



In Memory of Prof. Ahmad Syafii Maarif as Teacher of the Nation in Indonesia

Description

On May 27, 2022, Indonesia lost a Teacher of the Nation, Prof. Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif. The Indonesian people are deeply saddened by his passing. Because for almost three decades, Buya Syafii has made extraordinary contributions to the Indonesian people. The news of his death does remind me of the deaths of Gus Dur, Cak Nur, and Habibie. They are the best figures of the nation that Indonesia has ever had.

Therefore, as an Islamic scholar, I would like to write down my impression of Sang Buya, born on May 31, 1935, in West Sumatra. I do not know Sang Buya personally, but since living in Yogyakarta in 1996, I have read the works of Buya Syafii Maarif. Therefore, intellectually, I learned a lot from the figure of Buya Syafii Maarif.

Buya Syafii is one of the Islamic thinkers in Indonesia who is so strong in introducing modernity, Islam, and Indonesianness. His progressive attitude, intellectual dignity, and consistency in the advancement of open-minded thinking, especially in any circle, always being there to defend the nation's interests are among the characteristics of Buya Syafii.

Buya Syafii Maarif is one of the last Teacher of the Nation owned by the Indonesian people. His ability to think clearly in dealing with various problems of this nation shows that he is above all groups with his way and method of thinking.

Fazlur Rahman's student is indeed very productive. His works always offer an intense reflective mindset. His works are always awaited and read by Islamic scholars in Indonesia. As far as I know, apart from Buya Syafii and Cak Nur, Fazlur Rahman also has a student in Malaysia, namely Prof. Wan Mohd. Noor.

His reluctance to get involved in practical politics, which the attitude of the Muhammadiyah has also colored, shows that Buya Syafii uses his intellectual and spiritual attitude as a figure who does not want to be involved in the conflict of interest and power in this republic.

Therefore, he is always consulted by the leaders of this country when the state of this nation is in turmoil. After the death of Buya Syafii, it seems rather difficult to find national figures who are more concerned with the nation's problems above the interests of themselves and their groups.

For almost three decades, I have seen the role of Teacher of the Nation in Indonesia after their death has always given a sign that it is challenging to find a Teacher of the Nation whom all groups in this country can accept.

A Teacher of the Nation is always born in the motherland of this country. They departed from the village as prospective reformers who would participate in the community. Buya Syafii's journey from West Sumatra to the United States then returned to serve in this country. It must be admitted that from the province of West Sumatra, reformers are always born who become enlighteners for this nation.

Regardless of the attitude of some of the political elite towards the province of West Sumatra, I see that the residents of this Minangkabau land, like it or not, are the most consistent in their attitude on any matter.

The thoughts of the reformers in this province have been going on since before Indonesia's independence. Several times I visited this province to trace the traces of the reformers, showing that nature, Islam, and culture became the spirit of the reformers from the Minang Land. I think the teachings of life instilled in the Minang land are quite different from other regions in Indonesia.

There were Mohammad Natsir and Hamka as the preachers who were respected, both at home and abroad. They are good at speaking and writing, which can be seen from their works, reading, and studying by every generation in the archipelago. They all became reformers outside the region, and Buya Syafii was no exception.

The joys and sorrows of Buya Syafii Maarif's life journey may have been and will be written by his admirers. In this context, of course, there will be many stories left by Buya Syafii. The nation's young generation needs to make him a place to take inspiration when they want to devote themselves to this nation and country.

Reading his books always inspired me to continue to devote myself to the service of knowledge. Perhaps this will provide a strong impetus for anyone to rewrite the details of Buya Syafii's thoughts. Back in the late 1990s, Buya Syafii's books were lined up with the works of Cak Nur, Gus Dur, Djohan Effendi, and other writers who, where through space and time,

worked for the nation and state.

Finally, I hope that this note will inspire anyone to continue the various aspirations and hopes of Buya Syafii that have not yet been realized in this country. Because when Guru Bangsa dies, it is the ideological students who will carry on every idea from the Guru.