**Early Encounters in Colonial Jamaica: Hindu and Rastafari Divine Metaphysics[1]**

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*This paper explores encounters between the long-standing Hindu community in Jamaica and the early Rastafari movement, with special attention given to the historical formation, and contemporary actualization, of the concept of I-n-I – a core teaching of the Divine in Rastafari. It emphasizes the shared intimacies (implicit and explicit) between Rastafari's I-n-I and Jamaican Hindu spiritualities, thus challenging customary Afrocentric readings of the movement's metaphysics.*

*Keywords: Rastafari, ganja, Caribbean Hinduism, indentureship, interreligious encounter*

## Introduction

In most scholarship, the Rastafari movement is thought to have formed from a rethinking of biblical prophecies enabled by Black consciousness. Rastafari scholars have not sufficiently probed the tentative connections between the movement and Hinduism. Most map the movement in a dialectic between White oppressive Christianity and oppressed Afro-Jamaicans, which has produced a Rastafari that reappropriates, repurposes, and reproduces the Black and African ethos while actively disentangling the Afro-Indian intimacies that are found across the archives. Moreover, this view diminishes the agency of the members of the Jamaican lower class (the Indo- and Afro-Jamaicans) to organize among themselves. This article, a tendentious reading of the nascent stages of Rastafari, aims to excavate the historical silences of the Hindu contributions to the genesis and development of the movement's metaphysics.[2]

Rastafari metaphysics centers "I-n-I," a teaching which focuses on the Divine-self or "I" in relation to the interconnectedness of "I" in all people. An inevitable consequence of this metaphysical relationship is the intentional move of "I" from the limited subjective awareness of Divine-self to the fuller picture of I-n-I. The Rastafari approach to this is through what I call the "web of I-n-I." The esoteric web, that I later detail using five categories, is a nexus of ideas and practices that outlines the different approaches to I-n-I realization. This article argues that I-n-I is

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[2] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995).

a convergence of various Hindu mysticisms brought to Jamaica by Indians during indentureship. To show I-n-I's relationship to Hindu spiritualities, I draw attention to religio-cultural parallels but at the same time emphasize interreligious encounters that support a transcultural and creolized reading of Rastafari metaphysics.

This paper employs a multidisciplinary approach anchored in interreligious studies, an emerging field that examines "encounters that take place and relations that exist or existed, in the contemporary world or historically, between, within, and among groups with significant difference in worldview or lifeway."[3] To better understand I-n-I metaphysics, my methodology takes its cue from the practice in some Jamaican households of quilting. The life of a piece of fabric may be stretched due to (1) memories attached to it, (2) the practical needs of the quilter such as clothing, warmth, and comfort, and (3) economic constraints. The quilter(s) gather different pieces of older material and stitches them together over a period in ways that assign aesthetic value to the practicality of the cloth. Throughout the life of the quilt, several different calculated procedures such as mending, embellishing, patching, and combining with new material, are done to ensure its continuity. Moreover, it passes through different quilters who fix and care for it in different ways. As time goes on, purpose may continue to and eventually outweigh initial memories attached to different pieces of cloth. Newer quilters may even morph the memories of the quilt inheritance to match newer methods of assigning aesthetic value. When we encounter the quilt, we can appreciate the array of differences that combine to form the whole. The design may demand from us to take a closer look at the different fabrics and ask questions about the purpose of including them on the quilt. I use the quilt as a metaphorizing framework to understand the religio-cultural history of I-n-I. This methodology outlines an encounter in the present with a quilted memory of I-n-I and demands a retracing of the genealogy of the theological inheritance.

To achieve the goals outlined above, this paper is organized into three sections. The first provides historical and religious context to both Hinduism and Rastafari in Jamaica. The second defines I-n-I and highlights the different paths to the realization of I-n-I (web of I-n-I), and their relationship to Hindu spiritualities. The concluding section attempts to date the emergence of the I-n-I concept, by tracing it back to the infancy of Rastafari and its development alongside the movement's growth, while synthesizing its metaphysical relationship to Hindu spiritualities at each stage.

## Context

As slavery drew to an end in the British West Indies in the 1830s, the colonial administration soon began experimenting with other forms of controllable labor in their colonies. In as early as 1840, White Jamaican plantation owners complained about a "labor problem." Many of the formerly enslaved refused to work on the plantations due to problems with the work environment which "present[ed] little change from the … days of slavery."[4] The *Anti-Slavery Reporter* noted that the Afro-Jamaican "population [was] more than sufficient to meet all the demands of the sugar estates for labour on the condition of the labourers receiving fair wages, [being] promptly paid, and

[3] Hans Gustafson, "Introduction," in *Interreligious Studies: Dispatches from an Emerging Field* ed. Hans Gustafson (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 4.
[4] Anti-Slavery Reporter, "The Coolie Question in Jamaica," *Anti-slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society* 19, no. 9 (November 1, 1875): 229.

[getting] decently civil treatment."[5] Thus the "problem" was not due to the lack of Afro-Jamaicans who could work on the estates, rather the apparent shortage was more a consequence of the colonial commitment to control its labor force. To meet its demand for a controllable workforce, the colonial administration relied on a system of paternalistic contracted workers known as indentureship.

Between the landing of the first set of Indian indenturers in Jamaica in 1845, and the last repatriation to India in 1929, close to 37,000 Indians were imported to work on the island as indenturers.[6] To ensure the indenturers were submissive to the White Jamaican proprietors, the colonial masters implemented indentured contracts with criminal sanctions, and harsh labor laws.[7] Of the nearly 37,000 Indians who were taken to Jamaica as 'Coolies,'[8] approximately a third repatriated. Most of the Indian population transitioned from labor 'migrants' to Jamaican immigrants for several reasons including legal complexities, new families across caste and ethnicity, Indian governance, and lack of ships which worsened due to World War I.

Even before the arrival of so-called "Indian Coolies," religious intimacies between the Afro-Jamaicans and Indians existed in the anxieties of the colonial and ecclesiastical administrations. Both were concerned about the religious impact of the Indians on the Christianized Afro-Jamaican population. Jamaican missionaries and the Anti-Slavery Society opposed the importation of Indians, arguing that it was a new form of slavery. Yet, it is hard not to read the resistance to importing Coolies being more strongly guided by religious difference rather than a plea for the Indians. The same groups did not oppose the earlier admission of European indenturers to replace the slaves.[9] The Baptists in Jamaica also advanced a rhetoric that "the immigration of a number of heathen and pagan foreigners with their religious superstitions, idolatory [*sic*] and wickedness, will act most injuriously on the morals of the [black] inhabitants … and hinder very much the efforts that are now in operation for their moral and religious improvement."[10]

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[5] Anti-Slavery Reporter, *The Coolie Question in Jamaica*, 229.
[6] Verene A. Shepherd, *Transients to Settlers: The Experience of Indians in Jamaica, 1845–1950* (Coventry: University of Warwick, 1994), 13, 101; This number does not consider children born to indenturers while in Jamaica nor those born from Indo- and Afro-Jamaican relationships during indentureship.
[7] Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh, *Home Away from Home: 150 Years of Indian Presence in Jamaica 1845-1995* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), 92; The contracts stipulated the length of work and a guarantee return passage. It also restricted movement off the estates during the contract period.
[8] Like most of the lexical dregs of Caribbean colonial history, the word Coolie screenshots an anecdote of power, violence, and negotiated memories. The designation "Coolie" evokes mixed feelings within and external to the global community of the descendants of Indian indenturers. It has been and, in some contexts, continues to be used as a racial slur. The colonial administration during indentureship used the vocabulary to refer to a disposable unskilled laborer from Asia. In time, some Indian indenturers and their descendants also appropriated the term as an identifier to distinguish themselves from the later migrations of Indians to Jamaica and more importantly, to reclaim their history. As someone who identifies as Coolie, I use the word to talk about the Indian indenturers and their descendants not only to specify the group of people I am referring to, but also to emphasize their relationship to history, India, and the Caribbean. Today, Indo-Jamaicans are the second-largest ethnic group in Jamaica, and the descendants of the indenturers are still referred to as Coolies. See Gaiutra Bahadur's treatment of the word in *Coolie Woman the Odyssey of Indenture* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), xix–xxi; as well as Tao Leigh Goffe's treatment in Tao Leigh Goffe, "Intimate Occupations: The Afterlife of the 'Coolie'," *Transforming Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (April 2014): 53–61.
[9] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 44.
[10] Verene A. Shepherd, "The Dynamics of Afro-Jamaican–East Indian Relations in Jamaica 1845-1945: A Preliminary Analysis," *Caribbean Quarterly* 32, no. 3/4 (1986): 15.

