

A'dat (Habit) Development And Its Impact on Temperament

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ABSTRACT

There is a great impact of habit on temperament of a person as habit (A'dat) are all those works or activities a person performs according to his suitable temperament. A temporary activity when exceeds a duration and a person use to do that on the regular basis becomes his habit. This habit obviously has little or more impact on the temperament change in that person according to type of habit acquired by him. If the habit is good then temperament will tend to be towards equability (Moatadil) and if the habit is bad it will affect body humors and shifts the temperament towards dystemperament (Sue-e-Mizaj). A'dat is different from routine, as it is not necessary all routines are to be A'dat. In this paper we have made an attempt to find that how habit affects the temperament and is there any hormonal correlation between habit and temperament.

Keywords: Unani system of medicine, habit (A'dat), temperament, Quwat-e-Nafsaniya.

INTRODUCTION

What is A'dat?

Origin: عادت 'adat is the broad term derived from Arabic language for describing a variety of local customary tradition and practices. Its synonyms are custom, habit, manner, usage, practice. The term habit originates from Middle English: from Old French *abit*, habit, from Latin *habitus* 'condition, appearance', from *habere* 'have, consist of'. [1] Cambridge dictionary had defined habit as; something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it, or something annoying that someone often does, or a strong physical need to keep taking a particular drug. [2] In dictionary of oxford it can be taken as "A settled or regular tendency or practice, or especially one that is hard to give up". Informally, it is an addictive practice. As per psychology it can be defined as an automatic reaction to a specific situation. Another contrast is that, it is the tendency for something done very frequently to become automatic. [3]

Definition: A'dat (habit) is a usual behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur subconsciously. [4] The American Journal of Psychology (1903) defines a habit, from the point of view of psychology, as a more or less fixed way of thinking, willing, or feeling acquired through previous repetition of a mental experience. [5] Habitual behavior often goes unobserved in persons exhibiting it, because a person does not need to engage in self-analysis when undertaking routine tasks. Habits are sometimes compulsory. New behaviors can become automatic through the process of habit formation. Old habits are hard to break and new habits are hard to be acquired because the behavioral patterns which humans repeat become imprinted in neural pathways, but it is possible to form new habits through repetition. This increases the automaticity of the behavior in that context. Features of an automatic behavior are all or some of efficiency, lack of awareness, unintentionality, uncontrollability. [5, 6]

Ismail Jurjani in his book *Zakheera Khawarizam Shahi* states that when any work is performed repeatedly either short in duration, likewise if any kind of diet is taken in small quantity (*kamiyat*) but repeatedly then both the things either it is work or diet becomes A'dat (habit) of that person. There is such a tendency in human nature that if something is done gradually and regularly as their A'dat (habit) and this habit becomes similar to their *mizaj asli* (real temperament). Habit after becoming just like temperament of one's personality reach to such a point that if the habit of any kind like taking of some bad item of food or doing some foul work is kept on continue it would not be such harmful to habitual person but there is a fact that delayed effects will be seen in them so it is better for them to quit such habits gradually instead of suddenly. Same happens with good habits but here good results are achieved so person should continue such habits for the benefits. [6]

Temperament and choice of A'dat: Depending on temperament, it can be more prone to exhibit certain virtues and qualities; they can be classified as good, moderate and bad. Throughout the day, a person constantly faces with the choice: Good or bad. Every time you exercise the virtues or any activity that brings the temperament towards the bright side, you choose good. When you exercise the activities that bring the temperament towards the dark side of the temperament, you essentially choose bad. The performative

aspect embodies the specific actions, by specific people, at specific times and places, which bring the routine to life. [8]

Types of A'dat (habit):

Instigating Habits: These are the life processes, establish to guide in the venture of life. These move towards a chosen idea that leads to fate. If they are positive, they can be enjoyed in their own right without achieving the goal. They maneuver on a path that in itself is rewarding. They often have a goal but that is not as important as the movement of the process. These habits are open ended because the person is not focused on the outcome, whatever happens can be framed as a success. For example going to the gym, reading, making time for friends, and eating smart, building a home.

Avoiding Habits: These are the habits persons try to brake that for example smoking, drinking, gambling, slothfulness, gossip, procrastination, media addiction along with all types of addiction. Here the focus is on moving away from something. For example instead of trying to make stopping gossip a habit, make looking for areas in others to compliment as a habit.

Regimental Habits: Doing an activity the same way each time leaving no room for serendipity that becomes automatic. This is a devilish cycle that robs one of being present in the moment. These habits can become unconscious if they don't watch out. Examples are showering, parking in the same place, traveling on the same path, coffee in the morning.

