



Seven ways to good mental wellbeing & Rastafari

You might find it useful to consider the following seven steps to improve your mental health and wellbeing in line with Rastafari beliefs.

One Spiritual wellbeing



“Discipline of the mind is a basic ingredient of genuine morality and therefore of spiritual strength. Spiritual power is the eternal guide, in this life and the life after, for man ranks supreme among all creatures.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I

Spiritual wellness is at the heart of the Rastafari way of life. Known as livity, this combines ital (natural or pure foods from the earth) with positive mental attitude, righteousness and morality in a holistic healing methodology.

The Rastafari community holds fast to an ancient doctrine of natural living and peace and love for all humankind on earth. Its motto is that “the hungry be fed, the naked clothed, the sick nourished, the aged protected, the infants cared for, the homeless sheltered”.

Rastafari seek to become the spiritual, mental and intellectual children of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I and acknowledge Rastafari in all Ways and Things in order to achieve a positive pathway throughout life.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

— HEBREWS 11:1

Ways to improve your spiritual wellbeing

- Bless each day by giving thanks and ises (praise) unto The Most High, The Creator, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, Jah RasTafari
- Take part in Rastafari prayer – daily acts of worship and spiritual endeavour that encompass meditation, conscious awareness and focus
- Aspire to do work that has the greatest positive impact on humanity and seek equal spiritual and material growth
- Reach out and inspire others – volunteer with like-minded people. Serve community or cook and share a meal with someone in need
- Take part in the Nyabinghi gatherings of song and chant of the faithful – the drum sound that declares ‘DO GOOD! DO GOOD! DO GOOD!’ is the heartbeat of Rastafari spirituality

Two Physical wellbeing



“A modern building with all its physical facilities is not enough to cure patients, and you should not forget that your will to serve and your smiling faces act as tonics towards [physical] recovery.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I

Physical and spiritual essence can be harmonised to provide tranquility, which is so vital to total wellbeing within Rastafari.

When Rastafari speak of physical wellbeing, we speak of it naturally from a wholesome perspective. Physical health can be equated to the maintenance of one’s body as a vehicle (it is not everything but it carries one’s true inner nature). The body is regarded as a temple and must be treated with the same care as a noble caretaker would give to a church.

Once a Rastafari member awakens by the grace of the sustainer, they would benefit from waking up to a blessed environment.

Ways to improve your physical wellbeing

- Start the day early
- Have cold showers
- Use natural hygiene products (free from chemicals)
- Drink different herbal teas at different times of the day for different reasons
- Go outside, spend time in nature and take in plenty of sunshine
- Do regular physical activity
- Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food
- Join a drumming session or singing group
- Take part in health and wellbeing activities run by Rastafari, such as Rastarobics and Kemetic Yoga
- Use holistic health and wellbeing services

Three Educational wellbeing



“It is education that enables man to harness nature and utilise her resources for the wellbeing and improvement of his life. The key for betterment and completeness of modern living is education.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I

Rastafari sees the physical, social, spiritual and moral rooted in the lifestyle of human societies.

Education is closely connected to Entertainment (Edutainment) as part of Rastafari teachings are conditioned by the same breath and process or ‘word, sound and power’. Much has been learned from Rastafari musicians, songwriters and orators. Rastafari word sound, music and chant is likened to public health and awareness and Rastafari has its own “language of black dignity”.

In essence, education is at the heart of the Rastafari community and part of its day to day reality. Rastafari education is culturally relevant and the knowledge of Africanness is paramount to good mental wellbeing.

Rastafari meditate a lot to accommodate good thoughts, vibrations and reasoning and are always seeking to learn, teach and share knowledge, overstanding wisdom (wisemind) and divine inspiration.

Ways to improve your educational wellbeing

- Learn about African history and culture
- Read about His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen I
- Research the Rastafari Ways of Life
- Learn about The Houses and Mansions of Rastafari
- Study the Rastafari Code of Conduct
- Learn the Rastafari Creeds
- Practice the Rastafari Chants
- Attend cultural workshops (in person and online)
- Engage in discussion with community leaders, teachers, tutors
- Share what you have learned about the Rastafari Ways of Life

Four Iniversal

Universal wellbeing



“You must rid your deliberations of petty concerns. You must place principle above all else. You must avoid the least thought of personal gain or position in reaching your decisions.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE

For Rastafari, humanity is the extended family. As social beings cultivating thoughts, feelings, emotions and communications, words, and deeds, they are in harmony, organically, with the health and wellbeing of humanity and the temple of The Almighty.

The essence of world citizenship and governance, as well as the notion of collective survival or extinction, sees Rastafari using technology as a tool for harmonious synchrony and world unity, which emulates positive words and achievement placing His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen I onto the world stage.

Technology enables Rastafari to connect with our families and the global community of humanity.

Ways to improve your universal wellbeing

- Learn how to use the internet, email and mobile technology
- Use technology to remain connected to your African roots locally and globally and stay in touch with friends and family across the world (e.g. video chat)

Five Food and wellbeing



“Food is the staff of life and men and women shall not live by bread alone. Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food. This saying is a reflection highlighting the significance of health and nutrition in synchrony with Rastafari livity, dietary nutritional and medicinal codes.”

— AKLILA KEDAN

Members of the Rastafari community absorb spiritual vibrations in food. Physical substances that are eaten must enhance their structure, their bodily temple, their human vehicle or body (known as ‘Goody’).

