

## The Role of al-Shahrastānī (d. 548H)

ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548H)<sup>1216</sup> had inclinations towards the Ismāʿīlīs<sup>1217</sup> by many authorities and his book *al-Milal wal-Niḥal* is said

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<sup>1216</sup> He is Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Karīm bin Aḥmad, Abū al-Faḥ al-Shahrastānī. He was a student of Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (the son of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī). He was born in Shahrastān, then moved to Khawārizm, then to Khurasān. He also went to Baghdād and there he had a position in the Nidhāmiyyah school, giving admonition. Refer to *Lisān al-Mizān* (5/263), *Wafiyāt al-Aʿyān* (6/128) and *al-Siyār* (20/282) for his biographical details.

<sup>1217</sup> The verifiers of *al-Milal wal-Niḥal*, Amīr ʿAlī Mahnā and ʿAlī Ḥasan Fāʿūr (Dār al-Maʿrifah, Beirut, 1st edition 1993) cite the views of those who criticized al-Shahrastānī in this respect from them (p. 13):

Al-Khawārizmī who mentioned in his book *Tārīkh Khawārizm*, "And had it not been for his stumbling in [matters of] creed, and his inclination towards this heresy (ilhād), he would have been the Imām." And Ibn al-Samʿānī said, "He was suspected of inclination towards the inhabitants of the citadels (the Ismāʿīliyyah), calling to them [their way], and exaggerating in Shiʿism (*tashayyu*)." And Yāqūt who in his description of him said, "The philosopher, theologian (mutakallim), author of works, we was plentiful in his excellence, complete in his intellect, had it not been for his stumbling in his creed, and his exaggeration in aiding the doctrines of the philosophers, and defending them, he would have been the Imām."

And al-Dhahabī said in *al-Siyar* (20/287):

And Ibn Arsālān said in *Tārīkh Khawārizm*:

A shrewd and skilled scholar, had it not been for his inclination towards the people of heresy (ilhād) he would have been the Imām, and we would often be amazed from the abundance of his excellence as to how he would incline towards something which has no basis, we seek refuge in Allāh from [His] abandonment, and that was for no reason except his turning away from the knowledge of the [revealed] legislation and his preoccupation with the darkneses of philosophy, and there used to be discussions between us, so how could he exaggerate in aiding the madhhab of the Philosophers and defending them. I once attended admonitions of his many times and I did not find therein 'Allāhs said' and nor 'the Messenger said.' Someone asked him one day and said, 'All of the Scholars mention legislative matters in their gatherings and they answer with the saying of Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Shāfiʿī, and you do not do that.' So he replied, "The likeness of me and you is as the