

Barry Chevannes, Myalism, Revivalism, Rastafari and Leadership

by

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Abstract

Humans have only been able to survive in association with other humans. For this reason, society has been the only logical, practical and pragmatic arrangement in which such survival has been maximally realized, both for the self in terms of the basic necessities and, where the former have been achieved, other luxuries of life; and for the group as communes for the clearest definition, realization and appreciation of worthwhile modes of existence and interaction. This is a basic datum of human existence which is incontrovertible, even by the most cynical conception of human existence in the form of extreme individualism and libertarianism championed, by the advocates of social contract such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Bewaji 1999).

The next statement boldly posited in this discussion is this: Human societies have been able to develop socially, culturally, economically, technologically, scientifically, spiritually, aesthetically and make progress, or they have fallen into decay, dysfunction and committed communal and corporate suicide as a consequence of the kinds of leadership and leadership education that the societies have had. To this end, it is affirmed that the decisions that leadership makes determines the fortunes of society as a group and of individuals as atomic members of society.

These are the banal hypotheses that guide this discussion. And they are banal hypotheses that have implications that a single disciplinary investigation cannot fully sustain, because they have so many ramifications that require multidisciplinary approaches for proper elucidation and harnessing. But they are ones that have become very persuasive to me, given my humble familiarity with some of the various elements of the academe and how they have studied societies and commented on human existence. In this discussion, therefore, I examine how Barry Chevannes' research has evidenced these hypotheses, given the fact that he straddles so many disciplines (philosophy, sociology, anthropology and religion) which help us to focus attention on various elements of the social sciences. I am of the considered view that his signal research and life devotion to the Rastafarian and sibling religions of Jamaica, on the one hand, and his advocacy on matters of social issues such as fatherhood, children rights, gender justice,

poverty eradication, etc., on the other hand, in Jamaica, clearly show these hypotheses as valid means of gaining a perspective to understand the implications of his research for leadership in Jamaica, the Caribbean and in Black societies generally.

I argue then that the works of Barrington Chevannes, who is being celebrated here now (just like the seminal works of Rex Nettleford and Orlando Patterson, who are living intellectual legends and icons of knowledge and culture, in my judgment), all show this critical nature of leadership to and in human society. I concentrate the searchlight on Rastafarianism and kindred Jamaican religio-cultural and intellectual ideas treated by Chevannes here for practical reasons. Scratching the surface is all that can be done here, but just scratching the surface clearly show that the challenges that Rastafarians, Rastafarianism, Jamaica and, in deed, blacks universally, have faced and are facing, are directly and indirectly traceable to the paucity of leadership.

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Slavery, Plantation System, Emancipation and Independence

A lot has been written by scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds about slavery as a system – a system with historical, social, economic, political, cultural, aesthetic, religious, psychological, educational, and numerous other dimensions. Orlando Patterson’s seminal work, *Slavery and Social Death* (1982), being a comparative classic and even when we have made allowances for the clear limitations which most generalizations usually suffer from, still managed to trace many of these dimensions across time, across cultures, and clearly across continental human lives in such a clear, almost incomparable and astutely intuitive manner that makes his book singularly informative. Formulated not in exactly the words he chose, I am of the opinion that the conclusion that he drew in the book is simply this: individual humans or groups of humans who, by a product of effort, accident or coincidence, are so opportuned, can only attain incomparable wealth, success and live lives of extreme opulence where there are other human beings to be dispossessed, used, abused and disposed of without much need for fear of consequences. This, according to him, explains why those who most preach equality, freedom, reason, humanity of humans, in human history are, paradoxically, the most guilty of the worst form of inhumanity of humans to other humans. Thus, Patterson (1982) says,

Our distress, however, stems from a false premise. We assume that slavery should have nothing to do with freedom; that a man who holds freedom dearly should not hold slaves without discomfort; that a culture which invented democracy or produced a Jefferson should not be based on slavery. But such an assumption is unfounded. We make it only because we reify ideas, because we fail to see the logic of contradiction, and because in our anachronistic arrogance we tend to read the history of ideas backward.

... slavery and freedom are intimately connected, that contrary to our atomistic prejudices it is indeed reasonable that those who most denied freedom, as well as those to whom it was most denied, were the very persons most alive to it. Once we understand the essence and the dynamics of slavery, we immediately realize why there is nothing in the least anomalous about the fact that an Aristotle or a Jefferson owned slaves. Our embarrassment springs from our ignorance of the true nature of slavery and of freedom (p. ix).

What he has shown is the fact that the developments in the various regions which have led to the domination of others in these societies and across societies have all be traceable to the existence of cheap, unrewarded, and unacknowledged labour. Such labour, in the case of the plantation system of the new world, that has undoubtedly conducted to the growth of the West industrial, technological and scientific success in the modern period to the point of dominance over the rest of the world, till the advent of the Pacific countries, had derived from the dehumanization of the “other” on the plantations and in the mines, in the form of slavery.

I take Patterson's study as a necessary read before venturing in the opus of Chevannes, *Rastafari – Roots and Ideology* (1994), on the one hand, and edited *Rastafari and Other African-Caribbean Worldviews* (1995) because Patterson provides a socio-historical, economic and cultural background to the existence and meaning of slavery in the New World. The questions of identity, race, rebellion, revolution, heresy, religion and repatriation that Chevannes and Nettleford discuss at length in their many works only gain specific force, focus and meaning when understood in this light.

Being captured, bound hands and feet, sold, shipped through the Middle Passage into unknown foreign land, and made to work for nothing for a stranger who has the power over your life and existence are evil and incomprehensible enough, as they are culturally alien to most African concepts of humanity, self and servitude; but being made to become absolutely **nothing** in all respects – epistemically, metaphysically, socially, religiously, economically, linguistically, conjugally and futuristically – is even worse than evil, as it negates all metaphysical, psychological and theological ideas and ideals inherited in the traditions and cultures of most Africans (Diop 1978). The Plantation System was odious in all respects and Africans did everything possible to escape it – as in the cases of the Maroons clearly show. The Plantation System has been blamed for so much, but hardly can the full meaning and impact of the system be comprehended outside of the efforts made to sabotage the system and the various metaphysics, aesthetics, epistemologies and theologies that it has given birth to over the many years within and without the Plantation environment. What has been most enduring in many quarters has been the lasting effect of Plantocracy on the metaphysic, the psyche, the cognitions and the onto-genetic existential being of the survivors and descendants of the enslaved Africans in the New World. Plantation System has surpassed the colonialism of Africa in entrenching the feeling and belief that even when one is free, one still has to treat one's kin and race in the same way one treated the oppressors during the Plantation System – with absolute disdain and contempt. Thus, it becomes a paradox of the most unimaginable proportion that blacks are unable to operate and exist meaningfully except through and by using the parameters set by centuries of cultural, educational, social, material, political and psychological denudation, domination and expropriation.

In effect, what the Plantation System has done is to enforce, in the absence of the Plantation System, a construction of systemic Plantation Systems in the erstwhile Plantation Societies. This is where the background material of Patterson becomes signally relevant to the understanding of the Sociology and Anthropology of Jamaica as chronicled by Chevannes and reflected upon by Nettleford.

