CHAPTER 18

The Manner of Discovering the Irtifaqāt

You should know that the human being is such that all members of his species accord in their need for food, drink, sexual intercourse, protection from the sun and the rain, seeking warmth in the winter, and so on. It was due to the providence of God, may He be Exalted, for man that He naturally inspired him based on the requirement of his specific form how he could manage to accomplish these needs. Thus inevitably all individuals are equal in this except for the defective one whose substance is resistant.

He revealed to the bee how to eat fruits, how to make a dwelling in which the members of its species assemble, how to follow its leader, and then how to produce honey. He revealed to the sparrow how to forage for nourishing seeds, how to find water, how to flee from the cat and the fowler, how to struggle against the things which prevent it from obtaining its needs, and how the male should mate with the female at the time of mating and then make a nest in the mountains, and how they should share in incubating the eggs and how they should feed the chicks. Likewise every species has a law (sharī'a) infused into the breasts of its individuals by means of the specific form. In like manner He inspired human beings how to accomplish these necessities although He added for them along with these things, three other things which necessitate that his specific form be higher than all others.

1) One of these is being motivated to do something due to a comprehensive outlook (al-ra'y al-kulli). Animals are only motivated to a sensorially perceived or an imagined objective due to a motivation arising from their physical nature, such as hunger, thirst, and lust. Sometimes humans devote themselves to a rational benefit that has no motivation in their physical nature, so that they may want to establish a just order in the town, to perfect their character and refine their soul, to be saved from the punishments of the next world, or to win a special place in peoples’ hearts.

2) The second is that humans combine aesthetic sensibility (ẓarā'if)
with the supports of civilization. Animals only desire a thing to meet their requirements and to fulfill their needs, while a person at times want to be aesthetically and emotionally delighted beyond the basic need, and therefore he seeks a beautiful wife, delicious food, sumptuous clothing, and a magnificent dwelling.

3) The third is that there are found among them people of intelligence and awareness who discover the appropriate supports of civilization (irtifaqät), while there are people who are motivated by the same concerns, but who have been unable to discover a solution. Thus when they see and hear what the wise men have discovered they accept it wholeheartedly, and firmly adhere to what they find to be in agreement with what they know.¹

Many a person is hungry and thirsty and does not find food or water so that he is afflicted by severe distress until he finds them. Thus he seeks for a mode of development corresponding to this need but does not find a way. Then he chances to meet a wise man who had experienced the same difficulty, and has learned which seeds were edible and discovered how to sow them, water them, reap them, thresh them, winnow them, and store them until the time when they would be required. He has learned to dig wells for those far from springs and rivers and to make large jugs, water skins, and bowls, so that he has made this an inroad into the supports of civilization.

Then a person chewed seeds as they were but they could not be digested by his stomach and he fed on raw vegetables² and could not digest them. He wanted to find a solution for this but could not find a way to do it until he met a wise man who had discovered cooking, roasting, grinding, and baking so he adopted this as another inroad into the supports of civilization; and take this as an example for all of his needs. The reflective person has evidence in what we have mentioned of the origination of many beneficial things which previously had not been in existence in the countries. Generations passed in this way and they did not cease doing this until a great deal of the revealed sciences supported by acquired experiences were collected and they became attached to them and they lived and died in accordance with them.

In summary, the situation of the necessary inspirations with these three things is that of the breath. It is basically involuntary like the pulsation of the heart, but the choice of taking small or large breaths remains with the person.

These three things are not found equally in all people due to the variations in their temperaments and in their minds which cause the infusing of a comprehensive outlook (ra'yi kulli), a love of the aesthetic, and the deduction of the supports of civilized life, and their adopting these as models. Due to their differences in applying themselves to deriving these, and this sort of causes, the supports of civilization (irtifaqät) have two degrees.

The first is one which even the people of primitive societies possess, such as the Bedouin, the people who inhabit the mountains, and the regions far from the sound climates, and this we will term the “First Irtifaq.” The second is the one of the people of settled populations and the urban centers of the healthy regions where naturally people of superior virtues and wise men have arisen; since there are more groups of people, needs are more complex, and the types of experiences are greater. Thus abundant numbers of practices were discovered, and each person held to them firmly. The highest aspect of this degree is what the kings who are people of complete luxury put into effect, to whom the wise men from other nations come, so that they adopt sound practices from them, and this is what we shall term the “Second Irtifaq.”

When the Second Irtifaq was completed this required a “Third Irtifaq,” which is that when social transactions went on among them and avarice, envy, the postponement of paying debts, and denying the rights of one another, entered these relations. Thus there emerged among them disagreements and disputes, and there arose among them those who were overpowered by these destructive desires or naturally inclined to boldness in killing and plundering. They had supports of civilization of collective benefit but no one of them (alone) was able to carry them all out, or it was not easy for him, or he did not have the energy to do it. Thus people were forced to set up a king to judge among them with justice, restrain the rebellious one, oppose the insolent one, and collect from them taxes to spend as they should be spent.


² The text has fruits (fawākīh) but in this context, vegetables seems to be the intended meaning.
The Third *irifāq* required a Fourth *irifāq*. This occurred because when each king was singled out in his city and wealth was collected for him, and champions gathered around him, greed, covetousness, resentment befall them (the kings) and they disputed among themselves, and battled one another, so they were forced to set up the caliph or to obey the one who had the authority of the great deputyship (*khilafat*). I mean by the Caliph one who has obtained so much power that it is seen to be impossible that another man could dispossess him of his kingdom except after many gatherings and the spending of much wealth—an occurrence which during long periods of time only one may find possible.

