From the Cyrus Cylinder to Interfaith Dialogue: The First “Lotus of Dialogue” Statue Awarded to Peter Haider



At the conference **“Religious Identity and Global Identity”** in Vienna, the first honorary **“Lotus of Dialogue” statue** was presented to Peter Haider, a prominent advocate of interfaith dialogue. The award was established by the **Iranian Wisdom House, Vienna**, to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to promoting dialogue between religions and cultures, fostering mutual understanding, and strengthening cooperation among societies.

Dr. Reza Gholami, President of the Iranian Wisdom House, Vienna, and Scientific Secretary of the conference, presented the statue. In his remarks, he highlighted the historical tradition of interaction among religions and cultures in Iranian civilization, citing examples ranging from the Cyrus Cylinder in the sixth century BCE to the dialogues of Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq and Imam Reza with followers of different religions and proponents of diverse viewpoints. Drawing on this rich historical legacy, Dr. Gholami described Iran as a **“Land of Dialogue.”**

Dr. Gholami also expressed his appreciation for Peter Haider’s efforts to promote interfaith dialogue, particularly between Islam and Christianity. He described the Lotus of Dialogue statue as a symbol of commitment to dialogue, mutual understanding, and intercultural and interreligious engagement.

The Lotus: A Symbol of Flourishing Amid Differences

The choice of the lotus as the symbol of this honorary statue reflects its symbolic association with flourishing and the movement toward light. It embodies the conviction that even amid differences

and misunderstandings, dialogue can open a path toward mutual recognition, deeper understanding, and peaceful coexistence.



The presentation of the first **Lotus of Dialogue** statue marks a step toward honoring the dialogue-oriented heritage of Iranian civilization and strengthening a culture of understanding among religions and peoples. It also reflects a vision of Vienna as one of Europe's important centers of cultural exchange, where diverse traditions and perspectives can meet, engage in meaningful dialogue, and bring people closer together.

The conference **“Religious Identity and Global Identity”** concluded with a summary of the discussions and reflections shared by the participants.