#### **MINORITY COMMUNITIES: RASTAFARIANS**

#### AT1:

Pupils will:

- Identify how religion is expressed in different ways.
- Begin to identify the impact religion has on believers lifestyles.
- Describe some forms of religious expression and suggest meanings for them.
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influences of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions upon individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

## AT2:

Pupils will:

- Make links between values and commitments and their own attitudes and behaviour
- *Reflect on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.*
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.
- *Reflect on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.*

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Learn about a minority religion / belief.
- Confront stereotypes associated with the way people dress, the way they look or the music they listen to and reflect on whether these stereotypes are correct.

#### **SESSION 1: Introduction**

## 1. Discuss how Rastafarianism began.

 Rastafarianism is a very new religion. It began in 1930 in Jamaica. Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, predicted there would be a black messiah in Africa. As it turned out Ras Tafari, a prince, became Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. As emperor he was called Haile Selassie but the name Rastafarianism comes from his name, Ras Tafari. People believed he was the black messiah that Marcus Garvey was talking about.

#### 2. Map Work

- Look at a map of Jamaica and find Jamaica on a map of the world and discuss what life might be like living here.
- 3. Present the information about Rastafarianism. Use pictures or writing or a mind map etc.

#### SESSION 2: What do Rastafarians believe?

- 1. Discuss the beliefs of Rastafarians.
  - Rastafarians believe in some of the Bible mixed with some African beliefs and traditions. Rastas believe that they are one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel. They believe that Ethiopia is their promised land. They hope one day to return there just as the Israelites returned to the promised land after being slaves in Egypt and Babylon. Rastas believe that God took human form first as Christ the messiah then as Ras Tafari, the black messiah.
  - Discuss the Rastafarian belief of Ras Tafari as a 'messiah'. What does this word mean?
- 2. Discuss the biography of Ras Tafari
  - Do you think he was a 'good' man? Do you think he is someone worthy of being 'followed'?
- **3.** Present the information about Ras Tafari. Use pictures or writing or a mind map etc.

#### SESSION 3: What is the Rastafarian code for Behaviour?

- 1. Discuss the code of behaviour for Rastafarians.
  - Rastas believe in living close to nature. They are vegetarians and ideally, they grow their own food. They do not believe in smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol or coffee. Interestingly enough, however, they do believe in smoking marijuana or cannabis, since this is to them a natural and beneficial herb. They smoke it as part of their worship.
  - Do you think the Rastafarian way of life is a healthy one?
  - Discuss the legalities of smoking marijuana or cannabis in the UK. Discuss if it's right or wrong that Rastafarians would not be able to smoke cannabis or marijuana 'as part of their worship' in the UK.
- 2. Discuss some of the rules that Ras Tafari decreed all Rastafarians should live by.
  - What do these rules tell us about how Rastafarians try to live?
  - Are these rules similar or different to Christian rules? (and compare with other religious codes of conduct / rules, that the children know).
- **3.** Present some of the rules that Rastafarians try to live by. Use pictures or writing or a mind map.

#### SESSION 4: Where are Rastafarians today?

## 1. Discuss where you can find Rastafarians today.

• Most are in Jamaica but it has spread to other Afro-Caribbean communities in Europe and the United States. It especially appeals to young African Americans. The image of the black messiah and the positive message about being black and seeking freedom are very compelling. Although not a large group, perhaps 100,000, its influence has spread beyond its followers through the dress and reggae music of Rastas. Reggae was developed by rastafarians in Jamaica as an important part of worship. Today you hear it all over the world.

# 2. Listen to some Reggae music (Bob Marley)

- Discuss the style of music is it fast or slow? Instrumental or with lyrics?
- What kinds of things are the singers singing about? What do the lyrics tell us about the feelings / beliefs of Rastafarians?

# 3. "Three Little Birds"

- Write the lyrics to Bob Marley's song 'Three Little Birds'.
- Learn the lyrics to 'Three Little Birds' and sing along with the recording.

