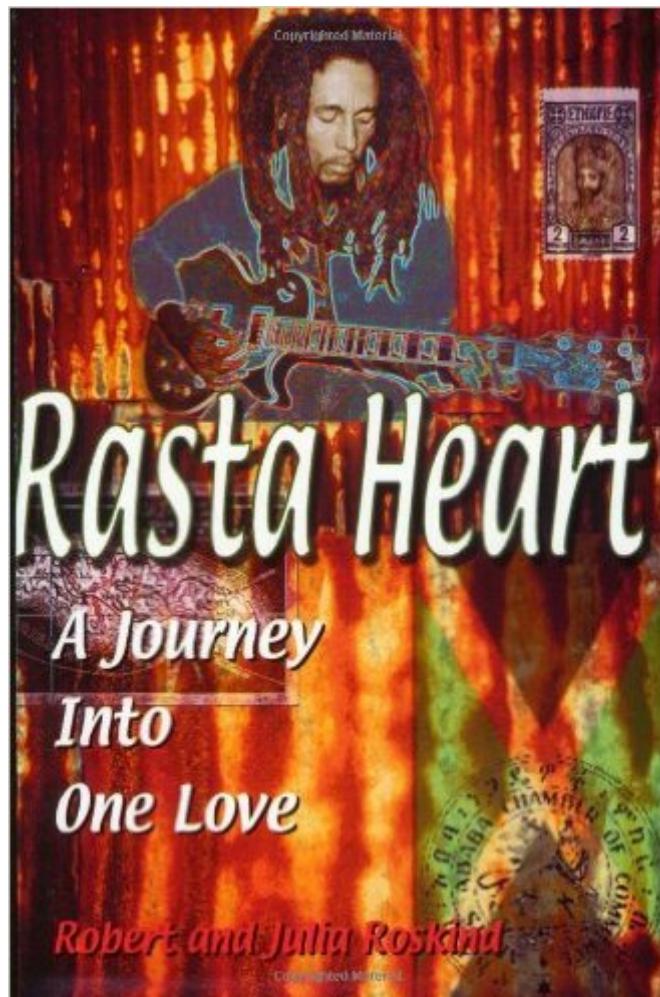


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# Rasta Heart: A Journey Into One Love



## **Synopsis**

Since his passing in 1981, Bob Marley's music, like tribal drumming, has been sending out a message of love and freedom for all humanity. Twenty years later, Julia and Robert Roskind traveled to Jamaica to learn more about Rastafari-the people and philosophy that inspired his music. Their life-changing odyssey through the towns, villages and mountains of this beautiful island, revealed not only the Rasta way of life but an ancient mystery as well. "RASTA HEART" is truly a journey into One Love. "Riveting... An incredible adventure that reveals the true essence of Rasta!" Dr. Dennis Forsythe author of "Rastafarians: The Healing of the Nations."

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I saw this book on a shelf in an internet shop in Montego Bay. I opened it in a random way and read a paragraph or two, and I knew I was going to take this book. I left the store quite happy to have found this book. If you've been to Jamaica more than a few times, and you have become impressed by the rastas there, then get this book. You are likely to have the same appreciable insight about the rastas as Robert Roskind does. Robert Roskind uses the book to provide almost a forum for the rastas to share what you might see and hear if you were there. He is full of understanding and appreciation for who they are and what they believe. The book is like a travel log on Jamaica with the major focus on the rastas and their history. It is certainly better to go to Jamaica yourself. If you've been there and know what is going on, then the book serves as a memoir of a very special place. This book provided me with a little more grounding in the rasta ideas/beliefs. Helped me understand a little more about the role of ganja. The author adds an excellent history of the hemp plant in a few pages; information that I was not aware of. The author knows how to enjoy himself there and from the

pictures it looks like he fits in well as a spiritual person himself. It is a very enjoyable book if you already have some interest, curiosity, and personal experience with the rastas. If you have the same appreciation, then the book is an easy, informative, and nostalgic read. The book would not likely grab you in the same way, it might be a little more difficult to appreciate, the ideas might not seem as special or potent to you, if you have not already gained the same vision as the author.