In December 1845, almost seven months after the start of Indian indentureship in Jamaica, Rev. Walter Dendy, chairman of the Baptist Western Union in *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, declares publicly

> that as Christian ministers, we cannot but view with dismay a measure which is sure to produce the same disgusting vice that has degraded Demerara aad [*sic*] the Mauritius, and so calculated to impede the progress of morals and religion in the island, and to destroy many of the benefits conferred upon the agricultural labourers by the glorious act of Emancipation.[11]

Indeed, the Jamaican churches saw Indians as "nuisances to Christianity" who would end up contaminating the proselytized population and undermine the "hard work" the missionaries had undertaken to secure the salvation of the formerly enslaved.[12] This anxious space should be read as initial interreligious encounter between the Indians and Afro-Jamaicans before they shared an intimate physical space. Soon after the importation of Indians, the worries of the churches would be concretized in the Jamaican spiritual economy.

Before knitting an outline of the religious life of the Indians in Jamaica, it is important to recognize that at no point in indentureship was religiosity uniform. Dominant religious strategies were of course present. Approximately ninety percent of the indenturers were Hindus.[13] En route to Jamaica, the newly contracted laborers offered daily prayers, read sacred scriptures, and engaged the Divine with anxieties about the unfamiliar.[14] Religion was important for extracting meaning from the fresh undertaking as well as for providing comfort to the shipload. On arrival of the indenturers, the colonial administration did not group Coolies out of consideration of their castes, languages, or religions. The colonial disregard of their individual identities and their newly formed alliances "led to intra-culturation between different Indian groups which might not have had contact prior to their arrival…so a new kind of 'Indian' identity began to emerge."[15] The Indian culture that developed in Jamaica was a creolized version formed from the different groups of Indians who were imported. Of course, every now and then, they incorporated units from non-Indian culture into their lifeways. On plantations, the indenturers worked alongside some of the formerly enslaved Afro-Jamaicans, an important space of encounter and exchange. Throughout indentureship, the Clarendon and Westmoreland estates took the most indenturers. Other significant concentrations of Coolies were in St. Mary, Portland, and St. Thomas. Besides being settlements for Indian indentured workers, both Clarendon and St. Thomas are important parishes in the development of Rastafari.

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[11] Walter Dendy, "JAMAICA.—COOLIE IMMIGRATION," *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter* 6, no. 26 (1863): 232.

[12] Anti-Slavery Reporter, "The Coolies in Jamaica," *Anti-slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society* 11, no. 11 (November 1, 1875): 250.

[13] Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh, "The Impact of East Indians on Jamaican Religious Thoughts and Expressions," *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 10, no. 2 (1989): 38.

[14] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 51.

[15] Shepherd, *Transients to Settlers,* 43.

During indentureship, Coolies maintained an active religious life. They drew on their native local traditions and initially practiced based on their respective castes.[16] The Hinduism that emerged during indentureship in Jamaica became the collection of Hinduisms that were forcefully exposed to each other. As part of their practice, they used Hinduism to inform their native healthcare. To take care of their health, the indenturers turned to Ayurveda, a system of holistic medicine. Vaidyas, doctors in the Ayurvedic system, opened their own practice in as early as 1881, where they practiced faith healing and served beverages made from ganja (*Cannabis sativa)* and other herbs. [17]

Plantation owners, being shallowly familiar with the caste system, requested that brahmins be excluded from their quotas. This however was not successful for many brahmins had slipped through the checks that sought to bar them.[18] Some brahmins disguised their names using names attached to lower castes to board ships and squeeze into groups of those bound to become Indian Coolies.[19] Others were recruited under false promises and some oversights. The brahmins were the priests, spiritual advisors and (religious) academics, positions conferred to them by birth. Even though the brahmins had to be transformed into indenturers, the majority still practiced their priesthood in Jamaica.[20] Many brahmins who served on the plantations had the "last" name Maragh, which was later adopted by Leonard Howell, the most influential founder and early leader of Rastafari. Describing the priesthood in Jamaica during indentureship lies beyond the scope of this paper, however the two following anecdotes offer context. Some brahmins came to Jamaica after being promised work as priests, such as Dhanuk Maragh who was taken to Clarendon in 1885. However, Dhanuk, like other brahmins, was forced into indentureship. Some were adamant to practice their priesthood exclusively like Ganga Maragh, who mutilated his own fingers in front of the magistrate to protest manual labor.[21] Thus, on one hand, there were brahmins who bucketed their time between priesthood and toiling as indenturers. On the other extreme end, brahmins may have taken the side of religious resistance, as in the case of Ganga. Though there were many brahmins, Hindus outside the brahmin caste were still conversant about their faith, and memorized verses and narratives from the Hindu epics and poems.

A sub-group of brahmins, known as sadhus, was also part of the population. They had several non-conforming practices of detachment (from the mundane and its demands), in attempts to lead an absolute religious life. To sustain themselves, "they lived on alms and spent their lives in meditation and singing of devotional songs."[22] They all practiced strict versions of vegetarianism, and they grew matted hair.[23] The existence of a sadhu in West Kingston in 1968 helps to position

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[16] Anantanand Rambachan, "Global Hinduism: The Hindu Diaspora," in *Contemporary Hinduism: Ritual, Culture, and Practice*, ed. Robin Rinehart (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 382.
[17] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 63, 91.
[18] Shepherd, *Transients to Settlers*, 47.
[19] Ivan Parboosingh, "An Indo-Jamaican Beginning: A Fragment of Autobiography," *Jamaica Journal* 18 no. 2 (May-July 1985): 3. For more brahmins who changed their names to hide their castes, see Shepherd, *Transients to Settlers*, 47–48.
[20] Lakshmi Mansingh and Ajai Mansingh, "Indian Heritage in Jamaica," *Jamaica Journal* 10, nos. 2,3, & 4 (1976): 13.
[21] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 37.
[22] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Indian Heritage in Jamaica*, 13.
[23] Linda Aïnouche, "Erased from Collective Memory: Dreadlocks Story Documentary Untangles the Hindu Legacy of Rastafari," in *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean*, eds. Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 144–46.

them at the same time of Rastafari infancy.[24] Moreover, sadhus held geo-cultural links to the *I-gelic* House in Rastafari, which is important in the development and dispersion of I-n-I language and metaphysics.[25] Rastas from the I-gelic Houses shared many austere practices with the sadhus including celibacy, extreme detachment from society to promote spiritual growth, minimalistic clothing ("sackcloth-and-ashes tradition"), strict vegetarianism, peppery dishes, and some of the other lifestyles mentioned earlier.

In the evenings during indentureship, priests often recited the great Hindu epics, and mystical poems followed by theological explanations. Hindu scriptures used by the indenturers included the Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Bhagavatam Purana. The theology extracted from these scriptures and informal religious schooling was important in informing Rastafari metaphysics. The Hindu scriptures were not only read; they were often performed in public view by indenturers. Indenturers also recited Kabir and Tulsidas' poetry, Hanuman's Chalisa and other folk songs. Teachings were incorporated into everyday proverbs.[26] Themes of exile, suffering, and eventual repatriation in the Ramayana resonated with a miserable population, hoping to return to their motherland.[27]

Despite the misery of indentureship, Coolies celebrated several religious festivals, many of which Afro-Jamaicans actively took part in. Afro-Jamaicans often helped in designing tazias—replicas of the tomb of Husain, the Prophet's grandson—for Hussay celebrations. Although Hussay is an Islamic celebration, in Jamaica, it was part of the celebration of Indianness of both the Hindu and Muslim indenturers.[28] In some cases, Indo-Jamaicans associated the procession "as an event of Indian history, many [even] associat[ing] it with [the] Mahabharata."[29] The tazias were carefully designed using Indian and Islamic architecture.[30] Outside of celebratory spaces, Hindus brought spiritual architecture into their residence. Hindu homes in Jamaica were arranged based on special puranic cosmologies. In addition, yantric symbols and mantras decorated their walls to provide more mystical armor to their dwellings. Houses and compounds displayed *Jhandis*—flags symbolizing the sacredness of the space that also communicated to the public the followers' devotion.[31]

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[24] Colin Clarke, *Race, Class, and the Politics of Decolonization: Jamaica Journals, 1961 And 1968* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 164; See also Ajai Mansingh, "Rastafarianism: the Indian connection," *The Gleaner* (Jamaica) Jul. 18, 1985. for a photograph taken around the 1910s that shows an Indian sadhu; See Mansingh and Mansingh, *Indian Heritage in Jamaica*, 13. for the sadhu Kesho Das of Portland.

[25] A house in Rastafari is a branch of the movement "akin to a denomination or a theological stream." See K. Gandhar Chakravarty, "Rastafari Revisited: A Four-Point Orthodox/Secular Typology." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 83, no. 1 (2015): 154.

[26] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Indian Heritage in Jamaica*, 13; Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 66–67.

[27] Aïnouche, *Erased from Collective Memory*, 148.

[28] The procession featured many Hindu inputs such as tantrism, creolized pujas, aarti, and offerings of perfume, money, and flowers.

[29] Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh. "Hosay and Its Creolization." *Caribbean Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 25–39. The Mansinghs have also noted the use of Rastafari flags as decorations in Hussay celebrations in this article.

[30] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Hosay and Its Creolization*, 29.

[31] Douglas Armstrong and Mark W. Hauser, "An East Indian Laborers' Household in Nineteenth-Century Jamaica: A Case for Understanding Cultural Diversity through Space, Chronology, and Material Analysis," *Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 2 (2004): 16; Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 67, 92; Lomarsh Roopnarine, *The Indian Caribbean: Migration and Identity in the Diaspora* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2018), 47.

