



The epidemic, quarantine and disinfection measures in the Bukhara Emirate (based on the memories of Sadriddin Ayni)

Anora Zayniddinovna Togaeva

PhD in History, Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Tel: +99 891 (904 65 55)

e-mail: anora.tagaeva@mail.ru

ABSTRACT: There is no doubt that since time immemorial, mankind has been fighting infectious epidemics among many diseases. However, in each period, measures have been developed against it and there has been a struggle for survival. In the article, the author, based on the experience of Sadriddin Ayni, provided information about epidemics that occurred in the Bukhara Emirate at the end of the 19th century, measures against them, quarantine and disinfection.

KEYWORDS: Bukhara, plague, epidemic, quarantine, disinfection, population, disease, sick, government, microbe, contagious

Introduction

Infectious diseases and epidemics have been a serious threat to society for centuries and a major cause of death. Naturally, humanity has struggled against this catastrophe as hard as it could in every era.

Sources provide extensive information about epidemics at different times in history and their consequences. Infectious diseases such as plague and malaria often spread here due to factors such as the hot climate, natural conditions and unfavourable sanitary and epidemiological conditions in the country. Of course, the most possible measures to combat them have been sought.

One of the most famous figures in Uzbek and Tajik literature, a well-known scientist and public figure, was recognized by literary critics of the "*Balzagas of Central Asian peoples*". In his "*Memoirs*"

he wrote about his experience of the plague epidemic in the Emirate of Bukhara more than a hundred years ago, about its disaster and the government's response to it, especially quarantine and disinfection.

MAIN PART

In the summer of 1889, a terrible plague epidemic spread across Bukhara, drying pillows for 500-600 people daily. The author claims that his family was also affected by a natural disaster on the same days. Sadriddin Ayni described the devastating effects of the plague on his family: *"The small ward had five patients in a row. I went from one to the other, drank water and milk, drove away flies that landed on their faces and helped them by pulling them out of their armpits when they tried to get up. A week later, all the houses in our village found themselves in such a difficult situation. Not only in our village, but in the entire district there were almost no healthy people left. People started dying"* [1, p.113].

According to Sadriddin Ayni, in those days more than 25,000 people died in Bukhara and nearby villages. People did not even manage to bury their dying relatives one by one. Only with the onset of autumn and the onset of cold weather did the intensity of the epidemic decrease somewhat. The writer's parents also died as a result of this plague epidemic.

The Emir of Bukhara realised that such disasters cannot be eliminated without a modern medical system in the country. In 1891, on Amir Abdulla Khan's initiative, the first "Rus tuzem" hospital was built in Bukhara to treat the local population. On 30 August this year, the opening ceremony of the hospital was held with the participation of Abdullah Khan and Russian officials. Initially, it had 15 beds for men and 5 for women. The Russian hospital, built in one of the Emir's country gardens, is becoming increasingly popular with local residents. According to the archives, in 1899, 12,161 patients were admitted to the hospital's outpatient clinic and treated effectively. Half of them were women. [2, p.51]

According to the literature, in 1892, due to the lack of appropriate sanitary and epidemiological measures, the plague started again in Bukhara. This time it was joined by malaria and smallpox. On the initiative of doctors at the Russian hospital, a leaflet was drawn up and distributed to the public with measures to prevent these diseases. As a result of these and other preventive measures, the number of deaths from the next epidemic has been significantly reduced to over 600.

In the summer of 1893, another plague broke out in Bukhara. [3, pp.74-76] In particular, Sadriddin Ayni said: *"In one week a healthy person could rarely be seen on the street, and in the second week there were several funerals every day from each street. Usually at midday, Bukhara residents would take the Devonbegi and Baloyi khanaqas, where the dead were taken to the funeral centre - both sides of the mosque scene were filled with the dead brought to the funeral centre, so the Imam did not know which body was being buried"*.