# SESSION 5: Why do Rastafarians (or Rastas) wear dreadlocks?

- 1. Discuss why Rastafarians wear dreadlocks.
  - Rastas wear dreadlocks because they do not believe in cutting or combing their hair. This comes from a passage in the Bible. It is also the way some ancient African priests and Israelites wore their hair. Sometimes you see a green, red and yellow coloured hat over a Rasta's hair. These are the colours of the flag of Ethiopia.
  - Dreadlocks can be made by using different hair products or by brushing the hair in particular ways, or they can be made by simply not brushing your hair....but it will take a long time to make dreadlocks in this way!
  - Dreadlocks are NOT dirty! Rastafarians still have to wash their dreadlocks, or else they would look (and smell) horrible!
  - White, Asian or other race people can grow dreadlocks you don't have to have black skin.
- 2. Draw a picture of a someone with dreadlocks and write some interesting facts about dreadlocks.

## SESSION 6: What have we learnt?

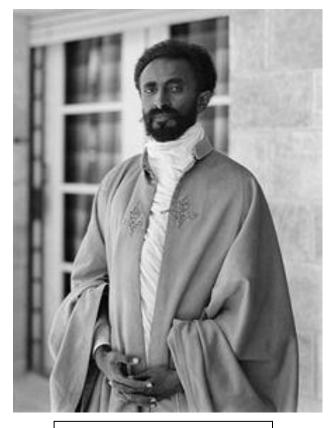
- 1. Recap on what we now know about Rastafarians.
- 2. Gather all your information and create a piece of work to tell others lots of interesting facts about Rastafarians. Use pictures or writing or a mind map etc.











# Ras Tafari

# Haile Selassie Biography

Born: July 23, 1892 Near Harar, Ethiopia Died: August 27, 1975 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Ethiopian emperor

Haile Selassie was an emperor of Ethiopia whose influence as an African leader far surpassed the boundaries of his country. Although his popularity declined near the end of his sixty-year reign, Selassie remains a key figure in turning Ethiopia into a modern civilization.

# <u>Childhood</u>

Haile Selassie was born Tafari Makonnen on July 23, 1892, the son of Ras Makonnen, a cousin and close friend of Emperor Menilek II. Baptized Lij Tafari, he is believed to be a direct descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, two ancient rulers from the tenth century B.C.E. Raised as a Christian, Tafari was educated by private European tutors.

Haile Selassie spent his youth at the imperial court (court of the emperor) of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Surrounded by constant political plots, he learned much about the wielding of power. Menilek no doubt recognized Tafari's capacity for hard work, his excellent memory, and his mastery of detail. The emperor rewarded the youth's intellectual and personal capabilities by appointing him, at the age of fourteen, the governor of Gara Muleta in the province of Harar. When he was twenty, the emperor appointed him *dejazmatch* (commander) of the extensive province of Sidamo.

# <u>Regent and Emperor</u>

Upon the death of Menilek in 1913, his grandson, Lij Yasu, succeeded to (gained) the throne. Yasu's apparent conversion to the religion of Islam alienated the national Christian church and gave its favor to the opposition movement led by Ras Tafari (as Haile Selassie was now named). The movement joined noblemen and high church officials in stripping Yasu of the throne in 1916. Zawditu, the daughter of Menilek, then became empress, with Ras Tafari appointed regent (acting ruler while the empress was away) and heir to the throne.

Throughout the regency the empress, conservative in nature and more concerned with religion than politics, served as opposition to Ras Tafari's rising interest in turning the country into a more modern nation. The result was an uneasy decade-long agreement between conservative and reforming forces (forces looking to make social improvements).

In 1926 Tafari took control of the army, an action that made him strong enough to assume the title of *negus* (king). Assuming this title was made possible, in part, by his success in international affairs, namely the admission of Ethiopia in 1923 to the League of Nations, a multinational organization aimed at world peace following World War I (1914–1918; a war fought mostly in Europe involving most countries on that continent and the United States). When Zawditu died in April 1930, Tafari demanded the title *negasa negast* (king of kings) and took complete control of the government with the throne name of Haile Selassie I ("Power of the Trinity").