For acts of worship, Hindus performed pujas in artificial structures such as their homes and *vedis*, as well as in nature such as streams near their barracks.[32] As part of their religious system, menstruating Hindu women were not allowed to cohabit with men nor take part in tantric rituals because of their "uncleanliness,"—a consideration later taken up by some Rastas. One of the more important pujas—the Kali puja, was often performed away from the colonial gaze. During it, devotees invoked the Hindu goddess Kali via tantric means. In a remote spot, a goat was sacrificed, and its blood was drained onto a Kali murti (if there was one) as offerings to the goddess. The hide was used for making dholak drums, and the meat was prepared as curry goat. Sometimes the goat was burned alive to appease the nature of the Mother goddess. The Kali puja was performed for uplifting their spirits during despairing or nostalgic times.[33] Clinton Hutton, a Rastafari scholar, in a footnote, observes how the Jamaican folkloric understanding of the *Coolie Duppy,* "fit[s] the description of 'Kali, the black and terrifying earth mother of Indian mythology.'" He also mentions in the footnote, "by the way, Kali is one of the names given to the 'holy herb' in Rastafari."[34] He notes also that his "study of Revivalism over the last fourteen years has revealed a multiplicity of East Indian elements in Revivalism," one of the Afro-Jamaican religious systems used to bolster and trace a pure or majority-African inheritance of Rastafari. The diffusion of Hindu religiosity into Afro-Jamaican religious and mythological life is the most important thing to note here, especially the ubiquity of Kali in Jamaican folklorization and her lexical invocation to name the "holy herb."

The evening recitations, religious performances, festivals, tantric sessions, Hindu homes, and pujas not only observed Indian religious heritage; they also celebrated Indian culture and reaffirmed identities in isolation from India. The distinction between nonreligious and religious Indian culture were however hardly discrete. These cultural gatherings would later develop into "Indian sessions," gatherings which celebrate Indian heritage, which today are still performed in Jamaica.

The churches and the colonial administration greatly opposed the Indians' religious customs before, during and after indentureship. From the debut of indentureship to around 1930, Indians had actively resisted state conditioning agents such as education and religion.[35] Today, Hindu practices and beliefs coming from indentureship have resisted erasure and are alive in Jamaica, though like other religiosities trafficked to the Caribbean, it has experienced ongoing evolutions and devolutions.[36] While I was in Jamaica collecting some surviving *Indian* vocabularies in an Indo-Jamaican community,[37] a few pointed out that the Indian word for Indian is Hindu,

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[32] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 66–67; Parboosingh, *An Indo-Jamaican Beginning*, 4.

[33] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 67.

[34] Clinton A. Hutton, "Leonard Howell Announcing God: The Conditions that Gave Birth to Rastafari in Jamaica," in *Leonard Percival Howell and the Genesis of Rastafari* eds. Clinton A. Hutton, Michael A. Barnet, D.A. Dunkley, Jahlani A. H. Niaah (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 2015), 52.

[35] Verene A. Shepherd, "Indians and Blacks in Jamaica in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century: A Micro-Study of the Foundations of Race Antagonisms," in *After the Crossing: Immigrants and Minorities in Caribbean Creole Society*, ed. Howard Johnson (London, England: Frank Cass and Company, 1988), 102.

[36] The Indian sessions from indentureship have evolved to encompass new Coolie identities. During these sessions, Indian heritage is still being celebrated through food, folk music, and dances, though some of the religious recitations have been replaced by Chutney music, and Bollywood films have somewhat taken over from the dance dramas. After goats are slaughtered for the famous curry goat, the skins are still dried to make dholak drums.

[37] The Jamaican descendants refer to the surviving vocabularies from Hindi (Bhojpuri) and other Indian languages as the "Indian language."

suggesting an intimate link in the descendants' culture between the faith and citizenship.[38] Modified pujas are still performed by some, even if they do not subscribe to "Hinduism."[39] They are done for blessings and prosperity, or at the passing of a loved one. They will warn however, that if it is done incorrectly, the puja will 'tun bak pon yuh,' vocabulary borrowed from the Afro-Jamaican religious system of Obeah. The mutual cultural borrowings were initiated through the different types of Afro-Indian encounters, beginning with indentureship, and continued into the twentieth century.

The Afro-Indian intimacy began to be more intentionally developed as soon as Coolies began arriving on the island. The Afro-Jamaican community were "far from fearing [the] importation" of the Indian indenturers in the nineteenth century unlike the White missionaries. Afro-Jamaicans welcomed the expansion of consumers in their ground provisions markets. Moreover, out of care for the newcomers, "*The Morning Journal* further reported that '… the immigrants have been well treated by the [Black] peasantry in the country [who have] promised to do all in their power for the 'strangers who have come to a strange land.'"[40] The indenturers occupied the same socioeconomic class as Afro-Jamaicans on arrival to and during their (often permanent) stay on the island. On plantations, there were rapid exchanges of labor-related lexicons to improve work efficiency. Later vocabularies were exchanged through different religious and cultural negotiations.

From 1880–1930, there was an increase in the rate of settlement of the formerly indentured Indians in Jamaica. They however did not create exclusive Indian settlements like in Trinidad and Guyana. Instead, they settled in nearby already established towns. Some of these towns that had substantial Indian settlers were labeled as Coolie or Hindu towns.[41] Interracial families also started to spring up, in most cases it was an Afro-Jamaican man and a Coolie woman. This period also saw the absence of any large-scale conflict between the groups, though mutual racial prejudices and misperceptions did exist.[42] Curry goat also began being welcomed into the everyday Jamaican diet, while Afro-Jamaican provisions like cassava were incorporated into Indian dishes.[43]

The first half of the twentieth century also saw the migration of many Indo-Jamaicans from rural to urban Jamaica. They settled mostly in slums along Spanish Town Road. Very few conflicts emerged from the increased racial contacts in Kingston, contrary to the fear of the opposing Protector of Immigrants.[44] In these settlements most Indo-Jamaicans, as well as a few Afro-Jamaicans, could speak Hindi and memorized the religious poetry mentioned earlier as well as some Hindu proverbs.[45]

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[38] Jamaican descendants of Indian indenturers in discussion with the author, January 2020.
[39] The descendants still refer to these rituals as pujas.
[40] Shepherd, *Indians and Blacks in Jamaica in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*, 98-99.
[41] Shepherd, *Indians and Blacks in Jamaica in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*, 96; Shepherd, *The Dynamics of Afro-Jamaican-East Indian Relations in Jamaica, 1845-1945*, 18-19; Kirk Meighoo, "Curry Goat as a Metaphor for the Indian/Jamaican Future," *Social and Economic Studies* 48, no. 3 (1999): 49.
[42] Shepherd, *The Dynamics of Afro-Jamaican-East Indian Relations in Jamaica, 1845-1945*, 16-17; Shepherd, *Indians and Blacks in Jamaica in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*, 102.
[43] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 94.
[44] Shepherd, *The Dynamics of Afro-Jamaican-East Indian Relations in Jamaica, 1845-1945*, 21.
[45] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 92.

The patches of Indo-Jamaican religiosity as well as interracial encounters mentioned above—language, theology/religious identity, resistance to White (church) power/epistemologies, cultural performance/preservation, socioeconomic identity, health/wellness, geography/residence, family/gender considerations, architecture, and food—will be important to understanding a convergence of Hindu mysticisms into Rastafari's I-n-I. The spatiotemporal locations mentioned earlier are picked up later by perinatal Rastafari.

By 1930, almost a century had passed since the emancipation declaration, yet there was little mobility in Jamaica's class structure. Afro-Jamaicans and Coolies still occupied the lowest socioeconomic class. Additionally, some Afro-Jamaicans were becoming frustrated with the worship of a White Christ and a British King. Rastafari emerges in this context, compounded with Afro-Jamaicans longing for Africa, which they constructed as their motherland. In 1930, Ras Tafari, the eponymous divine King of the movement, was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. Rastafari starts as a reaction to this event. The founding of the movement is usually attributed to four figures: Leonard Howell, Robert Hinds, Joseph Hibbert, and Archibald Dunkley. Most scholars (except Barry Chevannes) agree that the most important and successful of these early leaders was Howell. Chevannes however favors Hinds as the most influential.[46] All four started off and worked independently of each other, though they collaborated every now and then, and Hinds was a deputy to Howell.[47] Other than Hinds, who was a descendant of East Indians,[48] the other founders did not claim any Indian ancestry.

