
EVOLUTION OF ETHICAL AND DEONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN THE PRACTICE OF MEDICAL WORKERS BASED ON PRIEST-DOCTORS LIFE EXPERIENCE

**Alexey Alexeyevich Biryukov, Natalya Victorovna Biryukova* and
Olga Vladimirovna Nesterova**

*I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Sechenov University), 8-2 Trubetskaya str.,
119991, Moscow, Russian Federation*

(Received 28 March 2020, revised 2 September 2020)

Abstract

The article presents the historical stages of the formation and development of the ideas of Deontology and medical ethics and highlights the world community's interest in relevant problems of Bioethics. The principles of ethical-deontological relations are shown on the example of priest-doctors' difficult but at the same time vivid life path. The priests presented in the article are great personalities in world history.

Keywords: Ethics, Deontology, Bioethics, priest-doctors

1. Introduction

In medical personnel training there has always been much attention to the spiritual and moral education of a person, as well as ethical behaviour, which are the most important components in the personality of a doctor, being guided by the fact that a patient needs not only the effect of drugs on the body, but also spiritual influence on his moral principles. During the times of Old Testament, illness was interpreted as a direct consequence of a person's spiritual state and healing occurred or did not occur depending on one's understanding or awareness of a sin. Exodus 15.26: "And he said: if you obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do what is right in his sight, and heed his commandments, and keep all his statutes, then I will not bring to you any of the diseases that I brought to Egypt, for I am the Lord thy healer". Mastering ethical and deontological principles is necessary for a doctor, because outstanding physicians emphasized that in order to become a good doctor, you must first of all be a good person. Based on the general ethical culture of the individual and the concepts of deontology, a professional ethical culture and the doctor's deontological principles should be formed.

*Corresponding author, e-mail: N.V.Birukova@mail.ru

The purpose of this study is to analyse the lives of the great priest doctors that have become an example of the personal and professional qualities necessary for all subsequent generations of doctors.

The concepts of 'medical deontology' and 'medical ethics' are not equivalent. Ethics contains a wider range of topics related not only to the performance of a duty to the patient and society, but also the norms of behaviour in relation to their colleagues, subordinates, behaviour after work, etc. Medical deontology is a set of ethical standards concerning the fulfilment of medical workers' professional duties [1, 2].

Deontology (from the Greek 'deon' that means 'due') is a section of Bioethics focusing on issues of duty. The term 'deontology' was proposed by the English sociologist and lawyer Jeremiah Bentham in the nineteenth century to describe a theory of morality. Thus, it should be noted that the basis of Ethics originated from the medicine of the Ancient world. For instance, one of the most famous physicians of that time, Hippocrates, suggested some very strict moral requirements which we can find in his essay 'The Law'. Hippocrates wrote: "Medicine is truly the noblest of all arts" [3]. Reverent attitude to the morals of the doctor in the view of Hippocrates can be seen in the treatise 'About a noble behaviour': "...the Doctor who is also a philosopher is equal to God. In fact, little are the differences between wisdom and Medicine, everything that is sought for wisdom can be found in Medicine..." [3, p. 111] Hippocrates has played such a tremendous part in the development of the principles of deontological ethics which cannot be praised enough [3]. Also, he is the author of such famous works as: 'Where the love of the people is, there is love for their art', 'Make no harm' and 'Hippocratic Oath'. The importance of moral and ethical principles in medical practice is enshrined by the law in many countries. For example, in Russia there is a tradition where graduates of medical universities take the Hippocratic Oath, thus swearing to treat patients carefully and attentively, to act only in patients' interests regardless of nationality, language, property status and rank, descent, residence, attitude to religion, etc.

The works of the great scientist and philosopher of the X-XI century Abu Ali Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna, marked the continuation of healing and medical ethics development. In the main work of his life 'The Canon of Medical Science' advanced information on healing was collected [4]. In his work Avicenna highlighted the individuality of each patient which a doctor should find an approach to.

The famous physician and philosopher Maimonides (1135-1204) summarized the achievements of Arab and Jewish medicine. One of his main works is the doctor's prayer: "... Strengthen the power of my heart so that it will always be equally ready to serve the poor and the rich, a friend and an enemy, good and evil ..." [5].

Also, the Salerno Medical School should be noted, whose existence began in the X century and lasted for 4-5 centuries. Throughout the entire period of training, this school encouraged doctors to follow the humane medical traditions; it instilled a sense of medical duty and a careful attitude to the patient.