Emancipation did not bring any relief. In the first instance the slaves (most of them) who were now told they have been set free had nothing materially to fall back upon. Not even the land that they worked was theirs, nor were they allowed any form of amortization that could lead to clear security of person and deliberate planning for realization of self and family. At the instance at which the slaves were set free and the slave owners were compensated for setting their slaves free, at that instance did a new challenge develop for the freed slaves, who now had either to go away to nothing or remain in illusory freedom bounded, on all sides by uncertainties of existence, "to slavery even in freedom" (Chevannes 1994: 13).

The struggles for survival and the migratory dislocations that Chevannes chronicles in *Rastafari – Roots and Ideology* are clear evidence of how emancipation became nightmares for the emancipated. As in the case of Nigeria where even after independence people still continue to see government property as nobody's property, hence good only for stealing, the emancipated slaves, with not a modicum of rehabilitation, empowerment and resettlement; forced to survive whichever way possible, continued to use the same tactics of survival on the plantation to survive post-plantation, as in the case of the person (p. 50) or the negligent father who absconded from responsibility of child-rearing (p. 53) or as in the case of the survival tactics of Sister Dixon (p. 67) on the wharf.

Human beings prefer environments of certainty and they never like voids or vacuums – whether in the form of filial relations, social connections, mythologies to embrace or science to avow. For this reason, humans are always busy constructing explanatory systems. These systems often take on a life of their own after some time. And with the abolition of slavery, the kinds of compulsion that forced the slaves to espouse Christianity became untenable. Leadership is a critical element in the cognitive, epistemic and metaphysical constructs of systems of explanations and justifications that humans devise. This harks back to the inheritance of the *Two Jamaicas* mentioned by Chevannes (2006: xvi). It is also critical to the devising or discovery of survival mechanisms in the various practical, intellectual, religious, socio-economic and political contexts that emancipation and independence have spurned either deliberately or accidentally in the process of the pursuit of identity and welfare of humans in alien environment which has not catered to the deepest yearnings of the people. This then is where we must locate the pervasiveness of Anansism and Cannabis in the daily exigencies of the cultures of survival that have been predominant in the Jamaican terrain, as well as in other societies that have a mixture of Indian populations blending into cultural and traditional fabrics of existence. We shall have more to say about this later.

Given the fact then that many Africans find it incongruous that the slave masters and mistresses did claim to be Christians, and yet found nothing wrong with how other humans were treated (remember Patterson and freedom), it became untenable for Africans of the Diaspora in Jamaica to be Christians in the ways in which Europeans were Christians. The suppressed but remembered traditions of Africa became important elements in the forging of a new religio-metaphysical understanding of reality and self. This led to the hybridized cosmology, religion, education, politics, family and other existential relations that developed post-emancipation. The phenomenon of Garveyism and Selassie are two examples of the critical nature of the abhorrence of vacuum by human nature. Thus, while some freed slaves had some land and other properties (including in some instances slaves of their own in the pre-emancipation period!), symbolically insignificant as the number may be compared to the settler plantation owning absentee land owners, most emancipated slaves had little (if anything at all) to their names. What was lacking was a leadership that would recognize the place of land in the intellectual, material, economic, socio-cultural, religio-metaphysical and natural heritage of Africans, and hence the clear declaration of the imperative to redress this arrant injustice of the up-ending of the culture of the enslaved in the face of oppressive plantation historiography (Chevannes 2006: 163).

This has led to the various hustling, rustling, and scrounging tactics that have characterize the coping strategies of the impoverished emancipated slave who will not accept the negation

that stare him/her in the face regardless of the newly inflicted emptiness of emancipation without an empowering means of sustaining meaningful, fulfilling and enriching existence in the strange locale of the post-slavery society. It gave rise to the practical ideology of land capturing on the one hand, a system of illegality that the failed state have managed to legitimize through the idea that absenteeism means forfeiture of legally acquired property as the original land of Jamaica was captured any way from the Arawaks and the Tainos, and, on the other hand, the ill-informed, poorly enunciated and weakly justified doctrine of repatriation, when emancipated people now remember with nostalgia the foundations of the societies from which they were forcibly removed. That there has been many centuries between the original time of the capturing and sale of the ancestors of the present Jamaican African and the present day of the dream of repatriation played no part to temper the dream with realism, as the leadership gap meant the weakness of intellectual foundation of the dream, just unlike most traditional and contemporary Jews who see nothing wrong in a dream of owning all of Palestine as a promised land, regardless of the apparent divine injustice on which such a promise is predicated, as the leadership foundation of the claim had intellectual and religious pretensions to divine sanctity enshrined in the oldest colonial document ever crafted by inspired capitalists. Except that in the case of the freed Africans in Jamaica, the fact that freedom gave them no compensation, while there remain memories of connectedness and meaningfulness of life pre-slavery made a big difference from the Jewish religio-economic appropriation of land!

Between emancipation and independence so much water of distress, pain, depression and agony has passed under the existential, material, intellectual, psychological bridges of freed, nay, emancipated, slaves. The pain and agony does not seem to have, or give, any respite even as the society (Jamaica) moved toward independence. Pain and sorrow, agony and helplessness, penury and poverty, suffering and deprivation have meaning where there is expectation of some form of terminality to them either in the here and now or in some foreseeable future existence. This has been the factor responsible for the apocalyptic hopes of many religions, as it gives the hope that where there is injustice in the domain of humans, there has to be a space where all the playing fields are level and humans are treated as equals. In the case of Jamaica, even on the eve of independence, there were no such socio-economic and political machineries that promise respite for the majority poor and near hopeless in society.

What complicated matters more was the fact that the post-emancipation, pre-independence and post-independence organs of the state seemed not to have changed their ways to accommodate the traditions, values, culture and historical antecedents of the majority of the Jamaican population. This meant that the erstwhile slaves, while now nominally free, were still doomed to dependency and suffering. All individual and quasi-group efforts made to break the vicious cycle of poverty were to no avail, leading to the forms of desperation that bred false prophets and false metaphysic, because any palliative to stem the tide of suffering was good enough, no matter how intellectually and rationally suspect these may be. In any case, the only way the organs of state could have a different understanding of relations between government and the people is if the educational preparations that bred the leadership had been overhauled. Since this was not done, it meant that there was only power transfer from one plantation owner to another, albeit an indigenous group who see themselves more like the former masters and mistresses than as part and parcel of the society that needed clearer vision for development and redress of injustices of centuries, and as such the greater majority population of African

Jamaicans who were supposed to have been nominally emancipated and freed from the shackles of slavery in actual fact remained in bondage.

Reading Chevannes especially in *Rastafari – Roots and Ideology* (1994), *Rastafari and Other African-Caribbean Worldviews* (1995), one would find that the missing link was rather amorphous and unclear, but reading his *Between and Betwixt* (2006) put the problem into clear perspective. To be African-American, as hyphenated as it is, was actually an advantage for the Blacks in United States of America, but really to be Black/African-Jamaican was a terrible disadvantage in Jamaica. This emanated from the celebrated numerical majority that blacks enjoyed. Even though Chevannes was not the first to advertise this point, but his biographical Chapter One, Section I of *Between and Betwixt* (2006: 3-10) clinched beyond doubt the reason for the intellectual explanation that I have been searching for to explain the leadership weakness, failure and incapacity of black intellectuals in Jamaica especially, in dealing with the critical issues that would advance the fortunes of the Jamaican populace. In my view, there has been a tendency among concerned Africana scholars to conflate the problems of Blacks universally as being the same, but I have been very careful to see the limitations of generalizations of this kind. Consequently, it has been most enlightening to see the way in which Chevannes has been able to show the paradoxicality of numerical and demographic majority as the harbinger of the chronic and intractable weakness of the systems of socio-economic, judicial, political, cultural and intellectual empowerment of the majority Jamaicans.