# <u>Italian invasion</u>

In 1931 the new emperor began to develop a written constitution (a system of basic laws of a country) to symbolize his interest in modernization and intention to increase the power of the government, which had been weakening since the death of Menilek. Haile Selassie's efforts were cut short, however, when Benito Mussolini's (1883–1945) Italy invaded the country in 1935. The Italian military used superior weaponry, airplanes, and poison gas to crush the ill-fated resistance led by the emperor. After the invasion, a fascist regime (a country under the control of an all-powerful ruler) occupied the country and marked the first loss of national independence in recorded Ethiopian history. In 1936 Haile Selassie went into exile, meaning he was forced out of the country. While in England he unsuccessfully went to the League of Nations for help.

In early 1941 British forces, aided by the heroic Ethiopian resistance, freed the country from Italian control, enabling Haile Selassie to triumphantly reenter his capital in May. The Italian colonial administration, backed by force and with a vastly improved road network, meant that the emperor returned to find a great deal of his government's independence had been destroyed, leaving him in certain ways stronger than before he left.

Throughout the next decade he rebuilt the administration; improved the army; passed legislation to regulate the government, church, and financial system; and further extended his control of the provinces (government territories) by crushing uprisings in Gojjam and Tigre. But in general the emperor had gradually grown more cautious, and he allowed few new leaders into his government.

In the 1950s Haile Selassie worked to absorb into Ethiopia the important Red Sea province of Eritrea (this was accomplished in 1962). Later he founded the University College of Addis Ababa, and welcomed home many Ethiopian college graduates from abroad. His Silver Jubilee (celebration of twenty-five years in power) in 1955 served as the occasion to present a revised constitution, followed in 1957 by the first general election. Haile Selassie's continued work to hold political balance between several major politicians as well as his efforts to shut out new politicians who still found few places in government, eventually led opposing elements to attempt a government coup (takeover) in December 1960. The coup failed, but it gave a short and violent message to the unchanging Ethiopian politics and hinted of future possibilities.

# <u> Pan-African leader</u>

In the 1960s the emperor was clearly recognized as a major force in the pan-African movement (a movement dedicated to a united Africa), demonstrating his remarkable capacity for adapting to changing circumstances. It was a great personal triumph for him when, in 1963, the newly founded Organization of African Unity established its headquarters in Addis Ababa. Unlike other African leaders, Haile Selassie, of course, had not had to struggle once in office to prove his legitimate authority to his people. Rather, his control of government for more than forty years had given him enough time to demonstrate his strength.

By 1970 the emperor had slowly withdrawn from many day-to-day workings of the government and had become increasingly involved with foreign affairs. He probably made more state visits than any other head of state, enjoying such trips for their own sake even when they had little practical use. To him foreign relations brought admiration from around the world.

At home Haile Selassie showed more caution than ever in his approach to modernization. Though warm to Western advancements, throughout his long reign he never advanced faster than what was agreed upon among his peers. However, by his fortieth year in power he appeared to be more concerned with adjusting to change than with enacting change himself.

A famine, or devastating shortage of food, in Wello province in 1973 seriously hurt the reputation of Selassie's leadership. With a strain on the nation, Selassie was forced to abdicate (step down from power) on September 13, 1974. The eighty-year-old emperor Selassie spent his final year of life under house arrest (restricted to one's house by court order). His death was announced on August 27, 1975. The man who led Ethiopia for sixty years—through some of the nation's darkest times—did not even have a funeral service. The exact location of his grave has never been revealed.

# <u>Rastafarian Code of Conduct</u>

# EDUCATION

A strong nation and free nation can only base itself upon education. In order to make life worthwhile it is necessary to acquire other things that can only come about after acquisition of learning. Learning and echnical training must be nurtured by faith in God, reverence for the human soul, and respect for the reasoning mind –Qadamawi Haile Selassie.

