### **Prestigious News Report: Workshop on Islamic Philosophy Convened at the University of Vienna**

Vienna, April 7, 2025 – A specialized workshop on Islamic philosophy, attended by an esteemed assembly of professors and researchers, took place at the University of Vienna. Held from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM in the university’s main building, the event was organized by the Institute of Philosophy, showcasing the institution’s commitment to advancing philosophical discourse. The workshop featured a series of insightful presentations, exploring the intersections of Islamic thought with ancient Greek philosophy and its contemporary relevance.

The proceedings commenced with an opening address by Professor Dr. Georg Karamanolis, Deputy Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Head of the Department of Ancient Philosophy. In his remarks, Professor Karamanolis underscored the significance of studying Islamic philosophy and its pivotal role in the history of human thought, introducing the speakers and their respective topics. Following this, Professor Dr. Elvira Wakelnig, an expert in Oriental Studies at the University of Vienna, delivered a lecture on “Arabic Translations of Galen and Aristotle,” offering a profound analysis of their impact on the development of Islamic philosophy.

Dr. Kasra Abdavi Azar, a researcher of Islamic philosophy from the University of Leuven, Belgium, then spoke on “Early Greek Philosophy in an Islamic Garb.” His presentation examined how Greek philosophical traditions influenced Islamic thought, spotlighting the contributions of Persian philosophers in this cultural transmission. The workshop concluded with Dr. Reza Gholami, a university professor and Iran’s Cultural Representative in Austria, who presented a “Critical-Explanatory Analysis of Islamic Philosophy,” proposing fresh perspectives on this multifaceted field.

#### **Dr. Reza Gholami’s Critical-Explanatory Analysis of Islamic Philosophy**

Dr. Gholami opened his lecture by expressing gratitude to Professor Karamanolis and the Institute of Philosophy for hosting the event. “Islamic philosophy is a vital subject that warrants continuous exploration,” he stated, “and I hope this institute, a leading center for philosophical studies, will remain a hub for such dialogues.” Structuring his presentation into seven chapters, Dr. Gholami covered foundational definitions, branches of Islamic philosophy, reasons for its emergence in the Islamic world, Iran’s role in its development, its ties to ancient Greek philosophy, and contemporary critiques.

**Foundations and Branches of Islamic Philosophy** In his first chapter, Dr. Gholami defined Islamic philosophy as a discipline that employs logical reasoning and self-evident principles to probe existence and truth. “Ontology stands at its core,” he explained, “while epistemology explores the limits of knowledge, and anthropology addresses human existence.” He outlined its primary branches: Peripatetic philosophy, led by Avicenna, rooted in logic and axioms; Illuminationist philosophy, pioneered by Suhrawardi, emphasizing light and spiritual intuition; and Transcendent philosophy, formulated by Mulla Sadra, which integrates the unity of being and substantial motion. This segment captivated the audience, offering a lucid overview of the diversity and depth within Islamic philosophical traditions.

**Reasons for Adoption and Iran’s Contributions** Dr. Gholami next addressed the factors driving the Islamic world’s engagement with philosophy. “The widespread translation of Greek texts during the Abbasid Caliphate, Islam’s encouragement of rational inquiry, and the patronage of institutions like the House of Wisdom were instrumental,” he noted. He highlighted the pivotal role of Iranian philosophers—Farabi, Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra—emphasizing Iran’s rich intellectual heritage, robust linguistic tradition, and focus on mystical and practical concerns. “Farabi, dubbed the Second Teacher, fused Greek and Islamic thought; Avicenna systematized it; Suhrawardi opened new paths with Illuminationism; and Mulla Sadra bridged reason and revelation through his innovative theories,” he elaborated.

**Links to Ancient Greek Philosophy** A highlight of the lecture was Dr. Gholami’s exploration of Islamic philosophy’s connections to ancient Greek thought. He explained how philosophers like Farabi and Avicenna reinterpreted Platonic forms and adopted Neoplatonic concepts such as the active intellect and hierarchies of existence. Aristotle’s influence, he added, was profound in logic, metaphysics, and theories of the soul. “Avicenna built on Aristotelian metaphysics to develop his theory of necessity and contingency, explicating the relationship between God and the world,” he said, sparking lively questions from the audience.

**Islamic Philosophy and Modern Western Thought** Dr. Gholami’s comparison of Islamic philosophy with modern Western philosophy emerged as a focal point. “They stem from distinct worlds,” he observed. “Islamic philosophy leans on metaphysics and rational deduction, shaped by Islamic teachings to explore existence and human felicity, whereas modern Western philosophy, post-Descartes and Kant, prioritizes skepticism, empiricism, and scientific method, seeking knowledge independent of religion.” This juxtaposition ignited spirited debates, reflecting its resonance with the attendees.

**Strengths and Weaknesses** In his critique, Dr. Gholami enumerated Islamic philosophy’s strengths: its metaphysical depth, capacity to imbue existence with meaning, emphasis on logical reasoning, and synthesis of religious, philosophical, and mystical elements. However, he also identified weaknesses: “It can be epistemologically simplistic, neglecting relativism, and has limited dialogue with other traditions. It rarely addresses modern existential issues and occasionally blurs boundaries with mysticism and theology, stagnating in certain periods and struggling with contemporary practical challenges.” This balanced assessment earned widespread appreciation for its fairness.

**Mulla Sadra, Tabatabai, and the Revival of Islamic Philosophy** Dr. Gholami concluded with the contributions of Mulla Sadra and Allameh Tabatabai. “Mulla Sadra, in the Safavid era, revolutionized Islamic philosophy with substantial motion and the unity of being, blending reason and revelation,” he said. “Tabatabai later adapted Sadra’s framework to modern challenges, notably through works like *Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism*.” Regretting time constraints, he expressed hope for future discussions on these figures.

**Religious, Mystical, and Ethical Dimensions** Dr. Gholami also explored Islamic philosophy’s ties to ethics and mysticism. “It uses reason to elucidate moral concepts like justice, with Avicenna viewing ethics as essential to human happiness through virtue and knowledge,” he said. Defining its “Islamic” nature, he added, “It emerged in the Islamic world, prioritizing free inquiry over strict doctrinal adherence.”

#### **Enthusiastic Reception**

Dr. Gholami’s lecture concluded to warm applause, sparking robust discussions among participants. The workshop not only provided a deep dive into Islamic philosophy but also raised provocative questions about its modern relevance and critiques, paving the way for future research. Organizers announced plans for similar events, reinforcing the University of Vienna’s role in fostering such scholarship.