Howell was born in Clarendon in 1898 "at a time when many East Indians lived in parts of the parish."[49] He travelled around, and his last residence before his 1932 deportation to Jamaica was Harlem. In Harlem, he ran a 'tearoom' where he also carried out healing practices. He was accused of making herbal concoctions which Hélène Lee speculates might have been ganja drinks like those he made for his followers at Pinnacle, the first Rasta commune.[50] He was also accused of being an 'Obeahman.' One instance that afforded him such a label was when he threw a living lamb into a fire but allowed for it to escape. Lee suspects that the followers' return of the animal into the blaze as their misreading of Howell's intent to demonstrate a parable. She discredits the Obeah claims as in his first publication, *The Promised Key*, Howell denounces Obeah as well as other African religious continuities.[51]

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[46] Michael Barnett, "Rastafari in the New Millennium," in *Rastafari in the New Millennium* ed. Michael Barnett (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 3.
[47] Michael Barnett, *The Rastafari Movement: A North American and Caribbean Perspective* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 23-24.
[48] Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari Roots and Ideology* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 129.
[49] D. A. Dunkley, "The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica, 1932-1954," *New West Indian Guide* 87, no. 1–2 (2013): 67.
[50] Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta: Leonard Howell and the Rise of Rastafarianism* translated by Lily Davis and edited by Stephen Davis (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003). Originally published in 1999 by Flammarion, France, as *Le Premier Rasta* Hélène Lee, 34.
[51] Lee, *The First Rasta*, 32-33. From the 1930s, to Pinnacle then to West Kingston, the slaughter of goats followed by feasting was an important practice for Rastafari on special nights known as *grounations* as well as other Rastafari ceremonies. This practice was phased out of the movement in the 1960s; See John P. Homiak, "Dub History: Soundings on Rastafari Livity and Language," in *Rastafari and Other African-Caribbean Worldviews*, ed. Barry Chevannes (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 159–160.

Howell began preaching about Selassie in Kingston in 1932 but relocated his efforts to St. Thomas where he gained a following. He moved between the slums of West Kingston and St. Thomas conducting street meetings with Hinds to gain followers until 1940.[52] Often left out of the scholarship on Howell's followers, both during his street preachings and later at Pinnacle, is that it also consisted of some practicing Hindus.[53] Moreover, according to Jake Homiak, a Rastafari anthropologist, "an undetermined number [of Indians] participated in [Leonard Howell's] celebrations" in St. Thomas.[54] Therefore, Hindus were participants in the initial celebrations and street meetings of the movement.

The meetings in the ghettos of West Kingston and St. Thomas served as crucibles of Rastafari thought and practice, though it seems that much of the transmission of Rastafari dogmas came from a top-down hierarchical structure in those days.[55] Howell was closely connected to the Indians in West Kingston, many of whom came from Clarendon. There was a significant concentration of Hindus in West Kingston at the time. The leader of these Hindus was Dhannuk Dhari Maragh.[56] The adjacency of Howell to Indians and Hinduism throughout his life and religious career is something that should not be taken lightly.

During street preachings, the images of Selassie were commonly on display. Howell also sold the images of the Emperor from as early as 1933. Homiak describes the images as "surrogates" for the Emperor.[57] They were deputized symbolic representations of the divine King. Moreover, in the famous 1960 Rastafari report, Rastas made vows to Selassie's photograph.[58] The Emperor's images were integral in channeling the worship of the Emperor, like the use of imagery to focus on the Divine in Hinduism.

In a 1953 street meeting, one of the speeches given to the crowd mentions "I know that the Queen who is coming here doesn't care for me, so why should I adore her? The only future destination is with Ras Tafari. Where was God when the white man was raping India, Egypt and other countries? Haile Selassie is Jesus Christ reincarnated."[59] In this preaching, India occupies a similar position to Egypt and other countries in the path of White oppressive powers. Additionally, Selassie is presented as a *reincarnated* Christ rather than a returned Messiah.

In 1934, Howell was charged with sedition. Upon release, he left St. Thomas and formed the first Rastafari commune known as Pinnacle in St. Catherine, famous for its ganja cultivation. According to Leonard Howell's son—Bill Howell, *ganja* was the preferred name of the plant at

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[52] M. G. Smith, Roy Augier, and Rex Nettleford, "The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica: Part I," *Caribbean Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1967): 7; Dunkley, *The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica*, 75.
[53] Aïnouche, *Erased from Collective Memory*, 151; Dunkley, *The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica*, 67-68; Bill Howell and Hélène Lee, *Pinnacle: le paradis perdu des Rastas*, (France: Editions Afromundi, 2019), 101,151.
[54] Jake Homiak, "Pinnacle Redux: Remembering Leonard Perceval Howell," *Reggae Festival Guide* 1(2009): 68.
[55] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 67, 87.
[56] Mansingh and Mansingh, *The Impact of East Indians on Jamaican Religious Thoughts and Expressions*, 46.
[57] Jake Homiak, "Hail Ras Tafari!: Contending Symbols of Nationhood in the Jamaican Post-Colony" during *The People's Symbols: A Critique of Symbols of Jamaican Nationhood Part II* by the Institute of Caribbean Studies at the University of West Indies on July 23, 2020.
[58] M. G. Smith, Augier Smith and Rex Nettleford, *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica*, 24. The report was written in 1960 to make recommendations to the Jamaican government about the Rastafari movement. See Barnett, *Rastafari in the New Millennium*, 4–5.
[59] George E. Simpson, "Political Cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica," *Social and Economic Studies* 4, no. 2 (1955): 142.

Pinnacle.[60] When asked who the buyers of ganja from Pinnacle were, Bill responded that it was "*Kapatula*," an Indian fraternity, but he did not give any details beyond this.[61] The commune became "the blueprint for future Rastafari communal communities."[62] At Pinnacle, Howell emphasized being called by his Indian name, Gangunguru Maragh,[63] rather than his given birth name. Jephet, an early follower, recalls "when we say Mr. Howell, he say no Gangunguru Maragh, and everybody would say, 'Yes, Gong.'"[64] His emphasis on his Indian name, which consisted of a common last name of the indentured brahmins, and a first name that is a combination of vocabulary from Hindu spiritualities, would suggest that Howell had an intentional encounter with Hinduism and absorbed some appreciative knowledge.[65] Furthermore, the Howellites would inject Howell's Indian name into their songs which refer to him as their "African Gungo [Gangru]," suggesting a type of African-Indian intimacy in his invocation.[66]

A reporter who visited Pinnacle recalls listening to a "mysterious prayer on various occasions [yet] was unable to give its interpretation but was able to say that it forms a pivotal part of all Ras Tafarian [*sic*] ceremonies." The Pinnacle residents were obligated to recite the chant before bed. The words from the prayer were also used outside of Pinnacle rituals such as when some followers were tried.[67] The prayer consisted of many Hindi words. Some of the words that Ajai and Laxmi Mansingh, scholars of the Indo-Jamaican heritage, have identified are *ye dekho* (look here), *maata* (Mother), *halat* (condition) and *anne* (grains).[68] Howell introduced the prayer to his followers at Pinnacle. The language of the chant was given to Howell by Laloo, an Indo-Jamaican. He was a personal bodyguard to Howell. In some scholarship, he might have introduced the notion of Black supremacy to Howell.[69] It may have also been Laloo who gave Howell his Indian name and introduced some of the mysticism to the movement.[70] In addition to the use of Indian culture in early Rastafari, Indians were also welcomed within the communal spaces. Whenever Indians visited the Rastafari commune, they, "according to Howell's instructions, were granted a special place at Pinnacle as visitors."[71]

There were many periodic assaults on the commune by the colonial government. Those in authority also maintained a close watch on Howell and often policed his activities. In between raids, the police would extort Howell. He would bribe the police by killing and preparing curry

[60] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 68.
[61] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 116.
[62] Barnett, *Rastafari in the New Millennium*, 3; Ajai Mansingh compared the commune to ashrams (sadhu monasteries) in Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta*, directed by Hélène Lee and Christophe Farnarier (2010 France: KIDAM-Cyper Produktion, 2011) Kanopy Streaming.
[63] His name is a fusion of the Hindi words *gyan* (also spelled *jñāna*) meaning knowledge, *guna* meaning virtue and *guru* who is a spiritual teacher; Maragh comes from the common brahmin last name in Jamaica; see Mansingh and Mansingh, *The Impact of East Indians on Jamaican Religious Thoughts and Expressions*, 46.
[64] Robert Hill, "Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in Early Rastafari," *Jamaica Journal* 16 no. 1 (1983): 35.
[65] Eboo Patel describes appreciative knowledge as "knowledge developed by actively seeking out the beautiful, the admirable, and the life-giving in others' traditions …"; See Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2016), 111-119.
[66] Homiak, *Pinnacle Redux*, 64.
[67] Hill, *Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in Early Rastafari*, 36; Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta*, directed by Hélène Lee and Christophe Farnarier (2010 France: KIDAM-Cyper Produktion, 2011) Kanopy Streaming.
[68] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 119.
[69] Hill, *Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in Early Rastafari*, 36-37.
[70] Aïnouche, *Erased from Collective Memory*, 151.
[71] Homiak, *Pinnacle Redux*, 68.

goat for extortioners.[72] Charges were also often brought against Howell and his followers. Petrine Archer, a Jamaican art historian, provides a visual analysis of line drawings that were used as evidence against Howell's Rastafari "cult" in one of his trials, that links it to Indian architectural and artistic constructions. According to Howell, the images were "a dream of what houses in future Abyssinia will look like." Archer's analysis speculates on the possibility that the architecture of the drawings being strongly influenced by the tazias of Indo-Jamaican Hussay celebrations.[73] Archer injects the possibility as well that the influence may have been indirect through the Afro-Jamaican Christmas masquerade—Junkanoo, in which Indo-Jamaicans often participated. She takes seriously the likelihood that Howell's celebration of Ethiopia's Christmas in 1937, which got him arrested, "was a creolized version of Junkanoo, with cultural influences that would have appealed to East Indians and West African descendants alike."[74] In preparation of the celebration, Howell had a goat sacrificed and made into curry goat. The similarity of this preparatory ritual to the Kali puja mentioned earlier should be noted. Moreover, Howell's decision to include "a cow arrayed in full Rastafari regalia" could suggests a hat tip to Hindu spirituality.