Who is to blame for this? Chevannes, in my reading of his works, does not seek to apportion blame. His task, as he sees it, is purely intellectual. But his intellectual challenges are so loaded and pregnant with clues that one need not look too far before the culprit is unmasked. It may be that his not taking this approach could be regarded as a weakness on his part, given the insightfulness of his many efforts. But it may also be that this deliberate non-partisanship is a positive that has allowed him to be able to engage his research to the extent that has been possible without being betoken to any polemics and diversions that may have been occasioned by the need to justify the apportioning of blame and fault. This is where a distant observer, like me, may be able to take the risk of transcending the boundaries that Chevannes imposes on his scholarship. In this regard, it is to a feckless leadership that lacks intellectual spine that one must look for the despairing state of the Jamaican society. What do I mean by this? While there is a clear indication of the kind of self-re-education that I have advocated in the Chevannes biographical Chapter One, Section I that I have referred to above, most black leadership never engage in any intuitive soul-searching or reflection about the parlous state of the black person in the contemporary world, either to retrospectively engage African history or to contemporaneously examine the retrograde system that makes the black persons a persistent victim.

Myth, Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism

The intellectual life struggle of Chevannes has been the documentation and historicisation of the sociological, religious, economic, cultural, political and existential traditions and intellectual spaces of Jamaica, especially since emancipation. I say this because his detailed and minute investigation of the forces of social change and development in Jamaica has shown that humans are irrepressible regardless of the forces arrayed against them. In fact,

the survey of the interstices of discourses relating to Africana theoria and praxis from Diop to Asante, from Lamming to Warner-Lewis, from Patterson to Nettleford in *Between and Betwixt* evidence such intellectual acuity that is very rare. And given the significance of the struggle, the current state of the debate, the implications of the arguments and futuristic vistas opened for others, it is clear to me that gold-mines of knowledge and reflection have been located and entrances sign-posted by Chevannes, and followers are welcome to continue in diverse directions.

What Chevannes has demonstrated is the irrepressibility of the human intellect, as it continues the journey toward fulfillment. Especially significant is the fact that humans continue to seek for relevance, meaning and ends that enable them to attain levels of satisfaction which only can be complemented by material resources. Regardless of nature and nurture, humans upon attaining the age of reason, always have the capacity to accept or reject, elect or deselect ideas, ideals and ambitions. This fact has been borne out by the diverging syncretisms and complementing heresies that have been developed in Jamaica to stand surrogate for Christianity, while at the same time not really negating the Christianity of the orthodox and unorthodox traditions practiced by the plantation owners and their repairing inheritors of similar hue. Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism are clear examples of these novel creative products of Jamaican genius. These have been mostly commented on, studied and yet not fully comprehended. And it is clear that aspects of the traditions bred in these religio-metaphysical constructs still remain to be properly understood.

Given the fact that slaves were not always allowed or encouraged to document and codify their antecedent histories and contemporary experiences in the new world, many of the practices and beliefs that survived plantation were products of oral traditions and memory (Chevannes 1995: 99). This fact made the hankering over a glorious past a critical element in the formulation of the beliefs and expectations of the plantation slaves and their free descendants. Consequently many ideas are found in the systems of religious observances that are only reminiscent of the original religions from which they derive in Africa. And when it is born in mind that where memory and orature fail these may be complemented by creative and imaginative hybrids, then the phenomenon of Myalism and Revivalism as combinations of African religions and Christian practices become understandable.

But the fact that Africans in Jamaica blended Christianity with African traditional religions to construct and create new religions such as Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism is not strange. While many theories have been formulated ranging from the Walcott “amnesiac blow”, to the Mintz-Price cultural nakedness “empty baggage syndrome” creativity-process, to that of Warner-Lewis linkage of trajectories of cultural-intellectual histories and traditions of African-Jamaicans (in deed, African Caribbeans), Chevannes weaves together a creditable socio-anthropological and philosophical explanatory model which enables us to see the true picture of African-Jamaican not only as humans with long historical traditions but also a contemporary Africans in the Diaspora who has refused to be bullied into nothingness, hence remain committed to the deliberate and conscious creation of cultural patterns that further enrich the African-ness of his/her history (Chevannes 2006: 3-7). More importantly, that the elements of these religions had fashioned into them mythologies, cosmologies, politics, culture and economics is not unexpected. All religions are intrinsically about human welfare. Consequently,

It is not emotion, feeling, or the ‘heart’ (metaphor), or simply the senses (sensory organs tuning to the world as such) that leads to religion. Nor is it the juvenile, the primitive or the delirious tremens in the infantile ego that seeks after the supernatural. It is reason – the astute mind, a tormented but unsatisfied consciousness, a challenged intellect, an unencumbered thought or the afflicted and bemused rational self – that leads to religion. Religion is like any of the other cultural artifacts that humans have devised to deal with reality, to cope with the world and to survive in the universe, by creating assurances and managing apparent chaos that seeks to annihilate or compromise human existence. It is the recognition of the epistemic inadequacy, of the cognitive insufficiency, and of the gap between what humans’ desire to know and what is known, that have compelled historic and contemporary humans to seek after the supernatural, the wholly other, the source being or the light without or within, the revelatory transcendent, as a way of illuminating the unknown and probably making known the “unknowable”. Other intellectual and practical means of dealing with reality that humans of all epochs and ages have evolved are art, science and technology, history, poetry, music, politics, economics, etc. These are significant in the sense in which they facilitate the understanding and resolution of certain aspects of the dilemma of existence. But our concern here is with religion, and hence, our focus will be on religion; especially how religion helps the human to master reality (Bewaji 2003: 3).

As a consequence, we see that the religions, the languages (Creole and Jamaica English), the culture, the psychology and the traditions that blacks have developed in Jamaica are clearly visible efforts to macro and micro-manage the spaces they inhabit. They are also relational instruments of existential expressions, shorn through and through with the expectations and realities of humans faced with critical challenges that refuse to be obviated by simple symbolisms of freedom, emancipation and independence. That the components of the religions include the use of dreams, séances, trances and spiritual journeys is only comprehensible in the light of the challenges faced by the Africans in their newfound freedom without survival resources, harkening back to the spiritual ancestry that refuse to abdicate their consciousness even though they be thousands of miles away from the continental environment of the birth of these ideas and practices. That Warner-Lewis has been able to trace these ideas with such creative genius and painstaking acumen is remarkable and deserving of commendation. What Chevannes does is to take the picture painted, especially by Warner-Lewis (2003), and give it sociological, anthropological, cultural and metaphysical life, thereby ensuring that our understanding of the cultural heritage found in Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism as religious phenomena is enriched. Even while it focuses on apparently dated material, there is no doubt that the tracing of the retentions between Nigerian and Jamaican retentions relating to religion is very informative and perceptive. The weak point is the limitation of failing to avail the reader new perspectives in the interpretation and understanding of the nature and temper of traditional and contemporary religiosity of the Yoruba as discussed by Abimbola (2005), Bewaji (1998) and Bewaji (2003). There then remain a sense in which Chapter 2, to the uninitiated, may not seem to differ from a Tempelsian tracing of the trajectories of “force” in *Bantu Philosophy*.