In Russia, the moral training of the doctor and ethical problems in Medicine has always been paid a great attention to. Ethics in the works of Russian scientists was considered to be an integral part of medical culture. In particular, it is worth noting the merits of N.I. Pirogov (1810-1881) [6] and M.Y. Mudrov (1776-1831) [7].

In 1813, M.Y. Mudrov delivered the famous Assembly speech ‘A Word on the Piety and Morality of a Hippocratic Doctor’, calling on professors to educate future doctors about the spirit of humanism, self-sacrifice and selflessness. M.Y. Mudrov set forth his thoughts in more detail in his work ‘The Word on the Way to Teach and Study Medicine’ [7]. In it, M.Y. Mudrov emphasized the need to connect medical ethics with the treatment of patients.

N.I. Pirogov also received a well-deserved recognition of the medical community for self-criticism and high medical morality. He became a model for both modern physicians and subsequent generations of doctors. Addressing students, N.I. Pirogov urged to find and cultivate honesty, dignity, devotion to duty and other qualities necessary for a citizen, but the doctor should also have such traits of character as conscientiousness, the ability to care for a patient, and the desire for advanced training. The worldview of N.I. Pirogov is reflected in his works ‘Letters from Heidelberg’, ‘Diary of the old doctor’ and ‘Annals of the surgical department of the clinic of the Imperial University of Dorpat’. In them, he not only detailed moral requirements for the doctor, but also impartially analysed his mistakes in order to prevent them in the future, which positively characterizes N.I. Pirogov [6].

N.N. Petrov, an outstanding oncosurgeon, wrote in 1944 a wonderful book ‘Issues of surgical deontology’, which was later republished five times [8].

The surgeon and scientist, B.V. Petrovsky has played a significant role in the development of Deontology. In the 1970s two conferences were held and two volumes of the collective monograph ‘Deontology in medicine’ were published by the initiative of B.V. Petrovsky [1]. In medical schools Petrovsky initiated academic courses on Deontology. Petrovsky gave a brief but very meaningful concept of medical deontology: that is “the doctrine of the physician’s duty not only to patients, but also in relation to society” (S.D. Nosov’s quotation, 1975) [3]. It is very important to note because in many works by authors from different countries the deontological demands are presented only from patients’ perspective and according to their own interests. The 1990s refer to the modern period of medical ethics and it is closely connected with the Council of Europe’s adoption of the pan-European document, the Convention on the rights and human dignity due to the application of achievements in Biology and Medicine. Its fundamental and historically the most important provision is the protection of the basic human right to life and preservation of health. A patient’s needs are put above the interests of society and Science, the government is responsible for the health of the population. The Convention notes that because of the development of new technologies, the society must find the most possible ethical and legal solutions to problems through debate and discussion. Important works on medical ethics which were published in recent

years are listed at the references [9-14]. One of the leading events in the development of medical ethics was the printing and publication of the book 'Bioethics: bridge to the future' in 1971, its author, and the founder of the new science was V. Potter [15].

2. The life of priests-doctors as an example of the basic ethical and deontological principles of healing

Faith in God does not deny Medicine. Before the revolution of 1917, monastery hospitals were centres of healing, medical training was closely connected with church monasteries, and medical and theological education could be obtained there. After the revolution in Soviet Russia, a ban for the Church to engage in charity came into force. Violators faced punishment by the law of that time. Everything that the churches had including their own houses for teenagers, hospitals and alms-houses ceased to exist during the years of Soviet rule. Therefore, nowadays it is common for many doctors to combine their medical work with serving as priests [16, 17].

An outstanding role in the development of the principles of Ethics and Deontology was played by outstanding priest doctors whose life is an example for many generations of doctors. In the modern sense, the medical profession is very secular and has nothing to do with spirituality. But this is a special profession, marked by God. There are many examples in history when priests combined their spiritual profession (healing the souls of men) with the profession of a doctor (healing the body).

A most remarkable example of priest doctors is V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky (1877-1961). He was an excellent surgeon, an outstanding scientist, a passionate preacher, a merciful physician, a fearless confessor and an ardent defender of the truth. All these talents of V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky declared themselves in the dramatic years of revolutionary persecution, wars and devastation. The time when Science and Medicine were declared enemies of religion, Church and faith, Saint Luke, making a feat, prepared the reunion of these never before warring directions. His life is a feat of serving God and working as a doctor. He saved many human lives and brought a lot of to souls to God. On November 22nd in 1995 V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky was recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church as a saint, with the name of Saint Luke. The life of Saint Luke, the great scholar, archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church is the best preaching of Christianity [18]. The study and analysis of the great spiritual and scientific medical heritage of Saint Luke is of significant applied value for any inhabitant of the planet, and not just for the spiritual and moral education of doctors and nurses. Saint Luke judged his medical activity not from the point of view of his usual work in a rural hospital, but from the point of view of serving the suffering people. Saint Luke treated the sick person with great love and saw the image of God in each of them. These are the famous words of the saint: "For the surgeon there should be no 'medical case', but only a living suffering person" [19].