Unconscious Habits: This is the largest kind of habits that everybody performs. Repeated unconscious behaviors define this type of habit. So many of the behaviors which are not consciously in control of that person but others have more awareness into this realm than others. These are the often outcomes of biases. Examples are frown, picking nose, and speeding, driving too slow, being negative or a pessimist, voting like our parents or peers. [9]

Types of habits described above can be classified in three major types, which are as follows: Good, moderate or Bad:

- 1) **Good A'dat (habit):** A habit might be a person wake up early in the morning and offers prayers according to their religion, brushing his/her teeth twice, after waking up and every night before bed, or walk every morning before school or work. These habits would typically be considered good habits to have because they are of benefit to the person performing them.
- 2) **Moderate A'dat (habit):** These are those which are neither too good that they help a person and benefit him/her in all the respects and nor too bad that are harmful to a person. If a person having such kind of A'dat then it is moderate kind.
- 3) **Bad A'dat (habit):** A bad habit is an undesirable behavior pattern. These habits might be a person stealing one item whenever he visits the store or drinking alcohol every day, procrastination, fidgiting, overspending, nail-biting, pica (eating soil). These habits would typically be considered bad habits because they may bring harm to the person performing them. As soon the person recognizes these bad habits it is better to replace them with healthier one instead of eliminating them all of a sudden. [10]

Another definition of habit is an addiction. Both good and bad habits can be addictive in nature.

Capacity to achieve the target: A goal or target can take precedence over the negative effect of bad habits, but their effect seems to be autonomous and additive. It means that the bad habits persist even after setting a goal but are submissive rather than cancelled. Will power is a key factor which distinguishes a bad habit from an addiction or mental disorder. If a person has control over the behavior then it is a habit. A habit may initially be triggered by a goal but over time that goal becomes less necessary and the habit becomes more automatic. [10, 11]

How firm behavior work for habit formation:

A person consciously or unconsciously follows ones behavior in such a way that the maintenance of customs involves the replication of habits. As a result the copied or conformist behavior becomes the habits of the follower, thus transmitting from individual to individual an imperfect copy of each habit by an indirect route. The habit in one person causes behavior that is copied and leads to similar habits being acquired. The acquired habit is similar to the first with respect to the behavior it might promote under specific conditions. Like any replicator, habits do not stand alone. Genes require organisms to carry them, and these organisms are dependent on their environment. Genes exist on a biochemical substrate. Likewise, habits cannot exist apart from the human organisms in which they reside. They exist on a psycho-neural substrate; they are formed and stored in the individual human nervous system. This in turn depends on the development of

each individual, involving both genetic and environmental influences. Habits depend crucially upon stimuli from the social environment. In social evolution there are additional mechanisms to supplement habit replication, which often weed out or alter aberrant habits. Routines are not habits: they are organizational meta-habits, existing on a substrate of habituated individuals in a social structure. Routines are one ontological layer above habits themselves. ^[11, 12]

Elimination of the habits: There are so many ways for removing bad habits, e.g., withdrawal of reinforces identifying and removing factors that trigger and reinforce the habit. The basal ganglia appear to remember the context that triggers a habit, so habits can be revived if triggers reappear. Recognizing and eliminating bad habits as soon as possible is advised. Habit elimination becomes more difficult with age because repetitions reinforce habits cumulatively over the lifespan.

There are some terms which are quite similar to habit they are as follows:

Addiction (nasha, lat, junoon, aadi, zehat): The state of need to compulsively repeat a behavior. Compulsive behavior: Behavior that is repeated over and over again, uncontrollably. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a mental disorder where people feel the need to check things, perform certain routines, or have certain thoughts repeatedly called obsessions. People are unable to control either the thoughts or the activities for more than a short period of time. Common activities include hand washing, counting of things, and checking to see if a door is locked. Dependent: A reliance on something or someone. Genetic: Something inherited through one's genes. Habit: A behavior or routine that is repeated. Kleptomania: Habitual stealing. Mantra: A phrase repeated during meditation to center the mind. Meditation: A practice that helps one to center and focus the mind; sometimes used to help recovering addicts. Pyromania: Habitual need to start fires. It is an impulse control disorder in which individuals repeatedly fail to resist impulses to deliberately start fires, in order to relieve tension or for instant gratification. ^[9]

Adaptation of A'dat: Habit formation is the process by which a behavior, through regular repetition, becomes permanent and dynamic. There is an increase in automaticity with number of repetitions up to an asymptote. This process of habit formation can be slow. It is found that the average time to reach the asymptote of automaticity was 66 days with a range of 18-254 days. ^[10, 13]