After the famous 1954 and 1957 raids on Pinnacle, each ending with calculated destructive acts, the Howellites were scattered across Jamaica. The most substantive scattering of fugitives fled to the West Kingston ghettos on Indian settlements. Kingston Pen, in the environs of Spanish Town Road, had been bought by an 1885 indenturer, Tiwari, in the 1920s. It had five sections: Newland, Ackee Walk, Back-O-Wall, Grassyard and Maranga Lane. According to the Mansinghs, it became the "centre of Hinduism and Indian culture in Jamaica."[75] More than 500 Indian families were living in these spaces, participating in several economic activities such as farming and jewelry. Until the 1960s, "Kingston Pen, Denham Town, and the Four Mile [*sic*] were known as Hindu Town."[76] In West Kingston, the celebration of Indian sessions continued. These sessions helped to reconstruct an interrupted Indian history and reaffirmed Indian identity and religiosity. Hinduism was still alive and kicking, and the Hinduism that had survived was indeed kicking to counter a ravaging Christian force. Rastas from Pinnacle chose Indian lands in West Kingston systematically while fleeing state religious persecution. In fact, Rastas were pouring into places like Ackee Walk and Back-O-Wall as early as the 1941 raid on Pinnacle.[77]

Another group of Rastas, the I-gelites mentioned earlier, were in contact with the Indians of West Kingston. They frequently traveled between Back-O-Wall and Wareika Hills (their residence). As stated earlier, Rastas from the I-gelic Houses shared many austere practices with the sadhus, parallels that are likely to have emerged with their interactions with the West Kingston Indians. At this point, it should be clear that Indians, and specifically Hindus, and Hinduism had many points of entry in the early stages of Rastafari. In the section that follows, more explicit attempts will be made that deal specifically with interreligious encounters in the web of I-n-I.

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[72] Lee, *The First Rasta*, 197; Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 120.
[73] Petrine Archer, "Reorienting Rasta: Tracing Rastafari's Visual Roots," in *Leonard Percival Howell and the Genesis of Rastafari* eds. Clinton A. Hutton, Michael A. Barnet, D.A. Dunkley, Jahlani A. H. Niaah, 172-184; Hutton, *Leonard Howell Announcing God*, 44.
[74] Archer, *Reorienting Rasta*, 180; A curious practice of Howell at Pinnacle was throwing money outside his window which his son speculatively questions if it was an offering. This resembles the Hussay offering of money mentioned earlier, see Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 94. Possible connections or lack thereof may need further inquiry.
[75] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 89.
[76] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 89.
[77] Lee, *The First Rasta*, 206.

## I-n-I Metaphysics

From street preaching, to Pinnacle and then to West Kingston, Rastas were mingling with Indians and encountering lived Hinduism. These interreligious encounters were integral in formulating Rastafari metaphysics and language. Velma Pollard describes the Rastafari language (known as Dread talk, Iyaric, or I-talk) as an "adjustment of the lexicon of Jamaican Creole to reflect the religious, political and philosophical positions of the believers."[78] Pollard categorizes its vocabulary into three groups: items bearing new meanings, words that bear the weight of their phonological implications, and I-words.[79] Chevannes traces the origin of Iyaric to the Youth Black Faith that came together around 1949, however Pollard dismisses this on the grounds that it could only supply the second category of words.[80] The feature that often distinguishes Iyaric from other Jamaican dialects is the I-words. Homiak dates the emergence of the I-words to the 1950s using oral testimonies, chants, and available information on the I-gelic 'House.' He proposes that the I-gelites diffused the I-words when they "assimilated within the island-wide network of Rastas."[81] By the 1960s, the centrality of I became part of the movement. Sheila Kitzinger, doing anthropological fieldwork on the Rastas in the mid-1960s, notices this when she states that "as a general rule [Rastas] refer to themselves always in the nominative case: 'Hear I when I call!' "[82]

In Iyaric, "I" combines with "I" to form I-n-I,[83] to reflect the related universalizing metaphysical and linguistic features of Rastafari. The metaphysics of I-n-I emerges before the language as I will demonstrate later. In terms of linguistics, it can be the subject and object pronoun for every person (first, second or third) and number (singular or plural). Sometimes to emphasize a singular subject or object, the speaker may say "the I" or "I-man." The choice to use I-n-I in this way is tied to its description of Rastafari ontology. To call everyone I-n-I is to reiterate the position that to talk to another is to talk to the self. If 'I' choose to describe another speaker as "you" and so on, "I" am locating them on another plane of existence, that is they become a "second" person. Iyaric also shuns the English object pronoun 'me' to center the speaker as a perpetual subject. To say "me" (or *mi* in Jamaican), is to make "I" an object (pronoun).

An important consideration in I-n-I metaphysics is the questioning of how I-n-I move from the more limited self-awareness to realize the greater I-n-I.[84] The Rastafari approach to this is through what I call the "web of I-n-I"—an esoteric nexus of ideas and practices that detail the different paths to I-n-I realization. In what follows, I detail the teachings under five categories—1) knowledge of the I's, 2) Jah King, 3) entheogenesis, 4) reasoning, and 5) *everliving*—while showing I-n-I's relationship to Hindu spiritualities.

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[78] Velma Pollard, *Dread Talk: The Language of the Rastafari* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 18.
[79] Pollard, *Dread Talk*, 24.
[80] Pollard, *Dread Talk*, 26.
[81] Homiak, *Dub History*, 159–70.
[82] Sheila Kitzinger, "The Rastafarian Brethren of Jamaica," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9, no. 1 (1966): 35.
[83] I-n-I translates to I and I. Its spelling reflects the ontological unity. It is often sounded with a yod between the first I and n (IyanI). Alternative spellings include I and I, I n I, and I an I.
[84] Some Rastas may refer to this realization as feeling *Irie*; See Homiak, *Dub History*, 168.

*Knowledge of the I's in relation to the atman and Brahman*

"I" in Rastafari is divine. The Rasta concept of I-n-I unquestionably collapses the distinction between God and humans. The first "I" recognizes the subjective awareness of Divine-self, whereas the second "I" echoes the first and emphasizes the interconnected Divine within all people. An "identification of oneself as divine … is not only encouraged, but mandatory."[85] The first "I" is sometimes referred to as "I-man" to stress the subjective experience of the speaker. To "chant" I-n-I, is to equate oneself with the Divine, and a further ontological relationship with all other humans.

The praxis of self-awareness was part of the Rastafari ethos at Pinnacle.[86] This is further nuanced by the followers' belief that Howell represented himself as divine. Paul, a follower who resided at Pinnacle, recalls that "Howell made his followers believe that 'when you go to him, [it] is God you are talking to.'"[87] Howell's intent however may not have been to be regarded as the God, but rather as divine. Such a reading is further supported by Bill who affirms that each human was god through an encounter with that knowledge as well as the possibilities that are brought on by this awareness. Bill asserts that his father never saw himself as the God, rather someone who was more in line with the transmission of the knowledge of Divine-self.[88] Later, in the 1960 Rasta report, the equating of the self to the Divine is seen more intentionally in the statement "All brethren who regard Ras Tafari as God regard Man as God." This makes clear that possessing this knowledge demarcated Rastas from non-Rastas. Moreover, in the same report the importance of singular versus plural nouns as references for Rasta, as well as language that alludes to the interconnected Divine are made clear, "Man are those who know the Living God, the brethren. Men are sinners who do not, and some of these sinners are the oppressors … for man is one, in God and with God."[89]

The distinction and relationship of both I's of I-n-I maps onto the Hindu concepts of the atman and Brahman and mirrors the relationship between the two. The atman is the "grammatical form of the reflexive pronoun in Sanskrit; according to the context, it can mean the body, anything that one considers as mine or myself."[90] The atman is thus the true innermost self that is a spark of the Divine. On the other hand, Brahman is the eternal all pervasive underlying principle that the atman returns to upon release from the cycle of rebirth. A common metaphor to distinguish and relate Brahman and the atman is a fire and its sparks. The fire represents Brahman as the 'Ultimate Reality,' while the much smaller sparks that are still part of the fire represent the atman.