While apparently Myalism and Revivalism have remained appendages and trans-religious phenomena, integrating into Pentecostalism and charismatic religious scions, Rastafarianism has

mutated over the years from simple rebelliousness, to cosmology, to acute idealization of Africa, to millennialism, to idolization of Selassie, to repatriationist, to dread, to religion and to contemporary mercantilist dancehall. All of these changes have not been without much inspiration from the existential circumstances and exigencies of life of the Jamaica that blacks inhabit, but they have also had both positive and negative implications to the proper understanding of the relations of life and society in a world that is suffused with “Babylonian” (using the neologism of Rastafarianism for oppressive capitalism) systems (Chevannes 2006: 97). It is in this connection that it may be suggested that Chevannes has taken an overly narrow sociological and anthropological understanding of Rastafarianism, and, in deed, Myalism and Revivalism when he suggested that,

... Rastafari may be more fruitfully studied from the point of view of its impact on the traditional worldview of the Jamaicans than as a revolutionary, political, millenarian or messianic cult, as has been the general approach of scholars (Chevannes 1994: xvii-xviii).

Looking at Rastafari in such narrow perspective will minimize the interest in the traditions that bred it, the conditions under which it has had to survive, the visions that it has emanated and the vicissitudes that it has had to survive. The deliberate effort to transcend Judaism and Christianity, while at the same time being predicated on both, are paradoxes which a purely sociological and anthropological understanding of Rastafari will fail to disclose. That there are symbolisms inherited from the Bible, yet denounced in the new faith, seem quite remarkable in how the faithful are able to embrace the faith without seeing any incongruities in their beliefs. More importantly, there is the need to account for the claim of Ethiopia as a geographical and as a mythical source of being, with the attendant idolization and reification of the Emperor Haile Selassie as god head and the returned messiah, while at the same time maintaining the primacy of the Christ. The political, revolutionary, cultural message of dissidence and otherness cannot but become obvious to any student of Rastafari, as Chevannes was also able to highlight (2006: 39ff).

In Christianity we find a conception of humanity derived from Genesis, with humans being created by God, for the purpose of serving God, and at the end of the tenure of humans on earth there is a return of the spiritual component to its creator. Explanations are provided for the existence of evil, suffering, death, etc., as arising from the Great Fall of the first humans that were created. The imperfections in humans and in society are seen as capable of being minimized through a persistent search for the true wish of God, and acts that puts a gap between humans and their creator cause imperfections, poverty, suffering, pain, defeat and even captivity to exist and only penitence can remove these! There is a polarity of existence in all aspects of life, and there is a need for the alignment of each self to one, and such choice necessitate consequences which may be positive or negative – no room for neutrality! Given the way the universe and humanity is understood in Christianity, it is clear that there cannot but exist irreconcilable antagonisms. These have been played out in the socio-economic and cultural arenas of competing peoples in human history, and the effect remains the inability of committed Christians to understand that others have equal entitlement to a postulation of a different concept of humanity and society. In tracing the Yoruba antecedents of Jamaican religiosity and devotion to the search for “power”, Chevannes shows what he calls the “earth-bound” nature of Yoruba religiosity and by extension the Jamaican religiosity. This in effect locates the efforts at the

attainment of power as a consequence of the need to tame the various forces that may be arrayed against human welfare. While it may be argued that this pre-occupation with the welfare of the human in the world drives religiosity, it may be wondered whether the majority of humans who are adherents of the religions are intellectually aware of this. It is quite possible that there is room for negotiation of the opposites here – it may be that the highly knowledgeable is aware that religion is for the improvement of human society, but there is the possibility that the majority of the followers do believe that there are actual domains of spirituality that transcend human cognition and control. This was a view urged in “World Religions and the new African Union ...” (Bewaji 2003). It is a view that is worth greater attention in dealing with Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism, especially as the issues of leadership demand real attention in our pursuit of proper annotation of the retentions of African cultures and religions in the West Indies, as well as the ways in which these have helped to shape the identities and existence of blacks in the West Indies.

So, what we find is that Rastafari not only matches these ideas while countermanding those aspects that negate the expectations of a better life, the religion and the faith even go further to indicate while Selassie was alive and visited Jamaica physically to deny his own deity, to continue to regard him as god even when contemporaneously he was dead. This only helps to further emphasize the ambiguity and paradox that it Jamaica – culturally, socially, economically, intellectually, etc. This paradox and ambiguity is well celebrated by Chevannes (2006) in Chapter 3, which celebration, even after it was crafted so craftily after the example of Nettleford, only further shows that fact that there gapes a yawning lacuna for leadership that would give meaning and purpose to all the angst and despair of the typical Jamaican. This factor is what may be missing in the reading of Chevannes, Nettleford and Patterson if one does not pay close attention to the ingrained ideas that suffuse the subconsciousness of the discourse of identity, knowledge and existence in the Jamaican intellectual terrain.

Arising from human freedom is the innate capacity for choice. Choice-making and acceptance of the consequences of such choice or finding explanatory mechanisms for rejecting consequences of choice are critical components of human freedom, and it is arguably these factors which separate humans from animals. Choice-making relates to deciding not just what course of actions to embark upon but also what life histories to design for the self as a being in the world and for one’s kind. The Rastafari needed alternative explanations of reality and provided, by choice, the Rastafari construct, complete with diverse episteme, metaphysic, ethics and logics. As humans we have no way of avoiding choice, and even when we refuse to make choices, this refusal itself is choice making. What will result in instances of abstaining from choice may be bad faith, as they mark evidence of lying to the self about the situation of the self, and in some instance lying to others! The self-delusion that constitutes bad faith is an emasculation of consciousness. This kind of effort is anathema to the Rastafari, and consequently there is emphasis on living the good life, being respectful of Jah and the I.

In Jamaica, in the period after emancipation, the immediate pre-occupation of the poor black freed slave is how to comprehend the necessity of dealing with the world; that is, dealing with an outside world whose humanity persistently sees her (Jamaican) humanity only in the sense of the “other”, as object and as the point of departure. Racism has always been an undercurrent in Jamaica, with all kinds of classifications and margins and hues that determine

where one fell on the ladder of humanity. Rastafari constitute a deliberate affirmation of the black self, and as such reversed the spectre of inferiority by relating to the I, the God-head, and the I, as in the self which partakes in the divinity of the Jah.

The embrace of the Dread, with its numerous nuances, was both an act of defiance as well as an affirmation of that which frightens the oppressor most about the Rastafari (1995: 97ff). Actually, the externally visible sign of the Rastafari is clear indication of the revolutionary in the heart of the Rastafari. This is acknowledged by Chevannes in his discussion of the progressive development from beard wearing to Dreadlocks, contrary to his earlier suggestion that Rastafari is best understood in the context of the Jamaican worldview. He says,

By contextualizing the rise of the Dreadlocks phenomenon in Jamaica, I have attempted to show that their matted hair was symbolic of stepping beyond the control of the White-oriented society (1995: 123).

As indicated earlier, the choice of Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism as oppositional religio-metaphysical tropes for dealing with reality and existence in Jamaica has been programmatic, but largely intuitively creative. In essence, there developed not just a dread-talk, but also a dread life. What was intuitively developed then needed the critical mass of an intellectual leadership which has not been forthcoming so far. In fact, the fascination that Chevannes exhibits with the various neologisms seem to suggest that this is not needed.

