

Ras Tafari Global Reasoning 2003

University of the West Indies

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Protection & Preservation of Ras Tafari Movement Including I&I Intellectual Property Ras Tafari Art, Music & Culture

Greetings to all gathered here to reason on about and for Rastafari - I give thanks for the opportunity to share in the discussion of the protection and preservation of Rastafari Movement through I&I intellectual property - Rastafari arts, music & culture.

We will begin by playing an excerpt from a DVD entitled Heartland Reggae which features Rastafarian Cosmo Ben Imhotep outlining many of the elements of Rastafari we are discussing here today and which we must consider in shaping the preservation and protection of I&I Intellectual Property.

Rastafari is a movement - a way of life and but increasingly, in the new world order, in the age of intellectual property and globalization, Rasta is a major revenue generating brand whose proceeds and direction are currently outside of the body of Rastafari.

To explore Rasta's preservation and protection we must also examine our options to legally protect and where applicable, earn from this globally appealing brand.

Many companies are currently branding and co-branding with Rasta from the rastaman image of Reggae Sunsplash and Sumfest to the image on Nestle's Rasta Ice or the latest CD compilation advertising on MTV called Rasta Jams featuring classics such as Murder She Wrote from Chaka Demus & Pliers and Boombastic from Shaggy and similar Reggae-Dancehall hits...with a skimpily clad video girl posing with her best asset on the cover -

hardly Rasta anthems or packaging but they know that the Rasta brand has resonance in the market so they use it.

In the absence of management the brand will be used at will because marketers know that Rasta has captured the world's imagination and through its music Reggae, the world's heart.

Jamaica is one of the three giants of global culture as reggae is found in every corner of the world like American blue jeans and Chinese food.

It is AirJAHmaca and JTB's One Love that sell Jamaica globally...it is Rasta culture that is at the heart of the strength of Jamaica's cultural brand internationally....maybe that is why beyond using it, few have really supported Reggae music and Rasta culture in Jamaica.

The Rastafari Movement has been advanced tremendously through the vehicle its music and culture which has established the identity not only of the Rastaman, but of the Jamaican.

The Rastafari movement has a broad development agenda for Jamaica, Africa and the world which requires the building of schools, hospitals, library and the establishment of food and water systems...those require money...

Intellectual property is the basis of the new world economy and a definite asset for the movement of Rastafari.

DVD - Heartland Reggae - Rasta

The bredren dealt with a number of elements of the Rastafari Movement that must be addressed in order to determine and develop strategies for the Protection & Preservation

of what? Rastafari - a movement rooted in Jamaica but which has global reflections and appeal - a wholistic way of life that continues an ancient tradition found in variety of places from Africa to Asia over the ages.

The Wholistic Lifestyle of the Rasta is based on the positive vibrations of those whose journey in life has given them a complete overstanding of the metaphysical realities of the human experience within the divine plan.

Emerging as Spiritualists-Healers and Teachers, Rastafari is held in High Esteem - respected around the world in certain quarters - respected in Jamaica - in few quarters.

The philosophies, opinions and teachings of the three principles have laid the foundation of Rastafari philosophy - the Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey who revitalized and respirtualized black people around the world

with a sense of identity and history that said I Am An African and I am proud; the principle of love as taught by Jesus Christ and the teachings of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie - Kings of Kings Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Many of the images important to Rasta such as the lion of Judah, the red green & gold colours and the star of David are not original expressions of the movement in Jamaica but symbols which existed prior to the birth of the movement in Jamaica which were integrated into the philosophical representation.

The collective experience of the movement from its birth in Jamaica with spiritual elders all the houses of Rastafari are a vital component which must be recorded and taught to future generations to accurately preserve the sacrifices and victories of those who came before and made it possible for

those here today....out of the many - there is one truth and a common vision for humanity.

While intellectual property remain the domain of individual estates or the public domain a mechanism is needed to safeguard and articulate the accurate details of Rasta philosophy and history....a reference point for the countless researchers, documentarians, filmmakers, students and travellers in search of the truth....

