

Introduction to al-Ghazali

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111) was a Persian Islamic philosopher, theologian, jurist, and mystic. He is known as one of the most influential scholars in Islamic history. His works combined philosophy, law, and spirituality, earning him the title *Hujjat al-Islam* (Proof of Islam).

Education and Early Career

Al-Ghazali studied Islamic law, philosophy, and logic under the best scholars of his time. He became a professor at the famous Nizamiyya College in Baghdad. Despite his academic success, he experienced a spiritual crisis, doubting the reliability of rational knowledge. This led him to leave his career and search for truth through spirituality and reflection.

Major Works

His most famous book is *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (Revival of Religious Sciences), which focused on Islamic ethics and spirituality. In *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (Incoherence of Philosophers), he criticized philosophers who relied too much on Greek rationalism. His autobiographical work, *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (Deliverance from Error), explains his personal journey from doubt to faith.

Teachings and Ideas

Al-Ghazali taught that true knowledge must be followed by action, and real certainty comes from spiritual experience rather than pure reason. He balanced Shariah (Islamic law) with Sufism, creating harmony between outward practices and inner faith. He stressed humility, sincerity, and detachment from material life as keys to closeness with God.

Legacy of al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali's influence shaped Islamic theology, mysticism, and law for centuries. He defended Islam against philosophers, inspired Sufis, and guided rulers and common believers. His works influenced both the Muslim world and Western philosophy. Today, he is remembered as a central figure in Islamic intellectual history and spirituality.