



# R.S: RASTAFARI

## Rastafari Origins & Overview

- The first branch of Rastafari is believed to have been established in Jamaica in 1935 by Leonard P. Howell.
- Rastafarians believe that they are being tested by Jah (God) through slavery and the existence of economic injustice and racial “downpression” (rather than oppression).
- They await their deliverance from captivity and their return to Zion, the symbolic name for Africa drawn from the biblical tradition.



- 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 Marcus Garvey was talking about.
- The emperor, who Rastafarians believe was a descendant of ancient Israel’s King Solomon, soon came to be worshipped by some Jamaicans and other blacks as a divine being.
- He was thought to be an incarnation of Jah—the Rastafarian name for God—and the messiah.

## Rastafari Beliefs

It is important to remember that there are three distinct orders of the Rastafarian movement which hold different beliefs and symbols. These are: **Boba Shanti, Nyahbinji and the Twelve tribes**. Below are some of the most common beliefs.

- 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.
- Rastas believe in living close to nature. They are vegetarians and ideally, they grow their own food.
- As an incarnation of Jah, Hailee Selassie is both god and king to Rastas. While Selassie officially died in 1975, many Rastas do not believe that Jah can die and thus that his death was a hoax. Others think that he still lives in spirit although not within any physical form.

Selassie’s role within Rastafari stems from several facts and beliefs, including:

- His many traditional coronation titles, including King of Kings, Lord of Lords, His Imperial Majestic the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, which correlates to Revelation 19:16: “He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”
- Garvey’s view of Ethiopia being the origin of the Black race
- Selassie was the only independent Black ruler in all of Africa at the time
- The Ethiopian belief that Selassie is part of an unbroken line of succession descending directly from the Biblical King Solomon the Queen of Sheba, thus connecting him to the tribes of Israel.

## KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

### Pinnacle, Key Figures and Symbols



- Rastafari is complex and about an exceptional journey of Leonard Howell who taught enslaved people how to be proud and impose their culture on the world.
- Although jailed, ridiculed, and treated as insane, Howell, also known as the Gong, established a Rasta community of hundreds to thousands of members, the first agro-industrial enterprise devoted to producing their own crops including marijuana. The Pinnacle.
- Although jailed, ridiculed, and treated as insane, Howell, also known as the Gong, established a Rasta community of hundreds to thousands of members, the first agro-industrial enterprise devoted to producing their own crops including marijuana. The Pinnacle.



Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican-born Black nationalist and leader of the

Pan-Africanism movement, which sought to unify and connect people of African descent worldwide.

- Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey, dedicated to racial pride, economic self-sufficiency, and the formation of an independent Black nation in Africa.

Hailee Selassie

- As emperor of Ethiopia (1930–74), Haile Selassie I was known for modernizing his country, for helping to establish the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) in 1963, for his exile (1936–41), and for being overthrown in 1974.



- He was also regarded as the messiah of the African race by many Rastas.

- Unlike Jesus, who taught his followers about His divine nature, Selassie’s divinity was declared by the Rastas. Selassie himself stated that he was fully human, but he also strove to respect Rastas and their beliefs.

### Leonard P Howell

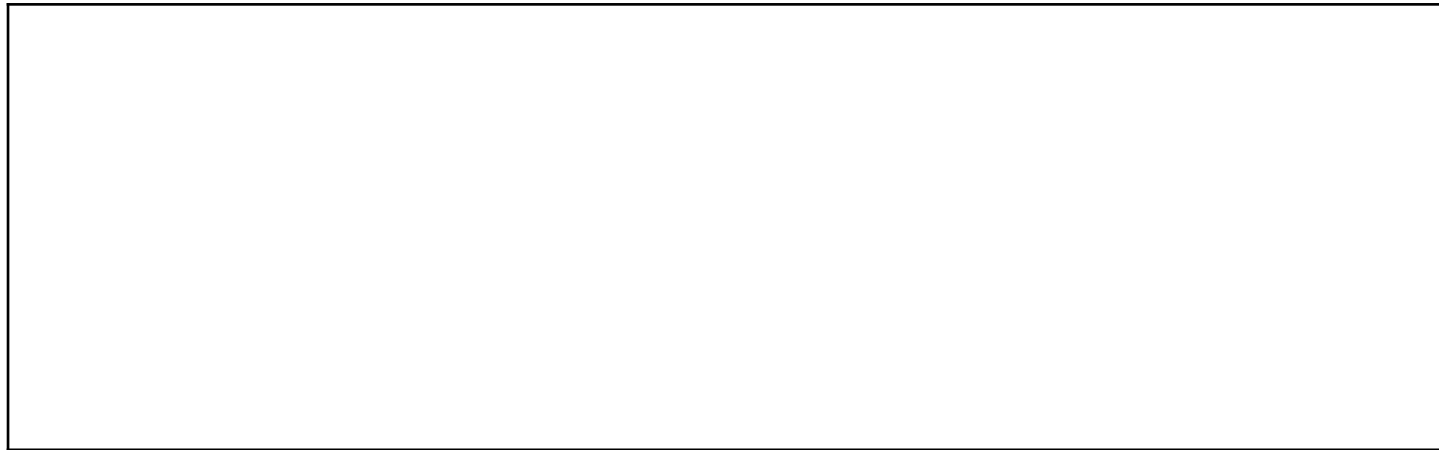
- The first branch of Rastafari is believed to have been established by Leonard Howell.
- Howell preached the divinity of Haile Selassie. He explained that all blacks would gain the superiority over whites that had always been intended for them.
- Howell's action encouraged others to help develop and spread the message of Rasta theology



### Key Vocabulary

1. Haile Selassie
2. Jamaica
3. Ital
4. Herb
5. Slavery
6. Jew
7. Ethiopia
8. Zion
9. Babylon
10. Marcus. Garvey
11. Leonard Howell
12. Repatriation
13. Incarnation
14. Pinnacle
15. Dreadlocks





- This marked the first uniting of Rastafarians and it paved the way for the future of the movement, bringing hope of repatriation with Africa and freedom for the black race