In his most difficult medical work conditions V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky showed a great virtue and that was mercy. It should be noted that his mercy, his help to his neighbours was constant, continuous and consistent, and not accidental, episodic. This is part of his job, as mandatory as medical.

Saint Luke wrote about his service to God: “I consider it my main bishop’s duty to preach about Christ everywhere ...” [20] Despite the persecution that the Church had to endure, Archbishop Luke not only remained faithful to his religion at all times, but also accepted the ministry as a priest and bishop. In 1921, and these were the first years after the revolution in Russia, he became a priest. Over the next two years, at the University of Turkestan, he taught Medicine in the clothes of a priest (cassock). And already in 1923, he decided to take monastic tonsure and take the name Luke. In a military hospital, in church, in prison, in university and in exile he always remained primarily the confessor of Christ. The spiritual scientific heritage that the saint has left for us is his work ‘Spirit, Soul, and Body’ [21], in which the author discusses important issues - the spirit of man and the soul, the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the heart as an organ of human knowledge of God. In the work ‘Science and Religion’ [22] he carried out a comprehensive scientific analysis and proved that there are no contradictions between religion and Science in practice, all the differences are only in the part of the personal worldview of a particular scientist. During 38 years of Church service Saint Luke delivered 1250 sermons and more than half of them were recorded, which amounted to twelve thick volumes. Currently, fortunately for believers, the writings of Saint Luke have become publicly available.

Valentin Felixovich Voyno-Yasenetsky’s moral principles and attitude to life are presented in his well-known statement: “the Church and Medicine have no right to do what I love, and I am obliged to do what is good for suffering people...” [20, p. 5]. The desire to benefit people and be helpful to patients influenced young V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky’s choice of profession. He “studied Medicine with the sole purpose to be always a village doctor and to help poor people” [20, p. 21]. As a gift for finishing high school Valentin was given the book of *The New Testament* and that made the deepest impression on the eighteen-year-old boy. The lines from the Gospel text that touched him so deeply were the following: “the Harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. And so pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest” (Mathew 9.37) said Jesus, pointing the fields with already ripe wheat to his disciples. For Saint Luke it was the first call of God to serve Him. He became a priest in the most difficult for the Church times, the times of persecution. While being not in his first exile at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) Saint Luke asked to send him to the front to give the soldiers aid, as a specialist of purulent surgery, and at the end of the war he would go back into exile because he considered it his duty to apply his highly professional knowledge in the field of Medicine to assist the wounded. “The main thing in life is always to do good for others. If you can’t do great good to people, then at least try to do small one” [23] was a basic principle of Voyno-Yasenetsky’s life.

Indeed, he constantly did good throughout his all life when he was a surgeon, a priest and an archpastor. In difficult times for Russia he selflessly served people, God and the Motherland.

Another interesting fate is one of Father Maxim (Zhizhilenko Mikhail Alexandrovich), Bishop Serpukhov. Despite the fact that his three brothers and father were lawyers, he entered Moscow University and graduated in 1912 from the University's medical faculty and began his career as a psychiatrist. He was a combat doctor from the very beginning of the First World War, and since January 1918 he worked as the chief doctor of the Red Army hospital. During this period of his life he was held captive by the Cossacks under the leadership of General Mamontov. Then, until 1928 he worked as a doctor in a Moscow prison. He secretly became the priest in 1928 and already in September of that year, without stopping working as a doctor, he became a monk and took the name Maxim. In the spring of 1929 he was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison, and then the term was increased by another five years. He was placed in the Solovetsky camp, in one of the most severe camps of the Soviet era, where he continued to work as a doctor and was in charge of the infectious barracks with typhoid patients. Professor Andreevsky, who was also serving time in the Solovetsky camp, wrote "less than a year later, we, all his colleagues, realized that he was not only a wonderful doctor, but also a great priest".

