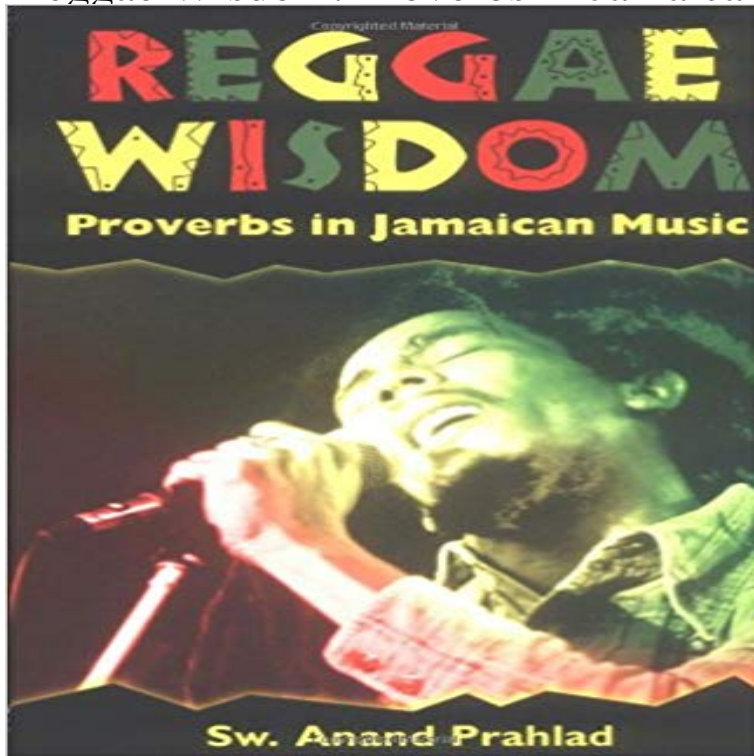


Reggae Wisdom: Proverbs in Jamaican Music



Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh, the Itals, the Ethiopians—they all dropped dazzling proverbs into their best known reggae tunes. What come bad in the morning, cant come good in the evening. They love to give you a basket to carry water. The harder the battle be, ago sweeter the victory. In *Reggae Wisdom: Proverbs in Jamaican Music* Swami Anand Prahlad looks at the contexts and origins of these proverbs, using them as a cultural sheet music toward understanding the history of Jamaican culture, Rastafari religion, and the music that is that cultures worldwide voice. Prahlads fieldwork in Jamaica is extensive. For him, the study of Jamaican sayings and music is not only an academic endeavor. It is also a personal and poetic exploration. Prahlad says, I am writing not only as a folklorist but also as a member of the international reggae community, a group of people around the globe who look to this music for its joy, wisdom, and strength. His unique, groundbreaking study argues that contemporary reggae artists are self-styled Rastafari priests for an international community of listeners and devotees. These warrior/priests serve as educators, healers, prophets, advisers, and social critics. Their proverbs become sources of strength and inspiration for members of the reggae community. Several chapters in *Reggae Wisdom* offer important insights into Rastafari ideology, the history of reggae, the life and folk culture of Jamaican communities, and the recording scene that gave rise to roots reggae. One chapter, based on the authors fieldwork in Jamaica, considers the use of proverbs by ordinary individuals in Jamaican society. Other chapters focus on proverbs used by musical artists such as Bob Marley. Chapters also explore the contexts of album cover art, promotional materials, concert venues, and performance styles and conventions. As Prahlad says, What better way to enter this rich and

powerful, eclectic world of sound and sense than through the magical world of proverbs? Swami Anand Pahlad is an associate professor of English and anthropology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is the author of African American Proverbs in Context (University Press of Mississippi).

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especially those studies that focus more on Rastafariemphasize its aesthetic, cultural, and