# <u>SELF HELP</u>

The people themselves must come to realize their own difficulties in the development of their community and try to solve them by collective participation following an order of priority and taking their potentiality into account-Qadamawi Haile Selassie.

# HUMAN DIVERSITY

The very diversity of the world's people today constitutes one of mankind's greatest resources; the different philosophies with which nations approach their problems lead inevitably to a vast array of methods and techniques. These variations are necessary, for each people mustfind solutions which are responsive to its particular needs ...each nation must inevitably pursue that course best suited to its own unique characteristics...We seek Africa's economic growth and development, the betterment of the way of life of Africans and all men-Qadamawi Haile Selassie

# Whereas the people of the Rastafari Nation worldwide:

- Have affirmed that the Nation of Rastafari is founded on Principles that acknowledge the Divinity of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God and Light of this World;
- Recognize that people remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect foridentifiable spiritual and cultural values, faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms, in a world of free people, where the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights which all members of the human family are endowed by their Creator are respected and maintained;
- Recognize that African liberation must be the primary concern of all Rastafari people;
- Desire that the Rastafari Code of Conduct should enshrine the abovementioned principles for ensuring the protection of InI fundamental practices, lifestyle, and freedoms;
- InI (We) declare that the following provisions shall outline the Code of Conduct of the Rastafari Nation.

# **GENERAL CODE**

The Rastafari Family and Nation:

Accept the Divinity of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I as the cornerstone and foundation of InI faith and being, in Whose Holy Name Ras Tafari InI are called;

Defend the sovereign rights of Africans at home and abroad; Abide by the laws and teachings of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I, the principles and practices of the Elders and Patriarchs of Rastafari, and the Laws of Nature written in the hearts of humankind;

Hence InI know and accept that the collective words of Emperor Haile Selassie are the true and divine foundation of righteous governance.InI uphold the principles of African Unity, Justice, Peace, Love, Truth and Right, along with Freedom, and commit InI-selves whole-heartedly to strive for the cause of African liberation, Repatriation and Reparation, and to labour unceasingly towards the achievement of these goals.

InI also seek world peace and goodwill among all mankind, working always towards equality in world citizenship, and the upholding of the rule of international morality, collective security, and global fraternity.

InI celebrate and deem sacred the Birthday of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I,  $23^{rd}$  July 1892, and the Coronation date of both the Emperor and Empress on  $2^{nd}$  November 1930, these being two major dates in the Rastafari calendar.

At all gatherings of spiritual observance and solemn occasions, the rules and laws of the **host** Mansion or House shall apply, and should be observed by all ones in attendance.

Whereas certain exemptions shall be made for visitors to any such gathering according to their individual house or mansion rules, provision should be made to accommodate visitors who do not belong to any house or mansion, e.g. dress codes...etc.

All are advised that Sacred Herb (I-cense) should be burnt in an incense pot/altar, for the cleansing of the tabernacle and for sanctification of the space. A smoking room should be also available for personal use (knowing that not every one smokes).

No drugs are allowed to be imbibed, consumed, or smoked at such events. All attendees should be modestly attired, adhering to the dress code of the particular House or Mansion. Similarly, conduct should be seemly, peaceable, and solemn as befits such occasions.

Only Brethren are allowed on harps (drums) at Nyah Binghi ceremonial programmes called "Ises", whereas the Sistren are allowed to play shakers and other appropriate hand-held rhythmic instruments.

At non ceremonial programmes the Sisters are permitted to play harps in their own groups, eg: The Empress Menen Liberators in Jamaica. All are advised and expected to abide by the observances of the officiating priests and elders.

# COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN UPLIFTMENT

Domestically, we can build strong and happy and resourceful societies. Internationally, we can force the end of oppression of man by man and nation by nation. We can bring about the security and mutual trust which will open the way to the greater human achievements for which the needs of mankind now cry out. Qadamawi Haile Selassie

# <u>RESPONSIBILITY TO GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP AND WORLD</u> <u>PEACE</u>

Let us not bemuse ourselves with the notion that it is any more possible to legislate equality, for these matters concern attitudes and values over which intellect sadly exercises but little control.