The fate prepared lots of trials for Father Nikolai, Bishop of Murom also known as Vladimir Mikhailovich Muravyov-Uralsky. The life of Father Nicholas was no less tragic than the fate of a thousand priests who went through the horror of Stalin's camps and prisons. Thanks to his specialty as a doctor, he managed to save his life and not die during the years of imprisonment. In 1911, Vladimir Mikhailovich graduated from the Military Imperial Medical Academy, and in 1912 he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. The same year he was ordained a hieromonk and from that moment combined serving the people as a doctor and serving God. From the first days of World War I and to the last day he worked in the Red Cross front serving both as a doctor and a regimental priest (1914). In 1924 he was first sentenced to four years of imprisonment, but his faith only strengthened and in 1931 he became a bishop of Murom. In 1934, he was again subjected to repression and sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. While serving his time he consulted and treated sick prisoners. In Siberian camps, despite the fact that his health condition was extremely poor, he continued to work as a doctor until 1945, saving the lives of prisoners and civilians who went to a merciful doctor for help. In 1945, Vladimir Mikhailovich began working in the clinic of the city of Murom, but after three years he was again arrested and sentenced to ten years. During all the years of his serving time in the camps, he helped the convicts to maintain health and guided them. In 1957 he was rehabilitated.

The path in the medicine of hieromonk Anatoly (Berestov), MD, a well-known abbot of Father Seraphim Sarovsky's house church began at the Institute of Transplantology and Artificial Organs. He began his career in Medicine by working as a nurse at the Institute of Neurosurgery after graduating from a

medical school. And after serving two years in the army, he entered the 2nd Moscow Medical Institute at the Paediatric faculty. Anatoly Berestov was the best student in his class and was the only one who received a merit scholarship for academic achievements. Being the second year student, Anatoly came to believe in God when he was introduced to the Gospel. When Anatoly was a five year student, he was almost expelled for attending a church, but his classmates supported him and proved that faith in God does not meddle with medical assistance to patients and thus belief is not a reason to force Anatoly from university. In 1966 A. Berestov's career began. First he became a resident, after that a postgraduate student, then an assistant, an associate professor, a candidate of medical sciences and finally in 1991 he became a professor of the paediatric neurology department at the medical university. Doctoral thesis in 1991 coincided with the adoption of a dignity of the deacon and from that time he began his service in the temple of the Mother of God 'Life-giving Spring' in Moscow. In Balaam, he took the monastic vows in 1993, and in 1995 devoted to the priesthood and in 2009 was elevated to the rank of abbot. He helped with organization of the medical faculty at the Russian Orthodox University, the Orthodox medical consultation and diagnostic centre in Moscow, as well as the Church public council on biomedical ethics. His wish to be both a doctor and a priest came true. Anatoly Ivanovich is the author of many publications not only on Paediatrics and Neurology, but he is also the author of a large number of works devoted to the relationship between Medicine and the Church, the acute problems of the society such as drug addiction and the occult.

3. Conclusions

It has always been difficult and very responsible to be both a doctor and a clergyman. First of all, it is responsibility for observing the following ethical and deontological principles by doctors who heal the body and clergymen who heal the soul. Both of them should have such qualities as compassion and mercy, kindness and dignity, justice and honour, etc. The professionalism of the doctor should be at the highest level, proven not only by education documents, but also by genuine deeds in relation to patients and colleagues.

So, in our opinion, the study of spiritual and medical heritage of priest-doctors is of great practical importance for modern doctors and representatives of different areas of Medicine. Research, analysis and study of professional heritage of priest-doctors by contemporary medical students and workers will enhance their professional experience in preventing diseases, treatment and preventing complications. Biographies of priest-doctors are a brilliant example of compassion, mercy and high moral attitude to a patient thus encouraging modern doctors to develop their high spiritual and professional qualities. Saint Luke noted: "The art of healing is wise, humane and laborious. It is laborious, because treatment is not a template, not a standard. It is extremely difficult to foresee because of individual reactions and individual courses of a disease as each person is unique in soul and body." [24]

The lifestyles of great priest-doctors are a wonderful example for the modern doctors, scholars and clergymen. Neither torture nor persecution affected their patriotism and love for the country. Their willingness to sacrifice their lives ‘for their friends’ is a great example that can educate young people. Their selfless service to patients is a moral reference point for doctors and nurses of our time. The realities of our lives today defined the desire of Orthodox medical scientists to combine their abilities and talents, professional knowledge and experience in order to improve the health care system and quality of medical care, to introduce Christian values in modern medicine. In conclusion, it should be added that public atheistic worldview has long gone and doctors should not be ashamed to follow the example of priest-doctors in their medical profession and ask saints for holy help when treating patients.

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