Maybe a Rastafari Truth Centre - a publishing library and archives where people around the world would come to learn about truths and Rastafari which could develop books and a website for global consumption.

The use of dreadlocks symbolic of the divine order - I Am - perfect expression of a covenant - the Nazarine vow, has become fashionable from the catwalks of the world's fashion capitals to the classrooms of the

wold's leading universities. An ancient tradition, Jamaica's Rastafari movement cannot claim authorship of this hairstyle but it could most certainly accept credit for its popularization primarily through the spread of Reggae music.

Jamaican dialect and specifically the language of Rasta is an interpretation of a decolonized post slavery Jamaica from a spiritual space - speaking from the divine within our cultural modality, Rasta levity is expressed in phrases which have come to be used commonly in the wider population - I&I - Babylon - Dread - Politricks - Overstand - Blessed - Greetings.

And as teachers of wholistic levity Rasta cuisine - the Ital menu is in touch with nature and the natural maintenance of the body using herbs, fruits and vegetables as the basis of a healthy eating pattern.

The holy herb Ganja is a sacrament with medicinal benefits for diseases from Asthma and Glaucoma to multiple sclerosis and cancer...another ancient tradition of spiritual people from Africa to India to China...the herb is the healing of the nation which must be used not abused for the benefit of mankind...and Rasta must remain diligent in the fight to legalize not only herb but hemp which represents a viable option for the farmers of Jamaica and a valuable export product for the earning of foreign exchange.

The protection and preservation of the Rastafari Movement also involves highlighting its impact on society & popular culture and its power as a force for social change and political influence - case in point - Reggae music and the One Love Peace Concert...

DVD - Play Movie - to Jacob Miller

Rastafari as a movement must maintain its position as a powerful and credible voice for the people not by disengaging the system but by challenging its injustices and rising above it to offer the youth an option for the future...peace and love not war and politricks.

The Peace Movement is a global phenomenon with roots in places where the spirit of mankind is oppressed...it is in these places that Rasta philosophy and culture have taken root - from Jamaica to New Zealand, the musical message of equal rights and justice has gained Jamaica the respect of the world.

Reggae Music - the Kings Music, the voice of Jamaica - Reggae is the rhythm for the movement of Jah People that has linked like-minded people around the world in the struggle for good over evil.

Many of the music's leading ambassadors profess Rastafari as their faith to audiences

around the world - names like Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Burning Spear, Culture, Jacob Miller, Mystic Revelation of Rastafari to today's soldiers like Sizzla, Morgan Heritage, Luciano, Anthony B, Buju Banton, Capleton, Jr, Kelly, LMS, Turbulence and Warrior King.

Protection and preservation must include the enhancement of an Afrocentric Education system focused on Rasta values and attitudes of discipline, peace and love based on the principles of spiritual teachers and the philosophies and opinions of Marcus Garvey and His Imperial Majesty as a blueprint for the development of Rasta's next generation.

Our youth must be anchored the richness of their heritage and the strength of the spiritual truths taught by their parents to allow them to survive and succeed in the new world order and to maintain their identity in the face of cable, travel and tourism.

The Protection of I&I intellectual property is at the heart of the protection and preservation of I&I...cultures around the world from Israel to China have died to protect their heritage...and to continue to exist.

The question to be asked is how can Rasta be trademarked to enable legal protection of the brand and to channel proceeds from commercial activity for the benefit of the community.

Any one person could go and register a trademark for Rasta but I think one of the great opportunities this reasoning and gathering presents is that as a community that action explored and if deemed correct, be implemented for the benefit of the community which could be administered by a foundation with part proceeds earmarked for Jamaica, Ethiopia and concerns in the Diaspora.

I&I pray that the elders of the Rastafari community consider this concept and act accordingly based on the interpretation of divine order and the legal options available.

Protection and Preserving must be done through transfer of knowledge & traditions, education, archiving, legal protection of trademarks and copyright and the development of accurate expressions of the culture for global consumption.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the discussion...Jah guide and protect you all.

Andrea Davis