As the habit acquiring this, it can be analyzed in three parts: the cue, the behavior, and the reward. The cue is the trigger of the habitual behavior which starts a habit to form. This trigger could be anything that a person's mind associates with that habit and which automatically let a habit come to the surface. The behavior is the actual habit that one exhibits, and the reward, a positive feeling, therefore continues the "habit loop". ^[14]

In Unani literatures *A'dat* is the synonym of a great concept that is *Tabiyat*. *Tabiyat-e-saniya* is actually habit or *A'dat*. As explained earlier that when a certain duration or asymptote reaches then those activities which a person performs just for a purpose or for getting some kind of benefit by adopting it becomes his *Tabiyat-Saniya* and finally his/her habit. Then that person performs it automatically without any intension.

Some of the examples why some habits are formed:

- Shopping habits, eating leftover food in the kitchen- these are some habits specific to women.
- Drinking tea as a habit- the reason behind this kind of habit formation is either the energy requirement for those who live in hostels as they have nothing else to energize them after hectic schedule.
- Some habits are known as "keystone habits", and these influence the formation of other habits. For example, identifying as the type of person who takes care of their body and is in the habit of exercising regularly can also influence eating better.
- People often became involved with charities because they saw their parents involved with charities.
- Pica-this habit is common in children, reason is deficiency of calcium. As soon the calcium deficiency is treated properly the habit of eating soil gets over.
- Some people are habitual of bloodletting or some to cupping. Those who are habitual to bloodletting feel irritation at the site of venesection as the *tabiyat* (nature) stimulates that person to go for venesection.
- Some people get habitual of smoking before going to washroom to get free from morning ablution. Some after having a cup of tea.

Habit Learning: Hirsh (1974) first used the term "habit learning" to describe a particular type of memory or learning system. From the beginning habit learning was defined negatively in terms of what it was not i.e., hippocampally based, rather than what it was. To Hirsch, the primary feature of hippocampal-based

learning was contextual encoding and retrieval of information that was contextually sensitive. Mishkin et al. (1984) extended Hirsch's concept of habit learning. Following Hirsch, they identified features of habit learning as the opposite those of hippocampally based learning. One set of features was rapid versus slow learning. Rapid learning was defined as one-trial learning, which required the hippocampus, whereas slow learning required repeated trials and was preserved in amnesia. They proposed that there is "a trade-off between short-term flexibility afforded by the memory system and long-term reliability afforded by the habit system". Mishkin and colleagues were also the first to propose a crucial role for the basal ganglia in habit learning.

[13]

Neurophysiological aspect of A'dat formation:

The basal ganglia are a group of subcortical nuclei, including the striatum, globus pallidus, substantia nigra, and subthalamic nucleus in humans. The basal ganglia interact with cerebral cortex via corticostriatal loops in which information projects from cortex to the striatum then to the basal ganglia output nuclei. From here to the thalamus and finally back to cortex. The functions of the basal ganglia are supported by three pathways from the striatum to the thalamus (direct, indirect, and hyperdirect pathways). The basal ganglia are particularly important in learning the relationship between sensory information and motor responses on the basis of trial feedback

Habit as a type of non declarative memory and role of Quwat-e-Nafsaniya (cognitive power): During the 1980s and early 1990s amnesic subjects were shown to have intact learning across a large number of novel tasks, primarily drawn from the implicit memory and learning literatures. Squire and Zola-Morgan (1988) created the term non-declarative and defined it as a heterogeneous collection of abilities (motor skills, perceptual skills, and cognitive skills). These abilities and perhaps others are examples of procedural memory. Simple classical conditioning, adaptation level effects, priming, and other places where experience alters performance independently of providing a basis for the conscious recollection of past events. This is done through *Hiss-e-mushtarik*, *Quwat-e- khayal* and *Quwat-e-Wahima* (powers of brain). Non-declarative memory thus incorporated the cognitive psychology distinction between implicit and explicit memory with the result that hippocampal based declarative learning was now identified as memory (i.e *Quwat-e-Hafiza*) that was accessible to consciousness, and the heterogeneous non-declarative memory systems as unconscious. [15-20]