As a result, Bukhara scientists issued a fatwa (proclamation) from the distance, which stated that it was acceptable to put a number of the dead on the battlefield and pronounce one burial for each row. The Bukharians were horrified by this situation, and even healthy people were frightened and sick when dozens of dead people gathered in one place. The government ordered that every dead person should be buried in front of the mosque in his or her neighbourhood, and Devonbegi and Baloyi should not be brought to the pools.

According to S. Ayni, Russian Empire officials were not neutral in this matter and established a plague hospital in Kogan, which they controlled, and quarantined at the station. At the time, there was one hospital in Bukhara with one Russian doctor, one interpreter and one Kashgar nurse. The anti-plague hospital in Bukhara was opened outside the Sheikh Jalal gate, near the city hospital, under the supervision of a doctor and a paramedic of the city hospital. It was these doctors who also treated plague patients. According to the author, the hospital "corps" consisted of mats and ordinary tents, and the conditions in them were not good enough. This means that even then, based on the possibilities of their time, the practice of creating temporary anti-epidemic treatment facilities was already in use. There is also one more information worth mentioning. According to sources, the population of Bukhara at the time was around 50,000 [4], which means that the number of modern medical personnel was much smaller than the population. However, the population at that time widely used traditional medicine alongside modern medicine.

Young Sadriddin was working and studying at Olympjon Madrassah in Bukhara at the time. According to him, two people died of plague in a madrassah, and most of the madrassah residents suffered from this disease and could not leave their rooms. When Sadriddin also became ill with the plague and lost consciousness, his friend Mirsolikh took him home. The author himself said: *"According to my brother, on the first day of my illness and anesthesia, humane Mirsolich did not leave me in the*

Madrassah, but put me on a mattress with my brother, took me to her yard and showed my father. According to their calculations, I was unconscious for twenty-nine days". He said that Mirsalih's father, an enlightened old man named Mirizam, would take care of a young man who was unconscious in his home until he recovered. "A week later, when I got a little stronger, I wanted to go to the madrassah. But the compassionate old man did not leave. He brought me and my brother to his house for another month, thinking I was going to die," the writer said [3, p.76]. It is noteworthy that in our country, speaking modern language, rehabilitation, i.e. restoration of health to the end and complete elimination of the disease, has long been considered.

We can see that an experienced old man who treated the same thing has a peculiar approach to a patient's diet. He only drinks *shirchoy* (milk) for a day or two after Sadridin regains consciousness. From day three, soup is added to the patient's diet. He said: *"They gave me some soup for lunch and dinner. This soup was meat, cooked with some rice, but I was given non-fat juice. On the third day, he allowed me to eat some hot bread in the soup"*.

This fact once again proves that our people's ideas about diet have been developed for a long time. There is one more information to quote here. One Russian doctor who came to Turkestan at the same time noted that the local population understands the diet very well, noting that during treatment almost all local patients asked him if he should follow the diet.

As noted above, quarantine and disinfection measures against the epidemic were also taken at this time. *"One of the quarantines of the Bukhara government took place in the Chetarik district in the Karshi desert and another in the Khanrabot area on the Karmana road. Each of these places, formed at the foot of the steppes, was home to a group of Bukhara healers and cavalry guards of the Emir. Wicker hats were also built there, next to which two or three large copper pots boiled water, and instead of caps were covered with wicker hats. The Navkars caught the passengers, the doctors saw his vein and assessed him as healthy, after which the passengers took off their clothes and entered the caps, poured a bucket of water over their heads, and the officers soiled their clothes on the mat covered with the pot. But for bathing, passengers were given water from one boiler. At the end of the 'disinfection' ceremony, people put on steam-soaked clothes and continue their journey," he wrote. [3, pp.74-76]*

According to another source, the Russian authorities have also taken certain measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases from the Emirate of Bukhara to Russia. In particular, in 1893,

disinfection chambers were installed at the Bukhara cotton cleaning plants to disinfect cotton bales and other items sent to central regions of the Russian Empire. [2, p.52]

Among Ayni's information on the history of Bukhara medicine is the history of the microbe. He said: *"Although there have been no other epidemics or transient diseases in Bukhara since the last plague epidemic in 1893, in summer the city and its surroundings suffered from frequent diseases and deaths. This situation did not go unnoticed by Russian medical scientists, and in the summer of 1895 a special commission arrived from St Petersburg. The commission included microbiologists and medical experts of the time"*.

