

In the memory of Dr. Arun Kumar Singh; A remarkable mentor and guide

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Dr. Arun Kumar Singh
(1947-2024)

It is with deep sorrow that I share the passing of my mentor, Dr. A.K. Singh, who was like a father to me and many others. His impact on my life is immeasurable, and those who knew him share in this profound loss. We have lost a doyen in dermatology, and his passing is truly irreparable. He nurtured numerous dermatologists who became world-renowned, shaping the future of the field through his wisdom and dedication.

Dr. A.K. Singh, a graduate and postgraduate from Patna Medical

College, ex-President of IMA Ranchi, joined Rajendra Medical College in the early 1980s and retired as its head. Born in 1947, he passed away on 9 September 2024. A man of unwavering discipline, he lived with the precision of an ex-army officer, starting each day with Puja in his white dhoti, a ritual he never missed. He spoke little, but his presence conveyed immense strength and wisdom.

His clinical acumen was unmatched. Despite my formal studentship ending decades ago, he never stopped teaching me, guiding me not only in medicine but in life, always encouraging peace and balance.

A few years ago, I dedicated my dermatology books to him. He smiled and said, 'You made me famous'. To many students, he was already well known and famous, but he said it to uplift me, as a great mentor would. That conversation will stay with me forever.

At a conference in Amritsar, he once asked me to explore the effects of spiritualism and meditation on skin healing. Later, he sent me a book on this subject and asked for a structured analysis. As a disciple of Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, his spiritual beliefs shaped his life.

His strictness was part of his character. His evenings were his own time, and he rarely met with anyone then. A few years ago, I travelled to Ranchi to meet him. Upon arriving in the evening, I learned it was his time to rest!

It had been decades since I graduated and I hadn't seen him since then. I felt depressed. I ultimately decided not to disturb him and returned home. I held a strong hope that I would come back soon. The next morning, he called me and asked why I hadn't reached out, saying he would have definitely let me meet him. I couldn't say much but I promised, 'Next time, Sir'. But that next time never came.

Before my final exams, I was extremely upset due to an incident. He told me, 'Teachers are respectable, but they should also remember that the only difference between a teacher and a student is the time they arrived on this earth. Respect is mutual. Don't worry, no one can stop you from passing'. Those words deepened my respect for him, and they still guide me as a teacher today.

To those who knew him, I hope we can all carry forward the lessons he so generously shared. His legacy will live on in the countless lives he touched, and the knowledge he passed on will endure.

At every turning of my life

I came across good friends

Friends who stood by me

Even when time raced me by

Farewell, farewell, my friends

I smile and bid you goodbye

No, shed no tears for I need them not

All I need is your smile.

Rabindranath Tagore, Farewell My Friends

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