Let us not recoil in hatred against those who, even while protecting their freedom from bias and prejudice, reveal by their actions that the poison of discrimination has left its lasting effects, and by this reaction reveal that we, no less than they, are prey to unreasoning emotion, that we, no less than they, are susceptible to that virus which is called intolerance. *Qadamawi Haile Selassie* 

**Peace and love** – the original greeting of the Rastafari elders summarizes the fundamental attitude and motivation of the movement. The ethos of harmonious goodwill towards humankind also extends to all living creatures in the universe.

The Rastafari Family should at all times seek to maintain the discipline of love for InI fellow men and women, knowing that the healing of Africa is the pathway to global peace and the brotherhood of man.

The virtues of tolerance, respect and fraternity should always be hallmarks of InI interaction with each other, with Africans, and with the global community of nations. Rastafari is a nation scattered among nations, and by our orderly conduct and behaviour InI become a light to the entire world.

We must become something we have never been and for which our education and experience have ill prepared us. We must become bigger than we have ever been: more courageous, greater in spirit, larger in outlook. We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice, owing our ultimate allegiance not to nations but to our fellow men within the human community. – Qadamawi Haile Selassie

# HEALTH AND DIETARY PRACTICE

"There is nothing more precious to man than a sound mind and a soundbody, and it is essential that the physical well-being of our people merits as much attention as its spiritual welfare.

Good health is not only necessary for the well-being and happiness of man, but is also a fundamental prerequisite for the progress and prosperity of the nation.

Just as education insures protection of man's knowledge in all fields of endeavour, so does proper medical care help in safe-guarding and promoting his physical and mental growth.

The preservation of health is a duty. Few seem conscious that there is such a thing as physical morality." - Herbert Spencer Natural and holistic methods of health care are highly recommended. However, in instances where the circumstances may be so life-threatening that surgery may be necessary, it would be advisable to seek conventional medical help.

It is recommended that the Rastafari people commit to eating healthy natural foods and follow the holistic principles of living, in keeping with Rastafari traditions and customs.

Rastafari who accept a more holistic and nature-oriented lifestyle are the ones living in harmony with the earth.

The highest form of dietary practice is the consumption of naturally grown foods.

Ital diet cleanses and purifies the physical being. It also offers the most lifeenergizing way of sustaining the physical structure and the inner Irits in their original integrity.

## WHAT IS ITAL? ITAL IS FRESH ORGANIC UNPROCESSED FOODS

#### Ones should abstain from:

- Animal products/by products
- Processed foods / Genetically Modified foods / Sodium salt
- The use of salt-free and natural herb seasonings is recommended.
- (In some cultures around the world where seafood is eaten as part of the dietary customs it is a fact that some Rastafari are fishermen and partake of their catch. However, seafood that are scavengers should be avoided)

#### Also to be avoided are:

- Drunkenness The use of alcoholic beverages (all forms of beer, stouts and wines)
- The use and sale of Drugs (legal or illegal)
- Drugs meaning (and including) crack, cocaine, barbiturates, pills, pharmaceuticals and any other synthetic commercially produced substances of like nature.

## Suggested solution:

- Anyone found to be in violation of the above, i.e.
- Drunkenness or drug abuse, is advised to seek professional counselling and be prepared to stop.

"As we guarantee to each the right to worship as he chooses, so we denounce the policy that set man against man on the issue of religion." - Qadamawi Haile Selassie

#### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

"This is as it should be, for when brothers or sisters quarrel, as it happens from time to time, they come together and discuss the issues concerned in a very open manner and attempt to arrive at a mutually agreed solution. It is natural for forty-one nations to have different problems. It is our duty to trash out our differences, and to reach a solution that will command our united stand. We should be aware, more than before, not to allow discord amongst us. We must close ranks and discharge our obligations in harmony and unity of vision and purpose." - (Important Utterance of Qadamawi Haile Selassie)

In the event of disputes, the parties involved should be taken before a Grievance Committee of the organization, or mansion that they belong to. Evidence that is collected, should then determine the resolution and/or disciplinary action by the Grievance Committee.