While it is interesting how Rastafarianism has subverted the English Language as a means of communication, representing both the oppressiveness of reality and the possibility of transcending the oppression to obfuscate the ingenuity of the oppressor from Babylon, there clearly is missing the appreciation of the need to use the energies of the populace to create order out of the Babylonian chaos, rather than celebrating the introduction of counter chaos into the already chaotic situation.

Leadership, Education and Jamaican Society

What the West has always been predicated on is clearly represented by Stanley M. Elkins in *Slavery* (1962: 59) as follows:

The rights of property, and all other civil and legal “rights,” were everywhere denied the slave with a clarity that left no doubt of his utter dependency upon his master. “A slave is in absolute bondage; he has no civil right, and can hold no property, except at the will and pleasure of his master.” He could neither give nor receive gifts; he could make no will, nor could he, by will, inherit anything. He could not hire himself out or make contracts for any purpose – even including, as we have seen, that of matrimony – and thus, neither his word nor his bond had any standing in law. He could buy or sell nothing at all, except as his master’s agent, could keep no cattle, horse, hogs, or sheep and ... could raise no cotton. ... It was obvious, then, that the case of a slave who should presume to buy his own freedom – he being unable to possess money – would involve a legal absurdity. “Slaves have not legal rights in things, real or personal; but whatever they may acquire, belongs, in point of law, to their masters”.

A civil society, indeed any society, that has its wealth predicated on this kind of oppression of one group by another cannot altruistically build a better society which will become humane for others. This is why George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is as relevant to our understanding of the relations between "free" persons in the West and the idea of libertarianism that it preaches on the band-wagonist crest of the terror of Hobbesian anarchy induced and force-sustained democracy and 'civilization'. This is why Rastafari are suspicious of the Greek-gifts from Babylon (metaphor for oppressive systems universally), and why they turn instead to a life of "livity", steeped in extreme naturalness, austerity, respect for nature, respect for the other and appreciation of the human frailty which condemns humans to perpetual dependence on nature for sustenance.

From the discussion of Chevannes regarding the origins of Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafari, it is clear that "liberty", as a purely conceptual terminology, never applied to humans in any form of civil arrangement, except in a limited sense, given the necessity for persons to navigate respect for each other's contending interests and search survival in the face of the natural and human-induced dangers that encroach on any and every aspect of human existence. As freedom from constraint, it only made sense in a situation where each person determines responsibly where to institute self restraint. In other words, the natural civil rights that humans in civil society enjoy are benchmarked on a responsible exercise of the latitude that is afforded not just for self-advancement but also for group and corporate advancement. The Rastafari realizes this, and often opt out of the limitations imposed by society, especially given the skewed relations that help to distort and privilege some over others for no other reason than because of their melanin endowment and affiliation to the centre of power devolution. Thus understanding that Babylon is suffused with injustice, the yearning then is for the enthronement of a free, fair and equitable system, which is not possible under the arrangements of Jamaica, but in the land of the black ancestors in Ethiopia (read Africa). For, to be free to do as one pleases means to understand what are the limitations of law and custom, work within those in making choices, and accept the consequences of the actions that issue from such exercise of liberty. Choosing not to cooperate with oppressive system of Babylon is only in the tradition of the Maroons on the one hand, and a singularly new form of rejection of injustice on the other by the Rastafari. The free choice of opting out then is clearly a determined and determining choice to show that there are other ways of understanding reality and organizing reality. This in itself is evidence of the clear and unambiguous vision of the Rastafari as a force of change, and this has been the factor that has attracted many across the globe to Rastafarianism. Chevannes has shown that the appeal of Rastafari is deep and compelling, even in the face of the serious repression that it has suffered in its early years and the suspicion and ambiguity that it still generates even in contemporary Jamaica.

In Rastafari understanding of human relations, it is arguable that individual freedom has no meaning except within the context of what is permitted. And what is permitted has no meaning unless in the context of options. A stone falling from a height to the ground could not be truly ascribed freedom, nor would a person who has to choose to part with a valued property to an armed robber free in choosing to live and give up the property rather than die and forfeit the property anyway. In this regard, what Patterson says regarding the mixture of hypocrisy with reality makes sense when we see how a society could so value freedom, yet its leading members

so deride and deny the freedom of/to large segments of society. It is for this reason that Rastafarians are unable to trust Babylon and its agents.

What we see then is the denigration of the rigidities of the corporate norms by the Rastafari, on the one hand. But since there can be no order and wellbeing of society without order, then Rastafari then develops a new idea of order and harmony and imposes the new idea of order and harmony on its adherents. These relate what constitute proper behaviour to elders, to peers, to opposite sex, to spouses, to siblings, to one's children, to relatives and extended family, to plants and animals, to nature and the environment, etc. Clearly, what the Rastafarian embraces conduce to their perception of reality and well-ordered and harmonious existence. And the effort the invest in ensuring that their posterity does not get lost in Babylon is very important. The education of the young is taken very seriously, even when there is ambivalence regarding the value of Babylonian education on the mind of the young. On the one hand, it is seen as the tool for the integration and control of the powers that society at large has on people, on the other hand they disdain the negative implications of loosening oneself in this debased and debasing educational apparatuses of the Babylonian state (Chevannes 2006: 189ff).

This is why it seems clear that individual liberty or freedom has become a new ploy for the deception project of the continued exploitation and expropriation of the peoples of other climes. And there is no doubt that the various facilities at the disposal of the West are being invested with all the necessary tools to maintain the control of the entrenched interests in all aspects of the lives of peoples of the world. The Rastafari is well aware of this, and because of that has attempted to construct an alternative universe of existence. But this alternative is not without limitations and denials of freedom that is claimed for the self. This especially is the case in the ways in which the Rastafari sees the female person. Claiming this as a cultural and natural derivative, the female is subject to the male and regardless of how much Dread she may grow, she only is able to grow it at the leisure of the male. As Chevannes says regarding how Rastafari sees the female,

The female was contaminating, and therefore required ritual distance and control. In effect, what I am saying is that in at least this instance, long hair does not have to mean only phallic sublimation or only freedom from social control, but both at the same time. Not only that, but both may be saying the same thing (1995: 123-124).

Bearing in mind that Jamaica has been the originator of Rastafari, the questions that press on the mind are: What is the renewal mechanism for the religion? What is the leadership structure of the religion? In what ways are the educational mechanisms used to further the development of Rastafari? To what extent are the aspirations and ambitions of Rastafari realized over time? How does one transcend the humanity of Selassie to the religio-metaphysical permanence of the faith of Rastafari? How does one justify this view of women from a religio-cultural system that hankers after freedom from the oppression of a Babylonian stifling bondage, even post-independence?

On this last question Chevannes did not expatiate apart from his investigation of family values and relations. In fact, it would seem that apart from the spousal issues of procreation and fertility, there is not much reflection on how the Rastafarian mythology would effectively deal

with the question of women, in order to justify the attitude of respect and repression that is the lot of the female. As the link between the past, the present and the future, women are highly respected, but a weak physiological accident necessitated by the procreation virtue (menstruation) then becomes a feared and derided part of the image of the woman. Given the fact that Rastafarianism is a new religio-metaphysical construct, one would have expected that enlightened leadership would have led to the transcendence of this myopia.

