

The ‘Revival of Religious Sciences’

Introduction

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, a leading Islamic scholar of the 11th century, wrote the famous book *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din* (Revival of Religious Sciences). The work was aimed at reviving the true essence of Islam by combining outward practices with inner spirituality. It became one of the most influential books in Islamic history and played a central role in guiding Muslims towards a balanced life of faith, morality, and knowledge.

Structure of the Work

The *Ihya* is divided into four main parts. The first section discusses acts of worship like prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. The second deals with daily customs such as family relations and earning a livelihood ethically. The third focuses on destructive vices, including pride, envy, and greed. The fourth section explains saving virtues such as patience, sincerity, gratitude, and reliance on God. This structure shows that Islam is a complete way of life, covering personal, social, and spiritual aspects together.

Objectives of the Revival

The main objective of Imam al-Ghazali’s work was to revive the true spirit of Islam that had been overshadowed by excessive legalism and ritualism. He wanted to bridge the gap between scholars who focused only on law and Sufis who leaned towards extreme mysticism. By combining both, he provided a balanced path that emphasized purifying the soul while also practicing outward religious duties. His work aimed to reform the Muslim community by teaching sincerity, humility, and genuine worship.

Influence and Legacy

The *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din* became a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship and spirituality. It was widely read, translated, and taught in different regions of the Muslim world. The book influenced Sufi movements by giving them a rational and balanced approach. It also inspired jurists, philosophers, and theologians to integrate ethics with knowledge. For centuries, it has been treated as a spiritual encyclopedia and moral guide, helping Muslims strengthen their faith and avoid hypocrisy.

Relevance to Pakistan Studies

For Pakistan Studies, the *Ihya* holds great significance because it shaped the religious thought of South Asian Muslims. Many scholars in India were deeply inspired by al-Ghazali’s balanced approach to religion, combining law and spirituality. His teachings on ethical living, sincerity, and social responsibility connect with the ideological foundation of Pakistan, which emphasizes

Islamic values. By stressing both personal reform and collective morality, the *Ihya* provides a framework that is still relevant in understanding the role of Islam in shaping Pakistan's identity.