"This commission first went around the city and its surroundings and looked around," wrote S. Ayni. He looked at the kitchens, lakes, ditches, swimming pools, streams, as well as the kitchens in the market, peasants, fish traders, kalapats, kebabs, people who prepared hot dishes in copper pots, took bowls and plates and sat on the highway.

The author testified that they were terrified when all the products were sampled and bacteriologically checked. They were all filled with microbes that spread dangerous infectious diseases. Russian doctors decided to show bacteria spreading infectious diseases under a microscope and invited representatives of various segments of the population to the hospital. According to Ayni, the commission found it necessary to include Ahmad Makhdum Donish, Kori Abdulmadjid Zufa and teacher Ikromch in the Bukhara jury, as the voice of their wisdom reached the ears of Russian scientists. However, Ahmad Donish, who was seriously ill, was unable to attend the meeting. S. Describing this process, the Russians said: *"They set up a laboratory and showed microbes in water, soup and other things to the Bukhara government commission, commenting on the harm to each microbe and the diseases they can cause. The writer said that fanatics such as Abdurahman Makhdum, Kiom Makhdum, Junbul Makhdum, who were present during the demonstration, were the majority in the circle, and they refused to accept this scientific innovation"*. They also managed to convince the ordinary people who came together in their views. The Russian doctors put an end to the riots to prevent them, and left, advising the Emir of Bukhara to drain the marshes around the city, clean the swimming pools, move the kitchens out of the city and keep the markets and teahouses clean.

Conclusion

This information is further proof that the events witnessed and covered by the great writer himself, which are similar to today's pandemic, occurred with our ancestors many centuries ago. At the same time, the historical realities we have taken into account encourage us to understand how important modern progress and scientific achievements are for us, and to realise that we have a great opportunity to overcome difficulties together.

References:

1. Sadriddin Ayni. Works. 8 volumes. Volume 5 Memories. Part 1-2. (Ed. R. Komilov). – T.: "Tashkent" fiction edition, 1965. [*Sadriddin Ayniy. Asarlar. 8 jildlik. 5-jild. Esdaliklar. 1-2 qism. (Red. R. Komilov). – T.: "Toshkent" badiiy adabiyot nashri, 1965*].
2. Ahmedov R.M., Naimov N.N. History of Bukhara medicine. The first part. Buxoro, 2009. [*Ahmedov R.M., Naimov N.N. Buxoro tibbiyoti tarixi. Birinchi qism. Buxoro, 2009*].
3. Sadriddin Ayni. Memories. Works. Eight volumes. Sixth volume. Part III. –T.: Tashkent Fiction Publishing House, 1965. [*Sadriddin Ayniy. Esdaliklar. Asarlar. Sakkiz tomlik. Oltinchi tom. III qism. – T.: "Toshkent" badiiy adabiyot nashriyoti, 1965*].
4. A collection of geographical, topographic and statistical materials on Asia. Issue XLVII. Bukhara, Lieutenant Colonel Poslavsky. Information about the cities of Afghanistan. Sir R. Sandeman's journey through southern Belugistan. Part I.; The Anglo-Russian Question in Asia and the Defense of India. – SPb.: Military printing house, 1891. [*Sbornik geograficheskikh, topograficheskikh i statisticheskikh materialov po Azii. Vyp. XLVII. Buhara podpolkovnika Poslavskogo. Svedeniya o gorodah Afganistana. Puteshestvie sera R. Sandemana po yuzhnomu Beluzhstanu. Chast I.; Anglo-russkij vopros v Azii i oborona Indii. – Spb.: Voennaya tipografiya, 1891*].