Like Hinduism, Rastafari requires the acquisition of the knowledge of self (I-man and atman) to be released into the greater reality (I-n-I and Brahman). The first I of I-n-I corresponds to the atman of Hinduism, while the second I corresponds to Brahman. A similar understanding of the relationship between the atman and Brahman would have been present in the Hinduism in

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[85] R. Matthew Charet, "Jesus was a Dreadlocks: Rastafarian Images of Divinity," in *This Immense Panorama: Studies in Honour of Eric J. Sharpe*, eds. Carole M. Cusack and Peter Oldmeadow (Sydney, Australia: Sydney Studies in Religion, 1999), 135-136.
[86] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 139.
[87] Hill, *Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in Early Rastafari*, 36.
[88] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 152.
[89] M. G. Smith, Augier Smith and Rex Nettleford, *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica Part I*, 24.
[90] Klaus Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (Ithaca: State University of New York Press, 2007), 167.

Jamaica based on the religious texts as well as the number of brahmins. Atman-Brahman metaphysics may have been introduced to the Rastas in the cultural contacts mentioned earlier as well as those I lay out below.

*Jah King and Avatars*

Rastafari emerges out of a response to the crowning of Selassie, not because of the Emperor's own beliefs about himself or about God. Rastafari soteriology is not through Selassie's teachings, rather through the knowledge of I-n-I in response to Selassie. The Rastafari founders are purported to come to this understanding of the Emperor independently. As mentioned earlier, they did collaborate from time to time, but it was not clear how they worked together on a doctrinal level. Except for Hinds who confirmed "Howell convinced him of Haile Selassie's divinity," the other two Rastafari founders concluded that Selassie was divine independently.[91]

Not only does the Rastafari Jah (the Iyaric word for God) King parallel the understanding of avatars in the Hindu scriptures mentioned earlier, but also three of the four founders, who had the largest followings and the continuation of their teachings, had explicit Hindu assistance in coming to this realization. In an interview with the Mansinghs, Hibbert tells them that "'in 1921, I acquired books to know about Hindu gods Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Ashoka [*sic*] and became convinced that Africa also has such a god except that we do not know of him.'"[92] This resonates with bhakti yoga in Hinduism. In the Gita, Lord Krishna, outlines three paths to Brahman—bhakti yoga, *jñāna* yoga, and karma yoga. Bhakti yoga is a devotional path. The follower becomes devoted to a specific *ishtadeva* (deity). This may be Lord Vishnu or one of his popular avatars such as Rama or Krishna. To the Bhakti devotee, the ishtadeva becomes Brahman or the path to Brahman. Lord Krishna in the Gita explains that worshiping the unmanifest (Brahman) is made easier by approaching it through a personal form (an avatar or ishtadeva).[93] The choice of ishtadeva may be due to an established tradition or an attraction to ideal qualities of the deity. This path is how Hibbert imagines an African God way before the coronation of Haile Selassie. In searching for his "African god," the ideal qualities of a Black King resisting colonial powers attracted Hibbert to Selassie as an articulation of his path to self-realization.

Building on the above, in Rastafari, "As a development of [the] teaching, that each and every human being is divine and of the same nature as Jah …, it is acknowledged that at certain points in human history, various figures have appeared who manifest their divinity in a greater-than-normal fashion."[94] In this current age, the greater-than-normal manifestation is Selassie who represents I-n-I in response to colonial powers and "systems of Babylon." Similarly, in the Gita Krishna reasons that avatars appear "Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjun, at that time I manifest myself on earth. To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and to reestablish the principles of dharma I appear on this earth, age after

[91] Barnett, *The Rastafari Movement*, 29.
[92] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 119.
[93] Swami Mukundananda, *Bhagavad Gita: The Song of God* (India: Radha Govind Dham Publication Unit, 2013), 12.5.
[94] R. Matthew Charet, *Jesus was a Dreadlocks*, 126; See also George E. Simpson, *Political Cultism in West Kingston*, 142. for the 'reincarnating' language used to describe the Christ.

age."[95] Other Hindu avatars can be found in the Bhagavatam Purana and the Ramayana.[96] Selassie is also understood as part of a line of succession of those who manifested their divinity in greater-than-normal fashion, like how avatars succeed each other age after age in the Bhagavatam Purana.[97] Some Rastas see EliJah being succeeded by Jesus then by Selassie I.[98]

Howell, who influenced Hinds' understanding of the Jah King, also had explicit Hindu influence in the realization of Selassie-Divine. Rastafari elder Filmore Alvaranga describing Howell's understanding of the Jah King explains that "when Howell come here, he come and wake us up to those things, and when he told us about Ras Tafari and we check history, we say he is the returned Messiah."[99] Such a claim may allow one to speculate on the possibility that it was not a reading of the Bible that allowed Howell to conclude Haile Selassie was divine, but instead it was the followers who later validated the Emperor through revisiting familiar Scriptures. The possibility also exists that Howell was able to use familiar Christian frameworks to promote an understanding of the Jah King to his followers, without adhering to the contents of the framework. This is all further complicated by the fact that Howell does not use the language of "Messiah" in *The Promised Key,* which was published under Howell's Indian name: G. G. Maragh.[100] Miguel Lorne, a Rastafari publisher, in his understanding of the text, highlights that in *The Promised Key*, Howell "point[s] to Haile Selassie I … as the Christ reincarnate," language often used in the conceptualization of Hindu avatars.[101]

Howell's Indian first name, Gangunguru, consisted of the word jñāna (gyan), another path outlined in the Gita as the path of knowledge or self-realization. This path deals with the atman and Brahman and their relationship. Usually, one who pursues this path is aided by a guru which could have been Laloo for Howell. In the Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna "Following this path and having achieved enlightenment from a Guru, O Arjun, you will no longer fall into delusion. In the light of that knowledge, you will see that all living beings are but parts of the Supreme, and are within me."[102] Similarly, the realization of I-n-I draws on an understanding that there is an interconnected Divine within all, and even how Howell represented himself as divine at Pinnacle after acquiring knowledge about self resonates strongly with Krishna's teaching in the Gita.

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95 Bhagavad Gita 4.7–8.

96 One of the most important avatars for the Hindu indenturers was Lord Rama, a banished King who battles a demon king and eventually returns from exile to His kingdom. Interestingly, Rama's story resonates with the trajectory of Selassie's life.

97 Ravi M Gupta and Kenneth Russell Valpey. *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Selected Translations.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Bhāgavata Purāṇa 10.51.36.

98 EliJah is a preferred spelling for Elijah in Iyaric in some circles to put weight on the "Jah" in Elijah. Jesus may sometimes be referred to as Jahshua to reveal the Jah in his name. Rastas often say Selassie I, rather than Selassie the first to reflect "I" in Him.

99 Filmore Alavaranga in Ishmahil Blagrove, *Roaring Lion: The Rise of Rastafari*, directed and produced by Ishmahil (London, England: Rice N Peas Films, 2002), DVD.

100 Howell published under an Indian pen name to avoid state persecution. See Lee, *The First Rasta*, 97; G. G. Maragh, *The Promised Key*, ed. Miguel Lorne (Chicago: Frontline Distribution, 2011).

101 Miguel Lorne, a Rastafari lawyer, in Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta*, directed by Hélène Lee and Christophe Farnarier (2010 France: KIDAM-Cyper Produktion, 2011) Kanopy Streaming.

102 Bhagavad Gita, 4.35

*Entheogenesis*

Entheogenesis is the ritual ingestion of a spiritual technology known as an entheogen to tap into unexplored realities or abilities of consciousness.[103] An entheogen is the sacred fulcrum on which the individual is pivoted onto an amplified realization of reality. Followers may ritually ingest these spiritual technologies via smoking or drinking beverages. In Rastafari, the commonly used entheogen is ganja. Ganja became the "agent whose ritual ingestion assists in the journey to discover the true self or I-n-I consciousness."[104] It opens the floodgates to more intimate experiences with the realization of "the I" in relation to I-n-I.

The use of ganja as an entheogen was introduced to Jamaica by Indian indenturers. They used ganja in Kali worship and tantrism.[105] In some of these ganja sessions, some of the Afro-Jamaican population gathered to share in the Kali weed.[106] One can also appreciate the linguistic borrowings of Rastas from Hindi to describe the sacred plant and its accompanying apparatus. The plant is often referred to as ganja or kali (collie) and is smoked in a chillum, or *cutchie* (also spelled *kochi*) and *saapi*.[107] Ganja and kali are both from Hindi, with kali either coming from Kali (the popular Hindu goddess) or *kalee* (the ganja leaf bud) or a combination of both. The names of the smoking receptacles are also of Indian origin. Later words like chalice (for the chillum pipe) and *Ishens* (for ganja, I-word for incense) were added to Iyaric to use Christian frameworks to validate their uses.[108]

Kenneth Bilby, in an often-cited paper on the "Holy Herb," has argued that ganja use in Jamaica may also have an African origin.[109] His article unfortunately treats sub-Saharan Africa as a singular geopolitical and cultural entity, and most of the "tribes" who he claims use ganja come from countries where neither Jamaican slaves nor African indenturers were taken from. Bilby believes his "most convincing case" of the African origins of ganja use in Jamaica is the Kumina practitioners' use of the plant in the nineteenth century and in their dances in the 1950s. The nineteenth century was also the period in which Indian indenturers were introduced to Jamaica. His argument implies that the culture of Kumina was static and impenetrable and could not have absorbed Indian elements after living decades with them in St. Thomas. At the time of his paper, he did not know the origin of the word kochi, and because of its use by Kumina smokers to describe their smoking vessel, he hints that kochi might be of African origin. He also introduces vocabularies for ganja and smoking apparatus that other Rastafari scholarship do not support. These blind spots in his argument have bolstered Rastafari scholarship that wants to maintain an African purity.

