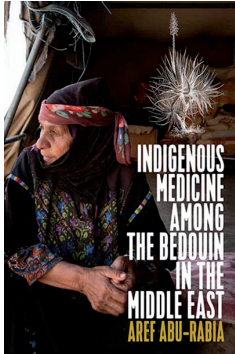


Book Review



Indigenous Medicine Among the Bedouin in the Middle East

Aref Abu-Rabia. 232 pp. Price: \$95.
Publishers: Berghahn Books.
Date of Publication: 2015. Place
of Publication: United States.
ISBN-13: 078-1-78238-689-6.

This book is a blend of history, unorthodox theories and beliefs, and an inside look into Bedouins traditional healing practices during the twentieth century. By profession, the author is an anthropologist. In preamble, he eloquently and affectionately expressed his motivation and the purpose for writing this book: *“I was six years old when I became seriously ill...thinking I was going to die, my parents took my brothers and sisters far away from me and turned my face...toward Mecca...suddenly the tent flap flew open...the dervish-healer Sheikh Isa Hamd entered. He shouted and chanted verses and pushed a finger covered with yellow powder into my throat...cauterized me twice...The next day...I had recovered.”*

Although the title of the book refers to the Bedouins in the Middle East, the focus is on Palestine and neighboring areas. This book has 4 chapters and the data are primarily derived from the Bedouin tribes in the Negev, Galilee, Sinai, and Jordan. The first chapter discussed health services among Bedouins and

their beliefs and attitudes toward traditional healers and conventional practitioners. The second chapter focused on Bedouins' healing practices in a variety of human ailments. The third chapter discussed general treatments and methods used by Bedouins, and these are related to birds, reptiles, animals, and camel milk. The last chapter was on Bedouins's belief in “Qarina”, which is a Jinn and indicated by 12 different names. In the author's opinion, “Qarina” is potentially dangerous impacting negatively Bedouins life. In general, most healing methods described in this book are considered safe, but for example, managing acute appendicitis by Bedouin practices might pose a threat to a patient's life.

In conclusion, this fascinating book meets multiple needs of integrative medicine practitioners, herbalists, faith healers, and a useful reminder of Bedouin healing practices in the Middle East. It is a must read by anthropologists, medical historians, traditional, and phytomedicine practitioners. Highly recommended to be translated to Arabic.

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