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Healing Civilizations: The Search for Therapeutic Essential Oils and Nutrients

Nadim Shaath
Cameron and Company (Mar 14, 2017)
Hardcover $65.00 (320pp)
978-1-944903-09-1

Beautiful and photo-filled with elements of a reference text and a travel memoir, this is a firmly grounded study of essential oils.

In *Healing Civilizations,* Nadim Shaath takes a literal and spiritual worldwide journey to rediscover the original sources of natural well-being.

Shaath, a chemist, educator, and researcher, began his quest some twenty-five years ago. Troubled by society's dependence on pharmaceutical drugs and synthetic compounds, Shaath felt a need to "refocus our priorities" through use of time-tested cures and cosmetics.

The result of Shaath's studies and sojourns is a multifaceted work: it is a beautiful, photo-filled coffee-table-style book, a reference text, and a travel memoir. Visits to the Middle East, Asia, Greece, and Rome in search of centuries-old healing wisdom are engagingly narrated, as is a trip to the Americas for native remedies. History and scientific facts flow together along with personal experience and opinion, but Shaath's amassed knowledge of precious plants is as rich and heady as their essences.

Healing Civilizations presents a wealth of intriguing information, such as how the herb basil's name originated from the Greek word *basileus*, or king, because it was so highly regarded. Patchouli, which Shaath acknowledges has a reputation for being a "hippie oil," can be used as an anti-dandruff agent. Lavender is a perfume element and a remarkable healer of burned skin. Ancient Egyptians applied cinnamon oil to cure scorpion bites, and myrrh—one of the three famed gifts to the infant Jesus—has excellent antiseptic properties.

Healing Civilizations also details oil distillation methods and standards of purity, and includes tables of essential oils and fixed oils, compiling chemical compositions, properties, potential side effects, and traditional usage methods. Aromatherapy is also included, with various blends of oils to effect desired moods or improve vitality.

Healing Civilizations offers a scientific grounding to the study of essential oils and their many uses while celebrating their enticing, enduring history. As a man of science and of the world at large, Shaath suggests that alternative and modern methods work best in a complementary fashion, and that we should learn from the past for a healthier, more holistic future.

MEG NOLA (March/April 2017)

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