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[103] Theodore M. Godlaski, "The God Within," *Substance Use & Misuse* 46, no. 10 (2011): 1217-1222; G. William Barnard, "Entheogens in a Religious Context: The Case of the Santo Daime Religious Tradition," *Zygon* 49, no. 3 (2014): 666–684; Examples of entheogens include peyote in the Native American Church and ayahuasca by Santo Daime in Brazil.
[104] Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 188.
[105] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from* Home, 123.
[106] Jahlani Niaah, "A Grass-Roots Jamaican Cultural Model," *The Gleaner* (Jamaica) Nov. 16, 2018.
[107] J. Edward Chamberlin and Barry Chevannes, "Ganja in Jamaica," in *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking* eds. Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 147.
[108] Homiak, *Dub History*, 161; Pollard, *Dread Talk*, 48.
[109] Unfortunately, many Rastafari scholars have cited Kenneth Bilby, "The Holy Herb: Notes on the Background of Cannabis in Jamaica," *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph*, (1985): 82-95. as definitive 'proof' of the exclusive African origins of ganja in Jamaica.

Other than language and entheogenic purposing, the use of ganja overall in Rastafari (and more widely Jamaica) echo the Indian uses. In *Ganja in Jamaica*, the researchers highlight the anthropological parallels between ganja use in Jamaica and its use in India. This includes the "methods of preparation and use, the role of ganja in folk medicine [teas and tinctures], in divine origin mythology, in pragmatic and ritual uses and the social class framework of use and attitudes toward ganja."[110]

*Reasoning Sessions and Tantric/Indian Sessions*

"Reasoning sessions" are based on the idea that all Rastas possess an essence of the Divine and by interacting in conversations, usually after being pivoted by ganja, they can tease out truth.[111] They explore 'I-man' and what it means in relation to I-n-I. These communal sessions also help to reconnect to a disrupted African history and to reaffirm their origins. Ennis Edmonds and Michelle Gonzalez propose that it was in these reasoning sessions that Iyaric emerges.[112]

These sessions operate like the tantric and Indian sessions during and after indentureship. During indentureship, at the end of each workday, Coolie men would sit together sharing in the smoking of ganja and/or tobacco and they sang folk songs while playing the dholak.[113] They smoked using a *kochi* and *saapi*. Coolie women, often excluded from tantric smoking sessions, also smoked using a hookah, the physics of which functions like the Rasta smoking chalice.[114] The Indian indenturers would also smoke ganja in a *chilam* and would sometimes use beedis, a mini-cigarette made from tobacco.[115] Interestingly, beedi has been marketed in Jamaica under Rastafari imagery despite having Indian origins. Communal ganja smoking allowed indenturers to get together, worship and reconstruct/reaffirm a distant India to which most did not return.

The gender considerations mentioned earlier were also important in the development of Rastafari reasoning sessions. Like the Indians, some Rastas initially excluded women from smoking rituals and reasonings based on menstrual taboos.[116] Menstruating women were (and continue to be in some circles) regarded as unclean bodies that should not partake in the sacred acts and intellectual sessions.

Reasoning sessions resonate with the ritualized smoking done by sadhus. Apart from the socializing uses of ganja, sadhus also used ganja to meditate, and to focus on and connect their minds to divine bliss. They also smoked ganja in praises to the Divine to "seek release from their mortal coils."[117] Today in India, sadhus still smoke ganja, often in groups with other sadhus and non-sadhus, to meditate on divine consciousness. They invite religious discussions and the

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[110] Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas, *Ganja in Jamaica: A Medical Anthropological Study of Chronic Marihuana Use* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton & Co, 1975), 16; Chamberlin and Chevannes, *Ganja in Jamaica*, 147.
[111] Michael Barnett, "Rastafari Dialectism: The Epistemological Individualism and Conectivism of Rastafari," *Caribbean Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2002): 57; Edmonds and Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History*, 188.
[112] Edmonds and Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History*, 188.
[113] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Indian Heritage in Jamaica*, 16.
[114] Chamberlin and Chevannes, *Ganja in Jamaica*, 147.
[115] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 16.
[116] Niaah, *A Grass-Roots Jamaican Cultural Model*.
[117] Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), 87.

partaking in the smoking of the ganja. The purpose of such tantric practices is to attain divine consciousness in a current life. Many Rastas use ganja for the same reasons. The Rasta communal reasoning sessions engaged theocratic discourses, Rastafari ethics, and other social topics.

Rastas reasoning sessions begin with ganja in the kochi or chillum being lit and dedicated to the Emperor. Similarly, during the Kali puja and tantric sessions mentioned earlier, the ganja would be dedicated to the Mother goddess before smoking by chanting "*Jai Kali Mai*!" Sometimes a mantra precedes the hailing of the goddess.[118] *Jai* can mean hail as used in the chant to hail the Mother goddess in times of despondency. *Jai* can also mean victory to or glory to, such as victory to Lord Rama (*Jai Ramji*!) as he is about to head into battle with Ravana, an oppressive king. Jai (dʒæ) does not only sound like the Rastas' Jah (ʤɑː) but is also used semantically as *Jah* in Rastafari reasoning sessions. Before communal smoking, Rastas bless the pipe by shouting "Jah Rastafari!" This can mean hail Ras Tafari, glory unto Ras Tafari, or even victory to Ras Tafari (resisting colonial powers). Additionally, Pinnacle Rastas used "Jah Rastafari" in their resistance songs for comfort or whenever a moment of great difficulty drew near.[119]

In West Kingston, Rastas living alongside Indo-Jamaicans, developed camps that sold and distributed the sacred ganja. These camps were also important in the development of reasoning sessions. The use of a space dedicated to the smoking and distribution of ganja was however not a new phenomenon in Jamaica. According to Chevannes, "The idea of an herbs yard was not new. A very old non-Rastafari informant remembered taking part in ganja smoking contests in the yard of an East Indian who used to peddle it around the time of the First World War. What seemed to be new was its rapid spread among the African population."[120] The camps also served medical concoctions prepared by a specialist from different herbs including ganja, like the vaidyas of the Ayurvedic system from indentureship.

Bilby, in his article mentioned earlier, attempts to discount the Indian contribution of ganja to Rastafari on the grounds of the distinctness of the reasoning sessions from any Hindu practice. He highlights that reasoning sessions are not associated with Shiva, who is usually associated with ganja and sadhus in Hinduism. Given the evidence presented earlier, the claim of distinctness is not true as the reasoning sessions bear strong similarity to the Indian and tantric sessions in religio-cultural performance, language and devices surrounding smoking, and theology. The explicit encounters between Afro-Jamaicans with ganja and the Indian social purposing of it in an Indo-Jamaican setting also supports an idea of cultural borrowing. Moreover, Bilby's analysis of Lord Shiva lacks understanding of the previously mentioned bhakti traditions. His argument suggests that an important missing piece of Rastafari which would support the Hindu origins of ganja in the movement is the worship of Lord Shiva. Indeed, Indians in Jamaica were worshiping Lord Shiva prior to 1930.[121] However, to worship an Indian god would be antithetical to Rastafari African centeredness. An Indian God could not be an articulation of the path to self-realization in the logic of Rastafari.

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[118] Mansingh and Mansingh, *Home Away from Home*, 67, 119–120.
[119] Howell and Lee, *Pinnacle*, 122-123.
[120] Chevannes, *Rastafari Roots and Ideology*, 153.
[121] Chakravarty, *Rastafari Revisited*, 157.

*Death? Everliving and Mokṣa*

In an interview with Ian Boyne, Mutabaruka, a Rasta philosopher and apologist, explains that "death is not the end of life, [because] life cannot die, entities die."[122] Some scholars have mistaken Rastas' detachment from death as denial. In relation to I-n-I, transitioning[123] is understood as dissolving of I-man completely into the full life energy of I-n-I. This is known as *everliving.*[124] Everliving is achieved through the full knowledge of the inward divinity.[125]

Rastas stayed away from the temporal dealings associated with death in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The followers of Hinds did not even attend his funeral in 1950.[126] A similar detachment from death in Hinduism can be found in chapter two of the Gita. Lord Krishna detailing the immortality of the atman to Arjuna explains "…he who dwells in the body is eternal and can never be slain. Therefore you need not grieve for any creature."[127] A strong engagement with death in Rastafari history emerges with the reported transitioning of the Emperor in 1975. Bob Marley, the world-famous Jamaican Rasta musician who adopted Howell's Indian name 'the Gong,' released the song "Jah live" shortly after the announcement. In Jah live, Marley explains, "Fools say in their heart / Rasta your God is dead! / But I-n-I know Jah."[128] In these lyrics, Marley dismisses the claims of the Emperor's supposed death on the grounds that I-n-I knows Jah. Claiming the Emperor to be dead was because of the lack of understanding of the claimants and their lack of knowledge of I-n-I. Notice as well how Marley draws on the I-n-I concept to explain the *everpresence* of the Emperor, rather than succumbing to a mainstream Christian-inclined theory of death.

