary restrictions and with regular fast days, wearing long robes and turbans over their dreadlocks, and separating women from men. The Twelve Tribes of Israel is considered as the most progressive and liberal of the three mansions and its beliefs and customs closely resemble those practiced in Christianity. The mansion was founded in by Vernon Carrington who proclaimed himself as the reincarnation of Gad, a son of Israel. Haile Selassie was a 20th Century Emperor of Ethiopia and was the last monarch in a dynasty that ruled the country for hundreds of years. The dynasty is believed as the descendants of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, two royal figures from the Bible. The Rastafarian religion is founded on Haile Selassie who is believed by Rastafarians as the divine manifestation of God Jah. Haile Selassie had knowledge of the Rastafarian religion and the divinity the religion believed he possessed. However, in one interview Haile Selassie discouraged Rastafarian members from worshipping him as a deity as he was a staunch Christian and a mortal human being. Haile Selassie once visited Jamaica and was received at the airport by huge crowds of Rastafarians that were so large that the Emperor was not able to disembark from his official plane. This day is marked by Rastafarians as a religious holiday and is observed annually on April 21st. Haile Selassie was overthrown by a military coup in and was later executed in , an event that caused great panic among Rastafarians.

Jesus of Nazareth Jesus of Nazareth is a key figure in the Rastafarian faith. Jesus of Nazareth was a 1st century Jewish preacher and teacher from Judea who became the fundamental pillar of the Christian religion which is founded on his teachings. Jesus is held in great esteem among the Twelve Tribes of Israel, a major denomination of the Rastafarian religion. Followers of this denomination share the Christian belief of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Other denominations see Jesus of Nazareth as an important religious figure, but disagree in his modern depiction of being white, but rather believe that Jesus Christ was himself a Rastafarian and a black African.

Marcus Garvey was a 20th Century leader who believed in racial separatism whereby he called for the repatriation of black people from the Americas and Europe back to Africa. According to Garvey, racial integration was a futile endeavor as black people were destined to live in Africa. Marcus Garvey organized for the repatriation of thousands of black people from the Caribbean as well as North America back to Africa in the early 20th Century.

Organization The Rastafarian religion does not have any administrative structure as such. Rastafarians believe that God lives within every individual, therefore negating the need to have any bureaucratic hierarchy. One of the denominations or mansions of the religion, The Twelve Tribes of Israel,

does have an executive council which leads its proceedings. Before the executive council was established, the Twelve Tribes of Israel was led by its founder, Vernon Carrington. This page was last updated on October 31, By Benjamin Elisha Sawe.