

Remembering My Good Teacher Almarhum Prof. Dr. Safwan Idris



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Though many people come and go in our lives, only a few leave a lasting impression on our hearts. They aren't remembered for their power, influence, or wealth, but for their genuine nature, warmth, love, and humility. Often, these remarkable individuals are cherished long after they've passed.

Upon their departure, they break into countless fragments, like precious gems, and remain in the hearts of those who knew them. The memories of their unique qualities continue to live on, forever etched in the minds of those they touched.

During my time as a foreign student in Banda Aceh (1986-1992), I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with one of the humblest scholars at IAIN Ar-Raniry—(now UIN Ar-Raniry), Dr. Safwan Idris. Throughout my five years as a student in Aceh, I had numerous opportunities to engage with him—attending his *Khutbahs*(Friday Sermons) and academic presentations. In these interactions, I found him to be a profoundly knowledgeable scholar, with every word he spoke full of wisdom. In terms of character,

he was a soft-spoken individual who consistently showed respect to everyone he conversed with.

I recall a private conversation where he shared that he had received many job offers from abroad, but had turned them down. His reason for rejecting these opportunities was rooted in humanitarian values. He felt strongly that if scholars left Aceh for better salaries and perks elsewhere, who would be left to educate the eager students in Aceh, who thirsted for knowledge and guidance?

This conviction kept him in Aceh until the very end of his life. Moreover, Dr. Safwan firmly believed that the future of Aceh could only be shaped through education. With this belief, whenever he gave a presentation, he consistently urged young people to excel in their studies and work toward restoring the lost glory of Aceh in the Malay world.

Dr. Safwan was a dynamic scholar and a promising leader for the people of Aceh, who passed away on September 16, 2000. At that time, I was in Malaysia, working to build my career in the teaching profession. I learned of Dr. Safwan's passing from a newspaper I was reading during my train journey from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur.

Reflecting on Dr. Safwan's character, knowledge, and aspirations for Aceh, I see him as a true embodiment of a humble Islamic scholar. In many ways, I have looked up to him as my mentor and role model in fulfilling my academic responsibilities. For all his admirable leadership qualities and character, I call upon all his former students and everyone who knew him to raise our hands heavenward and pray that his blessed soul may rest in peace among the righteous and those nearest to Allah SWT. Ameen!