When we come to other issues raised in our questions above, we could try to disaggregate them into their various segments. Looking, for example at education, it could be said that clearly the Western education paradigm has orchestrated the separation of the education into various segments, and that we now talk of the formal, informal and non-formal, as if education is not an all-encompassing whole such that having an aspect of it to the total neglect of others not only mean not having any at all but becoming a problems to oneself as well as to others in one's society. The partitioning of education into these segments, has for many discerning thinkers constituted the demise of the educational experiment in the colonised societies, such that such persons who now become educated has neither proper Western nor indigenous education, becoming parodies of cultured selves, roasted breadfruits, in-between people without any anchoring, beast of no nation, predators who know no limits or bounds, gorging themselves on both the holy and the profane alike to the utter disgust of both the educated and the uneducated alike. It is clearly not possible for an educational system predicated on the metaphysical assumptions of a foreign culture to lead to proper development of leadership of any other society. This has been the harbinger of the failure of Western educational structures without proper tethering in the indigenous cultures to lead to development for any indigenous peoples. This was clearly realized by the Rastafari, consequently the initial opting out. However, the time is probably ripe to work within the system to advance the cause of Rastafari. Hence, Marcus Garvey had said,

There comes a time in the life of everyone, as well as of races when we settle down to look ahead and see what is before us. The Negro, making up his mind to look ahead, has before him a very dark and gloomy future, brought about by his own neglect at a time when the opportunity presented itself for him to engage himself in the undertakings of world re-organization (p. 115).

While the re-organization that Garvey intended was at the United Nations level in the aftermath of World War II, our interest is even more modest now. Our interest is in the re-organization of our polities in line with the demands of fairness, justice, equity, love, dedication, and values that we can be proud to be remembered for by posterity.

Our situation in the various Afro-Caribbean constituencies call for drastic measures. In the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural societies like Nigeria, for us to continue as if we are really doing well is no more than grand self-deception. In the Jamaican situation, the dispossessed and the economic and social outcasts are outside of the system and constitute a big challenge to leadership. This creates a semblance of pluralism not different from that in multi-ethnic or multi-cultural societies. The fact that members of one extended family have contrived to divide the population of Jamaica into warring tribes, fighting each other perpetually to the point of death, further cements the Rastafari disinterest in the ways of Babylon and myopia of its

leadership institutions. While it is true that those who benefit from a system, either because they belong to the ruling majority (minority) or partisans in power, always find it difficult to understand the resentment of the minority for the domination they suffer, just as the powerful has always found it incomprehensible why the weak is suspicious of their good intentions of domination. We must bear in mind that the incentives for non-accountable rule is overpowering. These incentives make it difficult for our politics to get rid of the disease of electoral malpractices.

No group in a pluralistic society voluntarily accepts the leadership by another group. It is clear that for acceptance to occur there has to be transparency in the allocation of power and in the allocation of resources. Unless a means is found for judicious power sharing, there will always be rancour. This is where the matter of mettle of leadership comes in, to transform the contentious issues to areas for consensus and unification of destinies. Probably this is responsible for the inchoateness of the leadership structures of Rastafari. The consequence of this will be spelled out more clearly in the next section, but it seems that the mixed reaction of various Rastafarians to the structures of society, and the ambivalence of the society with regard to Rastafari suggest that there is need to look carefully at the Rastafari heritage, the world acceptance, and the future development potential of the faith, and that deliberate intellectual, political and cultural decision be made to facilitate the development of Rastafari.

This is where leadership becomes very important. And our understanding of leadership would indicate that we endorse, as the fountainhead, as historical responsibility and as a temporary stopping place for this discussion, the views expressed by Garvey. We would be able to defend this in philosophical and sociological (and indeed historical) terms, as the soundness of the reasoning originating it would be borne out by the good consequences or results of such commitment. He said:

Yet the thing that lives in history, the thing that goes to the credit of man, is not how much wealth he has piled up for himself; is not how comfortable he has lived, but how good he has done for the rest of humanity. The present world generally worship power, influence and wealth. It is very easy to find sycophants who will fawn before such, and who will pay unreasonable compliments; but those who encourage and help the poor are few, and when they do engage themselves in such labour there is nothing else transient for them but condemnation (p. 118).

Chevannes, Rastafari, Leadership and Posterity

In this concluding section, what we do is do some star-gazing. This has become necessary in order for us to be able to suggest answers to some of the questions posed earlier in our discussion. And we do this mindful of the limitations of futuristic efforts in contemporary Jamaica and in black societies, as we are now more enamoured with fire-brigade measures than with planning for the future, since our societies have been compelled even in their fundamental disadvantaged circumstances to contend with forces that have dominated our lives from the beginning of the modern period.

A: Leadership Education

Given the failure of our societies across the board, it seems that the time has come to look critically at the reasons for the failure of our societies. This kind of introspection will definitely show that why we have failed is a consequence of many factors, among which are the ignorance of those who have contrived to lead our societies for so long about their own historical antecedents, the nature of power relations in history and contemporary times, and nature of inter-racial, international and geopolitical relations across the globe. What Rastafari has to offer here relates to its search for justice, moral existence, simplicity, respect for nature and a determination to affirm the greatness of the black person who must have a right to be black without compromise and without having to genuflect to others in explanatory diffidence.

What this means is that there is need to be careful to avoid a kind of infection of the mentality of the people with a diluting and demeaning reduction in standards through the higglerization of the academy and the Coronation-ization of discourse, by a process of failure to perceive the creativity of the people on the one hand, and on the other mistaking the ephemeral for the substance. In the first instance, we could clearly see that by taking the indigenous intellectual, cultural, social and religious phenomena of the Jamaican heritage seriously Chevannes has challenged the academy to transcend both limitations. Secondly, giving the acuity of intellect that he brought to bear on the discussion of the heritage of Jamaica in the sociological, anthropological, cultural and religious dimensions, he has also sign-posted the terrain that must be traversed in order to effectively understand the intellectual heritage of the underclass of Jamaica. Clearly the two diseases mentioned above have been spreading widely in Jamaica in recent years, as intellectual and practical discourse have deteriorated so remarkably that critical issues have become personalized and national goals have become inseparable from partisan agendas. The deterioration of the dialogue issues from a lack of understanding of the value of Jamaica either surviving as one unit of dissipating into fragments that become prey to agents of violence and destruction. The failure of leadership to pay attention to the remonstrations of Chevannes, to engage the clear needs of the Jamaican intellect as brought out in the musical heritage of the people, the artistic deliverances of the people, the religio-cultural productions of the Jamaica and the metaphysical identity constructs, have all shown that where the imagination is weak or lacking, there will be a tendency toward a stunted understanding of the forces that propel people to success and greatness beyond the confines of that the forces of retardation can surmise.

Incidentally, it would be interesting to see what research would yield with regard to the percentage of criminals and criminality in Jamaica that have affinity to Rastafarianism by contrast to those of persons claiming to be better and Christian, given that fact that Jamaica has the distinction of more Churches per square metre in the world. Of recent, it seems that the demise of advocacy of the yonder years have also led to the gap in the leadership structures of both Rastafari and Jamaica as a whole. There has not been proper leadership transition or preparation for the next generation since the group who are now in their 50s and 60s claimed the spaces that advance their interest and make them the leaders. This factor is even more evident in the leadership structures of Rastafari and the political parties in Jamaica today. And it is not any different in Nigeria for that matter, as the greed for knowledge that propelled the search for better life, vision and ambition in the 50s, 60s and 70s have now become concretised into

leadership self-perpetuation. Could it be that the wane of Rastafari vision is no different from the cooptation of the Rastafari leadership into the structures of Babylon, just as the change from bush-jacket wearing, beard totting dreadlocks of the past has given way to new-found love for opulence and trappings of power? Or could it be that the divisions in the Rastafari is no different from the division of the majority black population into tribes for the purposes of oppression and dispossession by the very ones who were expected to be the liberators of the poor.

