



Rastafari is a young, Africa-centred religion which developed in Jamaica in the 1930s, following the coronation of **Haile Selassie I** as King of Ethiopia in 1930.

Rastafarians believe **Haile Selassie is God** and that he will return to Africa members of the black community who are living in exile as the result of colonisation and the slave trade.

Rastafari theology developed from the ideas of **Marcus Garvey**, a political activist who wanted to improve the status of fellow blacks.

There are approximately one million world wide adherents of Rastafari as a faith. The 2001 census found 5,000 Rastafarians living in England and Wales.

Followers of Rastafari are known by a variety of names: Rastafarians, Rastas, Sufferers, Locksmen, Dreads or Dreadlocks.

- It spread globally following the success of **Bob Marley** and his music in the 1970s
- Rastafarians believe that **blacks are the chosen people of God**, but that through colonisation and the slave trade their role has been suppressed
- The movement's greatest concerns are the **repatriation** of blacks to their homeland, Africa, and the reinstatement of blacks' position in society
- It is an exocentric religion - as Haile Selassie, whom adherents consider as God, is outside the religion
- Rastafari religious ceremonies consist of chanting, **drumming** and meditating in order to reach a state of heightened spirituality
- Rastafarian religious practice includes the ritual inhalation of **marijuana**, to increase their spiritual awareness
- Rastafarians follow strict dietary laws and abstain from alcohol.
- Rastafarians follow a number of Old Testament Laws

- There is a separate code of religious practice for **women** in Rastafari
- Rastafarians believe reincarnation follows death and that life is eternal
- Rastafarians are forbidden to cut their hair; instead, they grow it and twist it into **dreadlocks**
- Rastafarians eat clean and natural produce, such as **fruit and vegetables**
- Rastafarians try to refrain from the consumption of meat, especially pork
- Rastafarians are opposed to abortion and contraception

### **Rastafarian colours**

The Rastafarian colours are red, green and gold. Sometimes black is added. These colours are chosen because:

- **Red** signifies the blood of those killed for the cause of the black community, throughout Jamaican history
- **Green** represents Jamaica's vegetation and hope for the eradication of suppression
- **Gold** symbolises the wealth of Ethiopia
- **Black** signifies the colour of the Africans who initiated Rastafari

### **The Rastafarian symbol**

The lion is the symbol of Rastafari.

This lion represents Haile Selassie I, who is referred to as the 'Conquering Lion of Judah'. Rastafarians' dreadlocks represent the lion's mane.