

RASTAFARIANISM

In the **Collins English Dictionary** (21st Century Edition) the word **'Rastafarian'** is defined as follows –

'(Noun) A member of an originally Jamaican religion that regards RAS TAFARI, the former emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, as God. (Adjective) Of, characteristics of, or relating to the Rastafarians: Often shortened to RASTA.'

In **'A Book of Beliefs'** published by Lion Publishing plc (1983 paperback edition) their introduction to the section on **'The Rastafarians'** reads as follows –

'They are "the cult of outcasts", the modern-day Israelites in captivity in "Babylon" – the Jamaican state, the West and all organized institutions. "Love JAH and live. Hate him and die" says the graffiti. It is written by the Rastamen who believe that RAS TAFARI, later crowned Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, is the new Messiah for the black people of the world. "JAH" is their word for God.

There are more than 7,000 Rastafarians in Jamaica, the home of the movement, and many more are in the big cities of England and America where the "cult of the outcasts" is growing rapidly, Rastafarians are unmistakable with their hair in long braids, called "dreadlocks", worn with a woollen hat in the Ethiopian colours or red, black, green and gold.

As they refuse to give up smoking marijuana or to cut their hair (they quote verses from the Bible to back up their arguments), Rastamen have great difficulty in getting jobs and many remain unemployed. Rastamen say they are peaceful, but fringe followers of the cult have sometimes given the faith a violent image.

Followers of Rastafarianism or Ethiopianism deliberately speak a patois (English Collins Dictionary - a regional dialect of a language, usually considered substandard; the jargon of a particular group) to confuse outsiders. They have no organized church and no place of worship. But many followers will carry a picture of Haile Selassie wherever they go. Some too have a red, black, green and gold shed in their garden as a sort of shrine'.

Some years ago I recorded a TV programme in which a member of the Rastafarians was interviewed about his beliefs. Quite frankly it is not easy viewing or listening as he is a master of not answering any question directly. It might also be helpful to know that when he speaks of **'I and I'** he is speaking of **'me, myself, I, in union with JAH (God)'**. Not an easy concept to grasp and on this web site <http://www.zaiusnation.com/stuff/zaius/moosic1/rastalingo.html> they give this definition of the phrase –

"I and I": is a complex term, referring to the oneness of JAH (God) and every human. Rastafarian scholar, E. E. Cashmore - "I and I" is an expression to totalize the concept of oneness, the oneness of two persons. So God is within all of us and we're one people in fact. "I and I" means that God is in all men. The bond of Ras Tafari is the bond of God, of man. But man itself needs a head and the head of man is His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie "I" (always pronounced as the letter "I" never as the number one or "the first") of Ethiopia." The term is often used in place of "you and I" or "we" among Rastafarians, implying that both persons are united under the love of JAH'.

You can now view this by going to this link –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcENlrncd7A>

In addition the information on the following 3 links will also give helpful information

<http://www.letusreason.org/cults15.htm>

<http://www.letusreason.org/Cults16.htm>

<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/r19.html>

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 1 August 2014