Chevannes documented serious, chronic, endemic poverty, penury and hopelessness in Jamaica at the beginning of the Rastafarian experiment, which impelled the Rastafarian disdain for Babylon. What was never in doubt was that the spirit of hospitality and human love for each other made it possible for strangers to help each other through very difficult patches in their lives. But what has been lacking has been the desire of those who should know and who have had opportunities at leading, to do something about the poverty. For one, the poverty has become even more entrenched, and more of the same people who have always been poor while the White Man was Massa are still poor now that it is Black Man Time! And the indications over the years have been that out of self-hatred black leadership has preferred to assure that take-over of the economic resources of the country either by outsiders (foreigners) or by melanin-challenged members of the society. Marcus Garvey would turn in his grave if he were to visit Jamaica today and witness the deliberate dispossession of the masses to fatten the few.

Even more significant has been the inability of the leadership to take deliberate efforts to generate growth and development. In years gone by there used to be futuristic development planning, now since we only manage deficit and borrowing, we cannot plan as we do not even know if the destructive taxes we have imposed can be collected or if Moody's and Standards and Poor will rate us credit worthy so we can increase our future sorrow by borrowing to spend! What Rastafari fear most – lack of control over one's destiny – has become the reality of the Jamaican society, due to the intellectual, cultural and identity poverty of the leadership that has been inflicted on Jamaica over the last many decades. This has meant that whereas there is so much energy locked up in the Jamaica people – intellectual and physiological – the proper harnessing of this has not materialized and Jamaica remains a land of opposite extremes!

In this last regard arises the need to understand how the Africans in Jamaica and the Caribbean have ambushed the society, using their creative imagination to generate new ideas, new metaphors, new Gods (in deed, by creating God in their own image, rather than accepting the Genesis story of God creating humans in His own image), new music, new language, new representation of reality becomes very pressing. While Chevannes has pioneered the study in a way that deserve our kudos, there is need to take the discourse further a-field to ensure that we derive all the potential benefits that inhere in the ideas developed by those whose lives have been clear experiments in identity development and accession.

B. Chevannes, Rastafari and the Future of the Faith and Jamaica

What we see exhibited in the intellectual investigation of the cultural tropes of Jamaica is the efflorescence of the creative imagination of the oppressed in Jamaica; it is the elaboration of the intellectual nature of the consciousness of the nature of the forces of Babylon, and how this limits, but at the same time provides opportunities for the conscious the transcend and transgress

the limitations externally imposed by the other – the plantation owners and their surrogate roast breadfruits who have inherited the leadership of the society at the demitting of position of power by the plantocrats. While many would see nothing worth investigating in Rastafarian religion and other icons of black intellectual production like Pokumina, Myalism, Revivalism and their inherent linkage to continental Africa; whether through the reification of Selassie or through the appropriation of the spiritual forces of the African religiosity to subvert and convert European Christianity through a domestication process on the one hand and, on the other, allowing for the new “born again” rebirth of the ascendancy of the “man” to “humanity”, they Rastafarian has projected himself onto the world, claiming a space that was never allowed and making it his own to the chagrin of the oppressor.

However, what the elucidation of these ideas have shown is the fact that the Jamaica cultural heritage is at a critical juncture where there is need to seriously contemplate the solidification and consolidation of the fruits of the creative imagination of the African Jamaican, so that the powers of the globalized capital will not expropriate this heritage only to turn around and pretend generosity by acceding to the use of elements of what was traditionally Jamaican. In this regard, we make some suggestions, which probably is not new, but which an occasion like the celebration of the scholarship of Chevannes auspiciously make necessary for the record, as follows:

- i) From the writings of Chevannes and the activities of Rastafari world-wide, it is clear that there is a need to move the faith, religion, culture and vision to the next level. The investment of time and energy in the research by Chevannes has shown the way, the potential and the direction that leadership – intellectual, political, religious and practical – must now take. In my view, and here I am going to incur the ire of my numerous Rastafari brethren and sistren, there is need to invest time and energy in developing the mythology of Rastafari beyond the Selassie paradox. And what I mean here is that we need to develop the cult of Rastafari around the various traditions and personalities of Jamaica that gave birth to it, without looking to external sources of provenance and validation. This effort is clearly desirable and urgent, in order to take the faith to the next level. Let me spell this out: religion thrives on myths. Humans need myths. Rastafari has myths and is, by United Nations recent recognition, an international religion. There is need then to develop the myths that enshrine Rastafari faith. And this is a task for leadership in the Rastafari and the academy in Jamaica. This is necessary at this time, before some people wake up somewhere and say that Rastafari did not actually develop in Jamaica, but was imported from Frankfurt!
- ii) There is the issue of the Sacrament. Most religions have some emblem, some instrument of interaction and reflection. Rastafari has identified the Herb as its meditation Sacrament, and Chevannes has supported its decriminalization. It is only fair that this be honoured and granted, after-all Christians use wine – of varying degrees of potency – in celebrating the Holy Communion, and no one is frightened that after service there will be serious public disturbance. In fact, Christians gently go home to allow the effects of the wines to wear off, where there is any effect at all. And the Christian Clergy have always been availed a plenteous supply of liquor to ensure that proper meditation goes into the sermon. This is why I had asked that a study be conducted to see what percentage of

Rastafari are ever incarcerated or found guilty of any crimes and of any forms of violence historically and contemporaneously.

- iii) The Rastafari needs to identify shrines for pilgrimage. Since all religions are concerned with the welfare of adherents, it is of signal importance that the Rastafari develop deliberate policies of encouraging pilgrimage of the faithful to Jamaica – over and above Spring Break and nominal visits to the Marley Museum. What I mean here is this: imagine two million people coming to Jamaica for the celebration of a Rastafari even in the month of March or May of every year. Imagine that each pilgrim spends only five hundred Euro on food, accommodation, and other memorabilia. Imagine what that would do for the economy! This is what Christianity has done for Jerusalem and this is what Islam has done for Mecca. There is no reason why the Rastafari cannot do the same for Jamaica. We could have somewhere on the Hills dedicated as the burial-place of Marcus Garvey. Ensure that it can accommodate five million *visitors* (futuristic planning) and aggressively market it just as Christians do Jerusalem and Muslims Mecca. With little or not effort, over time, we may see that we do not have to rely unnecessarily on Cruise Ships, All-inclusives and other violence bringing and poverty inducing forms of tourism with all the ecological dangers that are inflicted on the environment, since Rastafari tourists, being environmentally friendly, will not want to be in a polluted space for the meditation that the Sacrament can induce, nor would she want anything the infest the earth with artificiality and disease.
- iv) There is much good in the way of life of the Rastafari. Not all humans can take the Herb one way or another, but not all humans have a head for wine either. So, what is applicable to each person as a good in the faith and way of life – especially its love of honesty, loyalty to others, and respect for nature on the one hand and its avoidance of violence, ostentation, and junk food on the other hand – should be embraced by all. And if Jamaica leadership were to take a leaf from the Rastafari page (and some of the current leaders, I am told, flirted with Rastafarianism before their conversion to agents of Babylon) and do well by the people of their own kind. This will take a lot of re-education though, and most people do not like hard work. For, to be re-educated means to unlearn what we have been taught, and to discover the myths that uphold the false beliefs that we have hitherto accepted. It is only after that that we may begin to see ourselves as real selves in a pool of other selves, and begin to appreciate that “no one but ourselves can free ourselves from slavery” as Bob Marley has said.
- v) Finally here, there is need for the intelligentsia, business and political leadership of Jamaica and the Caribbean in general to take seriously Rastafari and invest critical mass of intellectual capital in understanding the natural, economic, historical, sociological and philosophical foundations and implications of Rastafari beyond what Chevannes have done. We should not regard Chevannes word as the last, and there are real issues that arise from his study that needs to be taken further. He has not asked us to take his word for what he says. In fact the homage we can pay to his effort is to use these as lunching pad for the development of intellectually creative interrogation and advancement of the ideas that he has brought to our attention in his inimitable way. We are to be frank in dealing with the Chevannes legacy, as in fact, in many places in his works, it is clear that

