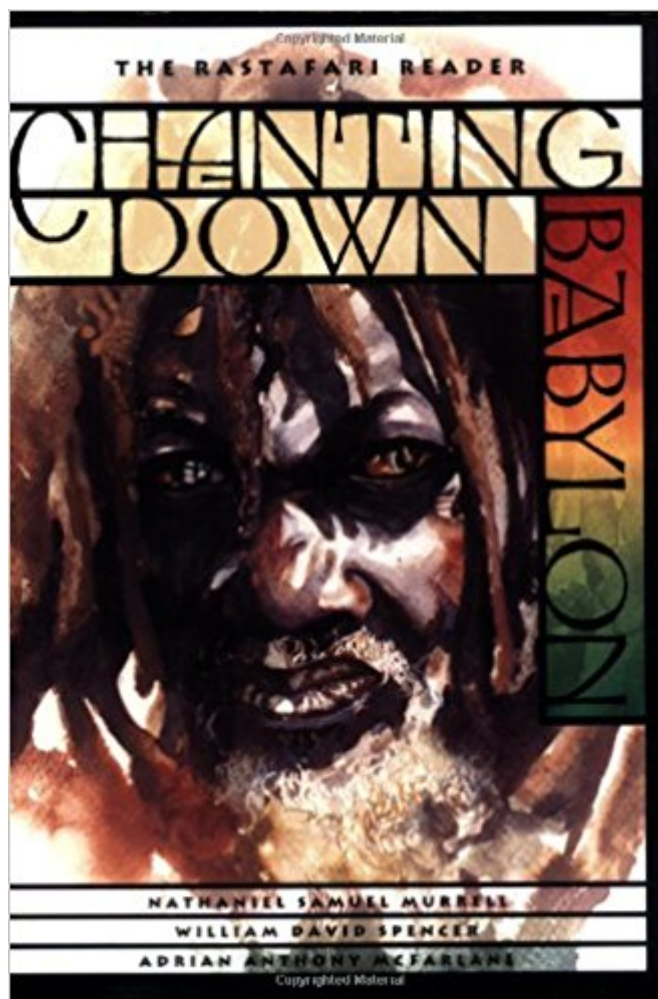


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# Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader



## Synopsis

This anthology explores Rastafari religion, culture, and politics in Jamaica and other parts of the African diaspora. An Afro-Caribbean religious and cultural movement that sprang from the mean streets of Kingston, Jamaica, in the 1930s, today Rastafari has close to one million adherents. The basic message of Rastafari--the dismantling of all oppressive institutions and the liberation of humankind--strongly appeals even to non-believers who are captivated by the reggae music, the lyrics, and the "immortal spirit" of its enormously popular practitioner, Bob Marley. Probing into Rastafari's still-evolving belief system, political goals, and cultural expression, the contributors to this volume emphasize the importance of Africana history and the Caribbean context. "Long before the term 'Afrocentricity' came into popular use in the United States, Jamaican Rastafarians had embraced the concept as the most important recipe for naming their reality and reclaiming their black heritage in the African diaspora," Nathaniel Samuel Murrell notes in the Introduction. "CHANTING DOWN BABYLON" brings together scholarly commentary, a long-hidden founding document of the movement, and the voices of leading Rastas who explain and critique the beliefs and practices associated with Rastafari. Also included are a glossary, an annotated bibliography, and an interview with the pioneering scholar of Rastafari, Leonard Barrett.

## Book Information

Paperback: 467 pages

Publisher: Temple University Press; 1st edition (March 23, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1566395844

ISBN-13: 978-1566395847

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #235,696 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Tribal & Ethnic > Rastafari Movement](#) #222 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Hispanic American Studies](#) #671 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Comparative Religion](#)

## Customer Reviews

The Rastafarian movement had largely been a Jamaican phenomenon from its inception in the

1930s until the 1960s, when immigrants from the Caribbean migrated internationally. This collection of essays attempts to define in populist manner Rastafari; its beginnings, successes, and failures; its belief system; and its religious, economic, cultural, psychological, and social connotations. With no formal structure, Rastafari is an evolving belief system based on the principles of Leonard Howell's *The Promised Key*. Its message of Afrocentricity is important, but the resistance and liberation psychology, along with reggae music, all give meaning to people's lives. The "Downpression" of Jamaican society reflects a "Babylonian" experience of the black's soulful desolation. From the life-affirming practices of Rastafari, selfhood and dignity is reclaimed. Bible study, fasting, and living with the earth were early components; later the African tradition of ganja smoking was used in rituals to commune on a higher plane. Recommended. Leo Vincent Kriz, West Des Moines P.L., Ia. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Long before the term 'Afrocentricity' came into popular use in the United States, Jamaican Rastafarians had embraced the concept as the most important recipe for naming their reality and reclaiming their black heritage in the African diaspora." --Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, from the Introduction

I purchased this book for a class a few years back. It was not my first choice for a history class, but the professor was an interesting one and it was an area of history that was not so familiar to me, so I took the class on the Caribbean. This was one of the books we used toward the end. It was definitely interesting to read, though I have yet to read the entire book. It is easy to dip in read a chapter or so and skip around. This made it pretty low pressure, which was nice. It had a lot of unfamiliar information and cultural insight, which was also really good. The stories were interesting and held my attention. All of this even though my favorite era to study is earlier (500's ish-1600's ish) and favorite places are Europe and Asia. So, yeah, good book. If you want to know more about the Rasta movement Chanting Down Babylon is an excellent book.

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Reads more like a history book than a novel. Expected something a little less formal, but very good none the less and informational.

A great collection of essays that examine multiple aspects of an often-misunderstood way of life, written by a host of insightful authors. The essays explore and analyze the history of Rastafari, Rastafari and gender issues, the Rastafari/Marcus Garvey connections and disconnections, and more. This represents an important contribution to those interested in the African diaspora in the Americas.

the first time i recieved this book it took me about 2 weeks to read it all the way through and i would have to say this is a great book for people are seeking more knowledge about all aspects of what rastafarl is from its origan till its current standings it covers the tip of all subjects that flows on through rastafarian teachings and wisdom comming from someone who knew not much about rastafal before reading this book i give it a 10 because it gives you info on lots of subjects discussed on rastafarl but leaves much for your mind to want to continue to search out more for yourself

Chanting Down Babylon is a welcomed addition to the growing literature on Rastafari. This reader sucessfully brings together most of the scholars studying Rastafari, as well as Rastafarians themselves, providing an important insight into Rastafari. The inclusion of articles addressing biblical hermeneutics as well as Rastafari theology begins to fill an important gap in Rastafari scholarship. A real treasure for those interested in learning about Rastafari for the first time, and for those who wish to expand their knowledge of this important religious movement.

So far I've read only the first few chapters of this book, but from the introduction on I've been continually impressed with the authenticity of this book. I found Rastafari while soul searching and latched on to the Truths I heard. This book is alas only a book, but the information is delicious. As I grow as a human being I find there are few soul satisfying lives to be led in "Babylon" but with this

book and my faith I'm finding my own way through these troubled times. Peace.

I found this work to be one of the most complete on the study of the the Rastafarian movement. The information is well presented and is cohesive and highly informative. This work is ideal for the new convert or anyone who wants a thorough examination of the faith. I highly recommend it.

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