Foods are prepared as naturally and simply as possible and include many raw foods, especially fruits, nuts and vegetables. Salt is omitted or kept to a minimum and natural herbs are essential. Food must be consumed in a holistic way that is in harmony with an ecological balance and promotes life, health, collective growth, development and sustainability.

Many Rastafari acknowledge that the human digestive system is designed for *Lacto-vegetarian* or *ital livity*. Although some Rastafari still eat fish or animal flesh, most Rastafari have the lived experience of isolation and exile, so connections to food and wellbeing, growing food and sharing food is essential for wellbeing. The culinary creations of Rastafari are colourful and exciting and cover a range of textures, food groups and tastes.

Rastafari life also reflects the overstanding that food is a social indicator and an instrument for social change and has a profound impact on social and cultural wellbeing and Rastafari livity.

Ways to improve your wellbeing through what you consume

- Try healthy recipes that include fresh coconut, fruit, vegetables, roots, edible barks, leaves and stems, cereals, whole grains, nuts and herbs
- Grow your own fruit, vegetables and herbs
- Make your own natural juices
- Reduce your intake of processed and sugary foods
- Refrain from cigarettes and alcohol
- Get plenty of fresh air, clean water and sunshine

Six Social wellbeing



“Any who may wish to profit himself alone from the knowledge given to him, rather than to serve others, for the knowledge he has gained from learning, is betraying knowledge and rendering it worthless.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE

The Rastafari cultural calendar is conditioned by the solemnity of the Nyahbinghi foundation and includes many festivals and pilgrimages.

The major rallying point of unity and togetherness for the Rastafari community is the Nyahbinghi celebration of groundations, which traditionally takes place in April. This is a colourful, dramatic and spectacular commemorative occasion that always generates a great vibration and festive mood and marks the beginning of many festivities of Rastafari.

The Nyabinghi is both a social and spiritual place of gathering utilising traditional drums and hand shakers. Social life is guarded and conditioned by high moral principles.

The Nyabinghi traditionally lasts for a minimum of seven days and functions as a retreat. Daytime events are used for reasoning, relaxing and deliberation and, at night, there is song and chanting of ises (praises) and celebration in a service-like or church-like atmosphere, utilising traditional drums.

Ways to improve your social wellbeing

- Attend events in the Rastafari cultural calendar
- Take trips of significant pilgrimage
- Develop tangible acts that recognise Rastafari development
- Focus on activities that move away from isolation, depression and anxiety
- Connect and support people who are in isolation

Rastafari cultural calendar

- 7 January**
Rastafari or Ethiopian Christmas
- February**
Black History Month in Jamaica
- 1 March**
Commemoration of Battle of Adwoa
- 25 March**
Earthday of Empress Menen, Queen of Ethiopia
- 11-12 April**
Commemoration of Coral Garden Incident
- 21 April**
Groundations and Commemoration of His Imperial Majesty's visit to Jamaica
- 5 May**
Ethiopia Victory Day
- 25 May**
African Liberation Day
- 16 June**
Earthday of Leonard Percival Howell - "The first Rastafari"
- 23 July**
Earthday of His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I
- 1 August**
Emancipation Day Reparation and Repatriation
- 17 August**
Marcus Garvey Day
- 11 September**
Ethiopian New Year
- 2 November**
Coronation Day
- 10 December**
International Human Rights Day

Seven Economic wellbeing



“Money is an instrument, but there is no duty that can be fully accomplished with its mere persuasive power. The work of the welfare organisation is not merely the distribution of money, but also the giving of personal warmth, of wholehearted services and spiritual encouragement. The time we spend in the fulfilment of such duties is the determining factor which demonstrates that the essence of one’s individual values is not obliterated.”

— HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I

It is vital that every community prospers with parity to ensure equality in the development of wellbeing. Steadfast faith in and earnestness of Rastafari feeds a will to be and to become; faith without works is seen as worse than death. Faith needs to be acted upon both spiritually and materially. It is faith that feeds the vision and energy to cultivate the need to manifest Rastafari livity and tangible reality that constitutes potential and aspirations of the faithful to be well and experience wellbeing.

Rastafari are very productive and creative, trading many items such as food, clothing, books, crafts and a range of services to the wider community. Land for growing food is as essential as the way food is grown according to moon cycles. Specialist food, herbal and ital stores and projects that deliver training in nutrition and wellbeing are also essential.

Ways to improve your economic wellbeing

- Identify your local Rastafari health and wellbeing shops and projects where you can get specialist support and advice to help improve your wellbeing
- If you have creative ideas, speak with local business advisers and existing businesses to help get started
- Go online and use technology to assist in managing your business – there are many free applications that support businesses to become prosperous
- Join business support networks
- Promote your business locally and globally

About Us

Good Thinking is supported by the NHS and London borough councils. We provide free, 24/7, digital support to Londoners seeking mental health advice and help regardless of where they are on their journey. We offer round the clock support and self-care options that are easy to access, and simple to navigate.

Our Mission

We support individuals to look after their mental wellbeing in a way that works best for them. We encourage everyone to be proactive about their mental health and we provide tools and guidance to support this. If these suggestions or the resources on Good Thinking are not helpful for you, try talking to your GP about what else may be more helpful for you.

For more information, visit www.good-thinking.uk



This text has been adapted by Sistah Stella Headley from Rastafari Movement UK, Aklila Kedan, Elder Ras Shango Baku of the National Nyabingi Council UK & Elder Gabre Wold along with wider input from the global Rastafari community.