his views are allowed to influence the points being made. These, though far in between and human, should be subject for further investigation by other from a diversity of disciplines. It is this kind of research that can facilitate the development of the identity of the Rastafari, and Rastafari intellectuals should take up this challenge in a serious way, beyond mere rhythm and symphony and cacophony and dub talk! But merely taking up this intellectual gauntlet would not be enough, there has to be a translation of intellectual insights into practical uplifting policies to transform society to the best that it can be, beyond the level of strife, violence, criminality in high and low places, and divisiveness into which the society easily regresses. This needs the meeting between town and gown to see that as Jamaicans and blacks we all share the same destiny, even in own little oases of wealth, we are still condemned to the same fate if we do not seek to improve the general lot of our ethnicity.

Conclusion

The experiences of human beings in the process of growing up constitute the raw materials that humans draw upon in the formulation of their understanding of reality, experience, identity, relationships, values, metaphysics, etc. Though humans have the capacity to be rational, it is not all humans who happen to claim the rationality, and even then it is not the case that all humans as individuals will realize the highest level of the rationality of which they are individually capable. And given the differential in the circumstances of individual progeny, it clearly means that some are born accidentally into privileges, while others are not that fortunate. It has never been the case that those born into privilege always provide excellence and leadership, in fact the opposite has often been the case. But it is a responsibility that those who have received much has to those who have not been lucky in this regard, to utilize the much that they have received to improve on the state of affairs that they have met in reality.

It has been unfortunate that the deliberate and concerted denudation of black historical heritage has been allowed to go on for so long, to the extent that Africana leadership have begun to embrace the falsehood of the empty baggage syndrome, black ugliness, black incompetence, black inability to be financially successful, black inability to govern, black educational incapacity, black non-scientific heritage, black historical lack of philosophy, black lack of concept of Supreme Being, black aversion to excellence. This breach of truth has been challenged in various ways by blacks in Jamaica, and the fact that they have continued to subvert all the dogmas of oppression to fashion new tools for challenging the oppressive system of Babylon is heart warming. It is that which Barry Chevannes has celebrated in his over three decades of intellectual labour. It is that which the creative imagination of blacks in Jamaica have celebrated over and over – from Marcus Garvey to Bob Marley, from Peter Tosh to Jimmy Cliff, from Toots Hibbert to Elephant Man, and from Mutabaruka to Joan Andrea Hutchinson.

Incidentally human mind's continued search for answers remain a signal source of relief, as the aporea that follows the discovery of an insight often reward the years of anguished labour that may have preceded the discovery. While cooking breakfast for my family one morning I continued to ponder why it is I have always been accused of impatience with mediocrity, folly, laziness, indiscipline and generally laxity. I went over the many things, issued, situations, experiences that easily become irritable to me. I asked myself many questions, such as: why do I

demand of my students the highest level of excellence? Why do I expect of academic colleagues great commitment to the search for truth and the upholding of the highest degree of fairness in dealing with others? Why do I expect of employers and persons in positions of influence to exercise the office with fairness to all? Why should politicians regard their privileged office as a call to service and not a call to prey on the poor and ignorant and the resources of their society? Why should education teach the truth, regardless of whether it contradicts received orthodoxies of religion and dogmas of science? And the simple reason struck me like a bolt of thunder in a moment of apparent reckless 'self-adulation' – it is because I recognize that I have a great historio-genetic pedigree, I have an ancestry of greatness, I am conscious of my historical progeny in great traditional warriors, leaders, priests and community leaders in my lineage; I descend from a lineage of generations of leaders and builders and creative men and women, which means so much in terms of my inability to tolerate idiocy and ineptitude, especially from adults, leaders and political power-mongers.

It is not just about this thing of great African civilizations, Nile Valley science and technology, and other ideas celebrated by Diop, Clarke, ben Jochanan, van Sertima, Mazrui, etc. It has nothing to do with the simple fact of the African ancestry of humanity, or even of the propitious need to have self affirmation and esteem. It has to do with knowing my family tree and the place the line holds in my village, and the respect that the family name commands in the village, and how the family has contributed to the defence, protection and development of the village. This historical pedigree was what meant to me that I did not need Western education to be human, and Western education only gave me tools to advance the humanity that I already had. In fact, Western education has been a hindrance to the humanity of many of my ilk, as they have lost their humanity in the quest for functional, vocational and professional personhood.

The discovery was very crucial in understanding what Chevannes was searching for in the travails of the Rastafarian, the Garveyites, the Marleyites and the others who have become cultural icons to the struggles of Africana quest to regain the humanity that has been so denied peoples of African descent. This is where I locate the crux of the discourse that Chevannes have initiated. This is where his efforts dovetail into the efforts of Nettleford, Patterson, Harris, Wynter, etc. And a careful scrutiny will reveal that what bears remarking in the intellectual disquisitions of Chevannes seamlessly reflect a concern for excellence married with a remarkable humility which shows the life-style of a person conscious of who he is, attenuated with a quiet pride that blossoms in simplicity of approach to interpersonal relations and an affirmation of a view to facilitate others to be the best they can be without feeling threatened by what they could become. Even more remarkable is how the experiences of life constitute the best teacher over and above what formal education can give, and along with a Nettlefordian unobstrusiveness, Chevannes shows that it is not throw loudness of life-style or bhootoistic extravagance that one's achievements are measured but by the institutional structures and lives one has edified. One only wishes that all leaders of peoples of colour realize this critical message, which the creative imagination of Jamaicans have had to claim through spiritual dialogues of Myalism, Revivalism and Rastafarianism.

Thus, what I have attempted here has been to look at various religious, social, cultural and political materials relating to Myalism, Revivalism, Rastafarianism, but especially Rastafarianism, in Jamaica as presented by Barry Chevannes. My interrogation has been with a

mixture of philosophical analysis and critical engagement. I have been able to show the fact that leadership in Rastafari and Jamaica needs careful attention and that it is such attention that will lead to the development of Rastafari and Jamaica to the next level to make life meaningful for the Rastafari and all Jamaicans in general. I have also indicated what I consider to be the next level of research for others in diverse disciplines and also areas of action for the Rastafari and the Jamaica people as a whole as the search for development, growth and identity continues.

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