Another explanation of everliving is given in the interview with Mutabaruka mentioned earlier. Boyne (interviewer) tries to map Muta's understanding of death through Christian lens. Muta quickly corrects him and provides an explanation of the everliving concept:

> Life cannot die. Life does not belong to individuals, but individuals possess a life energy that makes them, makes them individuals. It is like a building in an open land. … the space outside of the building and the space inside of the walls of the building is the same space but what differentiates the space is that wall. If you move the wall, the space does not go with the building … when you talk about death, death means that the building crumbles but there is nothing that is following the building.
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> Life does not have an individualistic personality….Life is the source that binds everything together. So, in other words now, you cannot come out of life and then say you are still life. When you're dead, you're dead. But the life that makes you understand what

[122] Mutabaruka on *Religious Hard Talk*, directed by Richard Prince, aired 2007, on Television Jamaica.
[123] Rastas may sometimes use 'transition' to describe dying.
[124] Everliving is the Iyaric word for everlasting since 'last' would suggest an end to a continuity. Some Rastas may use everpresence to describe everliving.
[125] Charet, *Jesus was a Dreadlocks*, 126, 130.
[126] Barry Chevannes, "Rastafari and the Coming of Age: The Routinization of the Rastafari Movement in Jamaica," in *Rastafari in the New Millennium* ed. Michael Barnett, 18-20.
[127] A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is *Abridged ed.* (New York: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1972), 2.30.
[128] Bob Marley & The Wailers, "Jah Live," Recorded 1975, track 9 on *Rastaman Vibration*, Island Records, 2001. This song was originally recorded and released as a single in 1975.

> you is [*sic*] now, is continuous…body is the connection that life makes with the material world… The material world is there, but life exists whether or not the material world is there or not.[129]

Compare Muta's analogy to the explanation of death with reference to the Gita 2.22 by Anantanand Rambachan, a scholar of Caribbean Hinduism: "Firstly, a suit of clothing is not identical with the wearer. Similarly, the physical body, which is likened here to worn-out garments, is not the true being or identity of the human person. Secondly, there is the similarity of a continuity of being. When a worn-out suit of clothing is cast off, the wearer continues to be. Similarly, with the disintegration with the physical body the indweller, that is the Self, continues to be."[130] In both analogies, "death" is thus the disintegration of only the physical body.

In Hinduism "birth implies the association of the [atman] with a new body, while death implies the dissociation from that body."[131] The highest goal in Hindu life is to rejoin with Brahman upon death known as mokṣa rather than reincarnating. This can be compared to "a drop of water falling into the ocean, what was once thought to be an individual disappears into the greater whole of the true reality."[132] The atman rejoining with the Brahman to achieve mokṣa resonates with I-man rejoining with the universal life energy to attain everliving.

Rastas also believe in reincarnation. Rasta reincarnation comes from a creolization of the Biblical motif of Babylon and Hindu reincarnation.[133] While Babylon has much to do with the police (how it is often used), it is a critique of the oppressive systems we have come to validate as normal. The biblical motif of Babylon can be thought of a series of succession of power that has been ascribed normalcy in society rather than recognizing I-n-I. Rastas understand themselves as reincarnation of the ancient Israelites since they have come to occupy *downpressed* positions in Babylon.[134] Some Rastas understand reincarnation like some doctrines of Hindu reincarnation where there is the progression of I-man (atman) in different earthly forms until all the lessons of life are learned.[135]

While it is possible that the Rasta understanding of everliving might have also been developed from traces of the West African ancestral realm where the spirits of the dead still exist within the life realm,[136] Rastas had (and many still do have) strong disdain for talks of duppies and

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[129] Mutabaruka on *Religious Hard Talk*. Mutabaruka seems to be drawing on the same everliving teaching as Homiak, *Dub History*, 167. Homiak links this understanding to the I-gelites mentioned earlier. Homiak highlights that this group of Rastas moved between Wareika Hill and Back-O-Wall and had similarities to Indo-Jamaican culture; See Homiak, *Dub History*, 137, 179.
[130] Anantanand Rambachan, *A Hindu Vision* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992), 30.
[131] Rambachan, *A Hindu Vision*, 20.
[132] Christopher M. Moreman, *Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 94–95.
[133] Reincarnation refers to the succession of the atman guided by past karma until finally achieving unity with Brahman (mokṣa); Rambachan, *A Hindu Vision*, 30; Moreman, *Beyond the Threshold*, 93-96, 104.
[134] "Downpressed" is the Iyaric word for oppressed. It is part of the second category of words that Pollard describes. Since "oppressed" has the sound "up" in it, Rastas replace it with "down" since there is no "up" involved in the positions they occupy.
[135] Martin J. Schade, *Incarnation: The Harmony of One Love in the Totality of Reality* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2016), 82.
[136] Moreman, *Beyond the Threshold*, 159; Chevannes, *Rastafari and the Coming of Age*, 18.

their 'so-called' interference with the living. Howell went as far as denouncing ghosts in *The Promised Key*. This would suggest that there may not have been conscious efforts of folding the belief into Rastafari, however at the very least, it cannot be ruled out as also having some influence alongside Hindu conceptions of death and afterlife.

## Conclusion

Despite evidence that the use of I-words existed decades after the start of Rastafari, there are clues to suggest that the concept of I-n-I emerges before this. The first clue is the manifestation of the Divine in a greater-than-normal fashion in the person of Selassie I. The second is the cultivation of ganja for entheogenic purposes at the Pinnacle commune and Howell's view of his own divinity. The universalizing principle is clearly part of the movement in the famous Rastafari report in 1960, after the breakup of the commune and scattering of Rastas: "man is one in God and with God."[137] These clues would suggest that the I-n-I concept can be traced back to the genesis of Rastafari and continued to develop throughout its infancy. Thus, the metaphysics of I-n-I emerges before the language of I.

At each of the abovementioned stages in the formulation of I-n-I, Rastas had several interreligious encounters with Indo-Jamaicans, and explicit help from the Hindus in developing their teachings. Before their arrival, during indentureship and after, Indo-Jamaicans shared many cultural and religious intimacies with Afro-Jamaicans. These encounters were integral in formulating Rastafari metaphysics. The Rasta metaphysics of I-n-I is a convergence of the Hindu spiritualities of atman-Brahman, avatars, entheogenesis, tantrism and mokṣa brought to Jamaica by Indian indenturers. The Indian presence is often presented as a footnote to Jamaican history and culture despite having contributed many things we have come to call "Jamaican." This article aims to work against the footnoted narrative by excavating the historical silences of the Hindu contributions to the genesis and development of Rastafari metaphysics.[138]

This article does not make the claim that Rastafari is any less "Black" by shedding light on Hindu inputs in the movement. Such a tempting reading would mean that Rastafari becomes less "Black" when one recognizes its White Christian elements. I believe scholars' disdain toward the Hindu contribution to Rastafari stems from the idea that the Indo-Jamaican community was and still is read as Indian and not as Jamaican. Moreover, far too many scholars have read Rastafari exclusively through Afrocentric lens. Afrocentric scholars have been determined to show that Rastafari is an African continuity rather than the movement centering Africa. Such short-sighted work assumes that for a culture to be considered authentically African or Black, it needs to be part of a continuous transmission with little to no interruptions or influence from 'foreign' cultures. Rastafari does not need to center an African system to center Africa. Interestingly Chevannes highlights the seemingly "un-African" origins of the movement: "in its belief and ritual structures, Rastafari mutes its African religious pedigree. The single exception would be its own drumming tradition, whose evolution was influenced by both Buru and Kumina. This presents us with a

[137] M. G. Smith, Augier Smith and Rex Nettleford, *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica Part I*, 24.
[138] Though there are other Afro-Indian interreligious encounters in Rastafari outside of I-n-I, this paper's focus is on I-n-I. Linda Aïnouche has highlighted resonances between Rastafari's *livity* (lifeway) such as an ital (a special type of vegetarian) diet, dreadlocks, and a detachment from society; See Linda Aïnouche, *Erased from Collective Memory*.

paradox: the most vocally Pan-African religion in Jamaica is the least 'African' in appearance, while visibly the most 'African' are vocally the least Pan-African."[139]

A fitting way to end this paper is to ask, 'how different would the theology of I-n-I be if Indian indenturers did not come to Jamaica?'

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[139] Barry Chevannes, "Ships That Will Never Sail: The Paradox of Rastafari Pan-Africanism," *Critical Arts: Communicating Pan-Africanism: Caribbean Leadership and Global Impact* 25, no. 4 (2011): 573.