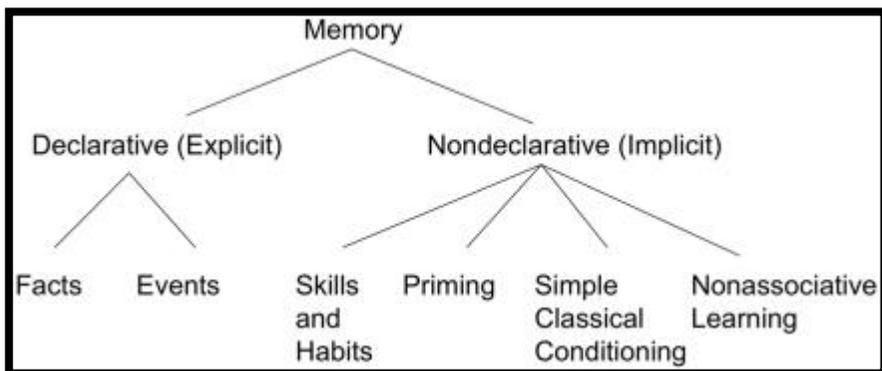


Figure 1 The fractionation of long-term memory proposed by Squire and Zola-Morgan

In unani literature it comes under the section of *Quwat-e-Nafsaniya*, which is broadly divided into five sub sections (*Hiss-e-mushtarik*, *Quwat-e-Khayal*, *Quwat-e-Mutasarrifa*, *Quwat-e-Wahima* and *Quwat-e-Hafiza*)

Justifying the characteristics of habit learning: As the concept of habit learning developed, a number of different defining features were proposed. The following features which covers the definition of habit learning are; inflexible, slow, unconscious, automatic, and insensitive.

1. **Inflexible:** The characterization of habit learning as "inflexible" in the definitions differ depending on whether habit learning is contrast with the hippocampal or prefrontal system. Within the hippocampal system, flexibility is a result of individual memories formed by the hippocampus that can be applied to new situations. Daw et al. (2005) argue that the basal ganglia select behaviors on the basis of the previous history of reinforcement, whereas the prefrontal cortex enables control based on theories or strategies. Activity in the basal ganglia can be predicted by measures taken from

- reinforcement-learning modeling, specifically reward prediction (the estimate of the expected reward associated with choosing a particular behavior in the current state). In this sense, the basal ganglia is inflexible because it is controlled to act in accordance with past reinforcement.
2. **Slow or incremental:** Habit learning was first characterized as slow or incremental by Miskin et al. (1984). Learning in hippocampally ablated animals required multiple trials while animals with an intact hippocampus showed one-trial learning. The terms slow and incremental depends on time. Habit learning is bcomplete when asymptote is achieved. If habit learning is gradual then time taken is long to reach asymptote when the performance becomes fully habitual.
 3. **Unconsciousness:** Unconsciousness, as a defining feature of habit learning is due to inclusion of habit learning as a subtype of non-declarative memory. Declarative memory was accessible to consciousness, whereas non-declarative memory was not according to the theory given by philosophers. Consciousness can be difficult to define both on a practical and theoretical level. It is difficult to assess the degree of conscious and its knowledge.
 4. **Automatic:** The concept of automaticity was developed in cognitive psychology by Shiffrin and Schneider (1977). It is itself a complex concept with four main characteristics. Three of these characteristics have already **been discussed. These are** : automatic **performance is unconscious**, the knowledge applied automatically **is rigid or inflexible**, and automatic processes are acquired slowly and incrementally. The remaining characteristic is that automatic processes do not require the limited capacity **for cognitive mechanisms** involved in short-term memory and selective attention. This leads to an operational definition **that automatic tasks are** able to be performed in a dual task situation along with a demanding task that requires short-term memory and selective attention processes. An alternative operational definition was proposed by **Jacoby-** that an automatic process will be performed regardless of a person's intentions.

Discussion: As discussed above the concept of Unani literature regarding *A'dat* (synonym of *tabiyat*) is vast. By *A'dat* philosophers means that all the physiological functions which are governed by *tabiyat* are all habit of the human body. They should be within a normal range for the maintenance of health their disturbance leads to ailment, for e.g pumping of heart is a kind of habit in which heart has to pump regularly, unconsciously and automatically. Habit affects all the three folds of the temperament i.e physiological, anatomical and psychological. A habit may either has its impact on one or all the three dimensions of the temperament, it depends what kind of habit a person has.

Conclusion: There is a great impact of habit (*A'dat*) on temperament of a person as it is as specific as the temperament of a person. People adopt those habits which are suitable to their temperament that's why not all the habits are same in all the persons, they vary as the temperament of individuals vary. If the habit is good then temperament will tend to be towards equability (*Moatadil*) and if the habit is bad it will affect body humors most important part of human body responsible for health and any alteration in humors cause disease condition in the body. So shifts the temperament towards dystemperament (*Sue-e-Mizaj*). Habit has impact on psychological aspect of a person as some habits come under the category of meditation which relaxes the mind and maintain a healthy state. Similarly bad habits disturb the person psychologically.

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