Failing resolution from the Grievance Committee, the evidence collected on the matter should be turned over to the executive administration of said organization or mansion.

## One should not:

Abuse, slander, carry tales, hearsay, or disgrace any Rastafari brethren, sistren, house, mansion, organization, or others, in public places, through Printed Press, Radio, Television, Internet, or any other communication media.

## Ones should:

- Always respect the decision of the Council of Elders, I- ancient Guardians of the Faith.
- Acknowledge the contributions of the Patriarchs, Matriarchs, and Founding Fathers of the Faith.
- Never use the ancients to obtain money for personal benefits.
- Always acknowledge the contribution of African Leaders, African Liberators and Freedom Fighters, noting important dates and events in the African Calendar.



# BOB Marley: Buffalo Soldier

Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta There was a Buffalo Soldier In the heart of America Stolen from Africa, brought to America Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival

I mean it, when I analyse the stench To me, it makes a lot of sense How the Dreadlock Rasta was the Buffalo Soldier And he was taken from Africa, brought to America Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival

Said he was a Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta Buffalo Soldier, in the heart of America

If you know your history Then you would know where you coming from Then you wouldn't have to ask me Who the heck do I think I am

I'm just a Buffalo Soldier In the heart of America Stolen from Africa, brought to America Said he was fighting on arrival Fighting for survival Said he was a Buffalo Soldier Win the war for America

Dreadie, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe Woe yoe yoe yo, yo yo woe yo, woe yoe yoe (repeat) Buffalo Soldier, trodding through the land Said he wanna ran, then you wanna hand Trodding through the land, yea, yea

Said he was a Buffalo Soldier Win the war for America Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival Driven from the mainland To the heart of the caribbean

Singing, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe Woe yoe yoe yo, yo yo woe yo woe yo yoe (repeat)

Trodding through San Juan In the arms of America Trodding through Jamaica, a Buffalo Soldier Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival Buffalo Soldier, Dreadlock Rasta Singing, woe yoe yoe, woe woe yoe yoe Woe yoe yeo yo, yo yo woe yo woe yo yoe

#### **BOB MARLEY: Redemption Song**

Old pirates yes they rob I Sold I to the merchant ships Minutes after they took I From the bottomless pit But my hand was made strong By the hand of the almighty We forward in this generation Triumphantly All I ever had, is songs of freedom Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom Cause all I ever had, redemption songs Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery None but ourselves can free our minds Have no fear for atomic energy Cause none of them can stop the time How long shall they kill our prophets While we stand aside and look Some say it's just a part of it We've got to fullfill the book

Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom Cause all I ever had, redemption songs Redemption songs, redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery None but oursekves can free our minds Have no fear for atomic energy Cause none of them can stop the time How long shall they kill our prophets While we stand aside and look Yes some say it's just a part of it We've got to fullfill the book

Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom Cause all I ever had, redemption songs All I ever had, redemption songs These songs of freedom, songs of freedom

#### BOB MARLEY: Three Little Birds

Don't worry about a thing cause every little thing is gonna be alright don't worry about a thing every little thing is gonna be alright

Rise up this morning smiled with the rising sun three little birds pitch by my door step singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true saying, this is my message to you:

don't worry about a thing...

# DREADLOCKS

- In today's society, dreadlocks are misunderstood.
- They are often thought of as dirty, low-class, representing homelessness, drug use, or a desire to be part of another culture.
- However, the truth is that dreads were often the sign of royalty and holiness throughout history.
- They predate the Jamaican / Rastafarian culture they are most often associated with today by thousands of years.
- Dreads were worn by kings and pharaohs, prophets, holy men, gurus, and philosophers since the earliest known times.
- They were a part of every civilization, religion and culture.
- Dreadlocks were worn by many figures in the bible, as well as famous pharaohs of egypt;King Tut's dreadlocks still survive to this day.



