

# CENTRIS E-BULLETIN

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# CONTENTS

FROM THE  
DIRECTOR'S DESK

FROM THE  
EDITOR'S DESK

GEMS OF  
WISDOM

CURRENT  
AFFAIRS

SHAS MOSQUE

EVENTS

1

2

3

10

42

43

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# From the Editor's Desk

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## Man is Madani

During the golden age of Islamic civilisation, Muslim political philosophers had theoretically outlined the importance of “*madani*” as a conceptual guideline for human beings. Among the meanings of “*madani*” are “urban” or “civilized.” For example, Ibn Miskawayh (932-1030 AD) mentioned that man by nature is *madani*. A man must live in society and must not seclude himself from socializing with other people. This is because, since birth, human beings have always been dependent on the help of other people in fulfilling their needs, as neither of us is an expert in all matters. Man is not like animals that can survive alone in the wild, as animals are born with fur, jaws and claws that enable them to live in such extreme habitats. What is more, according to Ibn Miskawayh, how can a Muslim claim that he is a pious person if he simply secludes himself from society in the name of *ibadah*, as he will never be able to further cleanse his heart through the practice of patience, giving alms and charity, and toleration in *muamalat* or dealings, which can only be attained by socializing in the society?

Hence, cooperation is key. Earlier, Al-Farabi (870-950 AD) had also highlighted that to live in *al-madina al-fadila* or a “virtuous city,” all of its citizens must recognise that each of us is born with a specific skill/talent that others do not possess, and thus after we had developed our respective expertise (with the help and guidance of the *imam* or the state leader) we must come together and work cooperatively just like organs in a human body that run the whole human physiology. Of course, previously, such cooperations were also stressed by Aristotle (384-322 BC) during the ancient Greek period in his conception of polity as the best form of political system wherein every citizen without exception tries their best to achieve their respective *telos* or objective and work together in developing the just/ideal state.

Furthermore, as Muslims we must be able to unite ourselves under the common *tawhidic* epistemology that we have which supposedly guides our thinking process - and therefore our actions - without detaching ourselves from the community at large.



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