

THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICINE IN THE “AVESTA”

Eshniyazov Jamshid Atakhonovich

Urgench State Medical Institute

+998937532202 | jeshniyazov87@gmail.com

Annotation: The worldview of Zoroastrianism, embodied in its artistic, philosophical, and ideological source “Avesta,” contains not only religious teachings but also important information about the health-care system, sanitary-hygienic rules, and medical culture of ancient humanity. In particular, the section “Vendidad” is among the earliest sources related to preserving human health, preventing diseases, medical ethics, and the system of training physicians. This article analyzes the medical knowledge found in the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, the “Avesta,” and highlights the influence of Zoroaster’s teachings on the development of medicine in Central Asia.

Key words and phrases: Avesta, Zoroaster, Zoroastrianism, Vendidad, Fargard, bertels, trita, healer, Central Asia.

Introduction. In the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta, there is no special section explicitly devoted to medicine, but almost every chapter of the Vendidad contains issues related to medical practice. Each part of chapter 22 of the Vendidad is called a fargard. For example, the third fargard discusses an important topic related to medicine - strict observance of hygiene rules; the sixth fargard concerns the examination of physicians and the payment for their services; the seventh fargard explains that after burying the dead, their utensils, clothing, and other belongings must be washed with special cleansing solutions; the tenth fargard emphasizes the most important concept - cleanliness; and the twenty-second fargard speaks about infectious diseases, how to eliminate them, and methods of prevention.¹ In short, to use the words of the Russian scholar Y. E. Bertels, the Vendidad section of the Avesta is devoted to matters of cleanliness and purity-medical issues-rather than religious belief alone.

The Avesta describes three types of healing methods:

1. Treatment with a knife (surgery).
2. Treatment with medicinal plants.
3. Treatment with words (incantations or verbal healing).

This classification resembles the modern branches of medicine: psychotherapy, pharmacology, and surgery.

Materials and matehoods. According to the Avesta, the first physician was Trita. To become a healer, one had to diligently study the theoretical and practical aspects of medicine. Before being allowed to work as a physician (surgeon), a candidate had to pass an examination: if he could successfully cure three patients through surgery, he was permitted to practice. If the surgical procedures were unsuccessful, he was not granted the title of physician. In addition,

¹ M.G‘oyibov, Sh.Jumaniyozov, U.Abdurahmonov. Xiva tibbiyoti (Xiva shifoxonasiga 100 yil) kitobi - Тошкент: Istiqlol nuri, 2013. – B. 12.

during that period, there were specialists in particular fields - physicians who treated dental and eye diseases, and midwives who assisted pregnant women.

The Vendidad states that the physician Trita knew 10,000 medicinal substances prepared from various plants. The Vendidad lists the names of 9,999 diseases. Among these, fever, scabies, poisoning, women's diseases, and their treatments were given great importance.² Furthermore, the Avesta places strong emphasis on hygiene, which was especially vital for the hot climate of Central Asia. For example, it emphasizes the following:

- not burying the dead wherever they happen to be in hot weather;
- washing the belongings of the deceased in special solutions;
- observing sanitary rules during women's physiological states;
- refraining from sexual intercourse during menstruation and pregnancy;
- disposing of hair and nails in designated places;
- keeping the beard and body clean.

The Avesta is not only a religious and philosophical source but also an encyclopedic work that played a major role in the development of Central Asian medicine. It contains:

1. A systematic body of medical knowledge,
2. Established methods of prevention,
3. Defined training, examination systems, and medical ethics,
4. A philosophical foundation for the role of hygiene and sanitation in human life.

In conclusion, Zoroaster's teachings integrated medicine with moral, social, and physiological principles, demonstrating a highly scientific approach to the protection of human health for that era.

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