Due to the variations in people and customs the caliphs differ, and the community of people who have more severe and violent natures is more in need of kings and caliphs than those who are the less rapacious and hateful. We want to inform you about the basic principles of these *irifāqāt*, and the contents of their divisions such as the minds of the righteous nations of superior virtues require. They have adopted them as an accepted practice and do not differ anywhere in it, so listen closely to what is recounted to you.

---

CHAPTER 19

*The First Irifāq (Stage in the Supports of Civilization)*

A aspect of this is the language that expresses what is in people's minds. This is based on acts, attitudes, and bodies, which come to be associated with some sound through onomatopoeia, causal connection or something else. Then this sound is imitated as it is, and then used to derive forms\(^1\) corresponding to varying meanings. Those things known by sight or arising from intuitive attitudes in the mind are represented by the first type (onomatopoeia), thus a sound is assigned which resembles them. Then languages were expanded through associations due to resemblance, proximity, or by the transferal of some relationship. There are other principles (of the first level) which you will find in certain of our discussions.

Among them are:

- Agriculture, planting, digging wells, methods of cooking and making stews, and making pots and water skins.
- Domesticating the animals and taming them to make use of their backs, meat, hides, hair, fur, milk, and their young.
- (Taking) a dwelling for protection from heat and cold such as caves or huts and so on.
- Clothing functioning as a covering which is made from animal skins or the leaves of trees or whatever their hands manufactured.
- That a male is guided to select a mate and not share her with any one else, in order to alleviate his lust and perpetuate his descent, and to be assisted by her in his domestic needs and in raising and educating the children. Non-humans only select a female by chance, due to their being from the same litter and maturing together in each other's company, or for other such reasons.
- That he is guided to tools without which cultivating, planting, digging wells, and domesticating animals would not be achievable, such as the pickax, bucket, plow, ropes, and so on.

---

\(^1\) “*Sigha*” means forms of speech, tenses, cases, etc.
BOOK III

That he is guided to exchanges and cooperation in certain matters. That the wisest and strongest will subjugate the others and become the leader and chief by one means or another.

That there will be an accepted practice for settling their quarrels, controlling the oppressor, and warding off whoever wants to attack them.

Necessarily, there must be someone in every nation who discovers the methods for the supports of civilization as they relate to their situation and sets them out for others to follow. There will be among them ones who love beauty, luxury, and reposes from whatever aspect; and those who pride themselves on their own courage, magnanimity, eloquence, cleverness, and so on; and ones who want their fame to spread or their rank to be higher.

God, may He be Exalted, blessed His worshippers in His Great Book by inspiring the branches of this first stage of civilization with His knowledge that the imposition of the religious duties in the Qur’an extends to all types of people, and that only this level of the first stage of civilization encompasses all of them, and God knows better.

CHAPTER 20

The Art of the Proper Manner of Livelihood
(The Second Ittifāq)

This is the science (ḥikma) which examines the manner of progressing beyond managing the needs previously established to the second degree (of the settled populations and towns). The basic principle in it is that the First Ittifāq should be tested by correct experience in every field. Then those attitudes should be chosen which are further from harm and closer to benefit, while those other than this should be abandoned. It should be tested according to those superior virtues to which the people of the most perfect temperaments are predisposed, so that whatever this necessitates and requires will be chosen while everything else will be abandoned. (Finally) it should be tested on the basis of friendly interaction among people and proper association with them, and other goals arising from the universal outlook.

The major issues of livelihood concern the proper manner of eating, drinking, walking, sitting, sleep, travel, defecating, sexual intercourse, clothing, dwellings, cleanliness, decoration, polite conversation, charms against disorders, foreseeing the onslaught of events, banquets celebrating births, marriage, festivals, or the return of a traveler, and other such things; as well as mourning over calamities, visiting the sick and the burial of the dead.

The people of sound temperaments who inhabit the populated lands agree that harmful food should not be eaten, such as an animal which dies of natural causes, rotten food, and animals which have unbalanced or immoderate natures. They like to put food in vessels, set them on tablecloths and other such customs, and to wash the face and hands before eating. They avoid frivolous and gluttonous behaviors or ones which would cause a grudge to arise among the company. Also they agree not to drink foul-smelling water, nor to drink water by lapping it up or gulping it down.

They agree on preferring cleanliness, and keeping the body, garments, and dwelling free from two impurities: from the smell
CHAPTER 21

The Management of the Household

This is the science examining the way to preserve the ties existing between the members of the household according to the second degree of the stages of the supports of civilization. In it are four departments: marriage, having children, being the master, and associating with one another. The basis of this is that the need for sexual intercourse necessitated relationship and companionship between man and woman, then affection for the children required their cooperation in raising them, and by nature the woman is the one of them more guided to bring up the children and the less intellectual of the two, the one less able to bear hardships, and the more totally modest and attached to the home. She is more meticulous in doing humble tasks and is the more completely obedient, while the man reasons more soundly, is more concerned with defending his honor, more enthusiastic in throwing himself into difficult tasks and more bent on domination, dispute, and so on. Thus the livelihood of the latter would not be complete without that of the former, and the former needs the latter.

The rivalry among men for women and their sense of jealousy concerning them requires that their relationship is not proper unless the man's exclusive possession of his wife is settled in the presence of witnesses. The desire of the man for the woman and the depending of her honor on her guardian and his (the guardian's) defending her, necessitate the dowry, engagement, and her guardian's remaining disinterested (in her as a wife). If the guardian were allowed to desire the relative put under his protection, this would lead to great harm coming to her, since she would be prevented by him from marrying the one she wanted, and she would not have anyone who would demand marital rights on her behalf despite her great need for this. The offense against the ties of kinship through the quarrels of co-wives, and the like, in addition to

1 Her father or brother, in most cases.