After spending some time in West Africa where I came across many inspirational Rastas, I came back to America wanting to learn more about this lifestyle. I found Roskind's book to be VERY firsthand and informative; after all, he speaks with dozens of Rastas with a whole range of views on Rastafari and One Love. The book was brilliantly written (with a lot of editing errors, however) and a great read for someone who is a novice to this faith. However, I do have one reservation about the author himself. Throughout the book he and the people he interviews criticize Babylon and all its materialism yet during his many trips to Jamaica he stays at the finest resorts (Babylon), likely owned by white non-Jamaicans (Babylon), and he talks about how he spends days here and there snorkeling, laying out, eating, etc. (Babylon). I am not trying to point any fingers, I would just assume that if someone was trying to minimize one's materialistic desires and really experience Rastafari than one would at least stay at less plush resorts - especially when in a developing country. Other than that, an excellent read.

I don't know how to go about reviewing this book. It grabbed my attention from the beginning and would barely let go for me to get some sleep each night. This book helped open my eyes about a lot of things in the world, and was a part in changing my attitude from depressed and hateful to optimistic, loving and caring. The people you will meet in this book are simply amazing, and it is truly heartwarming to realize that people like them exist in this world. In my opinion, it is a great introduction to the Rastafari lifestyle. Occasionally it felt a bit self-serving, but that may have been the former cynic in me still coming out. After reading this book, I feel that without a doubt, there is a chance for peace among men on earth. One Love is coming, people get ready, because when it gets here, we're going to be overjoyed.

Self-described ex-hippie Robert Roskind takes us on a journey to Jamaica, where we meet various practitioners of the Rasta philosophy and way of life. The Rasta worldview can be summed up as a critique of "Babylon" - materialism, colonialism, racism, consumerism, and environmental degradation - in favor of a lifestyle based on cooperation, simplicity, vegetarianism, and spirituality

based on the consumption of *ganga* (marijuana) as a kind of natural sacrament. Roskind's Rastamen are not "activists" or "leaders" in the usual sense, but rather ordinary men (and a few women) trying to live a natural lifestyle in a world dead-set against it. Chief among these is a man known as "Scram," a middle-aged jack-of-all-trades who expounds the Rasta philosophy of "One Love" as he does his best to get by in a world gone mad. With few exceptions, Scram and the other Rastamen we meet are sympathetic figures, engaging and intelligent, kind-hearted and resourceful. We also see, however, that there are hordes of "false" Rastas, outwardly projecting the image but inwardly full of the spirit of Babylon. Roskind is very much an enthusiastic convert to, and apostle for, the Rasta philosophy and way of life, and this perhaps leads him to promote views of African history, vegetarianism, and marijuana usage that are more debatable than he would lead us to believe. For example, he rattles off a series of claims that meat-eating CAUSES malnutrition in the Third World because it consumes resources (water, grain, land, etc.) that would be used more efficiently if vegetarianism were the norm. The reality is much more complex than that; if the entire USA were to become vegetarian, that would not in itself put one spoonful of food into the mouth of anyone in the Third World - much more would be required. The transition from Babylon to Paradise would undoubtedly require a somewhat authoritarian political movement, and the mostly non-political Rastas are justifiably suspicious of that very thing. My other caveat is that - appealing as it may be in some ways - the Rasta way of life is not in and of itself a solution to the world's problems. (At one point, Roskind himself seems to acknowledge this.) Solving problems of poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation will require scientific and technical expertise, and this will not be found by smoking spliffs and playing drums in the hills, villages, and slums of Jamaica. And even the spiritual benefits of Rasta are not inevitable or automatic for its practitioners. At one point, someone admits it's easier to love the whole world than one's wife or ex-wife, and several of the people featured in this book have that very problem. Despite these considerations, this book is an enjoyable read, and the people we encounter are generally lovable and memorable. We can learn something from people who - despite centuries of poverty, discrimination, and even persecution - seem generally happier than people who superficially have so much more.

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