

NANI PALKHIVALA : A ROLE MODEL (3rd ed., 2009) selected and edited by Maj. Gen. Nilendra Kumar, AVSM, VSM, Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., C-FF-1A, Dilkhush Industrial Estate, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi – 110033. Pp. xxiii+464. Price Rs. 495/-.

THE ABOVE book is a compilation of tributes and views of “eminent personalities on the sterling qualities and contributions of Nani Palkhivala”, an eminent jurist of this country. It is a collection posthumous festschrift from eminent persons of different fields. Nani’s contribution to diverse subjects like polity, economy, law and society is phenomenal and deserves the praise liberally showered. Nani had acquired a distinguished status among the erudite scholars by making significant contribution to the constitutional law. He was a committed democrat and a champion of human rights and laws. This book is a befitting tribute to a great citizen of India. The book is biographical as it may sound, however, actually it is not a biography, which means an analysis of more or less all the aspects of the person at different stages of his life. Though this book is reflective and descriptive of Nani’s personality, ideas and contributions, it is not as comprehensive as a biography. As a matter of fact, a comprehensive analysis of Nani and his works would require many such volumes.

The book has been divided into eleven unnumbered parts that analyse Nani from different aspects. The first two parts have memoirs written by some of the best lawyers/jurists of the country. The first part of the book describes Nani as doyen of the legal profession. It has eight chapters written by as many authors. The first chapter is written by M.C. Chagla who remembers Nani as a ‘Brilliant Advocate’. This chapter is preceded by a write up from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam who looks at the vision of Nani by the title ‘Nani Palkhivala’s Dream’. Next chapter is written by Soli J. Sorabjee who talks about the nature and character of Nani. Soli describes Nani as “the greatest advocate” that he had known, and his “unsurpassable” advocacy. The next chapter authored by Fali S. Nariman describes Nani as a saviour soldier of our Constitution and democracy. In the later chapters, K.K. Venugopal calls Nani a public figure, a man of principle, discipline, hard work and perseverance; Murlidhar C. Bhandare calls him a champion of human rights, human freedoms and free market as well as Master of English and Persian Poems and used to recite Persian poem in

order to explain Sufism through which he impressed about divine humanity; T.R. Adharujina describes him as “a genius in advocacy”; Goolam E. Vahanvati describes Nani as an excellent creation of God and P.P. Rao recollects humorous incidents with Nani which reveals the other side of Nani and is very informative.

The second part of the book is titled “Interpreter & Defender of the Constitution”. This part begins with the write up of Somnath Chatterjee who calls Nani as one of the best among the world followed by Ram Jethmalani who eulogises Nani as “titan of the legal profession, a captain of industry, a master of political economy and spiritually evolved human being”. While Soli S. Sorabjee in this part again contributed a chapter where he remembers Nani as protector of the Constitution of India, Abhisekh Singhvi analyses the features which made Nani a great lawyer and a great human being. Rajeev Dhawan confesses Nani as an extraordinary lawyer. For him, Nani was one of the “exemplary human beings and public statesman”. Anil B. Divan, while showing his personal glimpses, remembers “Nani Palkhivala is no more but we the citizens of India will continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty and the great constitutional rights which he so successfully defended and preserved for posterity”. Other contributors include Lalit Bhasin, Venkat Iyer and Subhash C. Kashyap. The first two writers call Nani a Great Indian and remarkable human. While Kashyap pays a tribute to the departed sole remembering him “a great and the good human being”.

The third part titled “Patriot with Secular Outlook” has been written by Manmohan Singh, Karan Singh, P.C. Alexander and S. Ramakrishnan. All of them are great names who have paid great tributes to another great (may be much greater) man. The fourth part contains the views of eminent judges who have showered praise on Nani and is aptly titled “Remembered by the Judges”. P.N. Bhagwati J remembers Nani in the form of reminiscences; R.S. Pathak J refers to Nani as an inspiration who had “already become a legend” when the author was himself a young student. V.R Krishna Iyer J wrote that Nani possessed “qualities beyond the faculties of normal humans”. Sujata Manohar J in her tribute to Nani exerts the young Indians to be inspired by Nani. Kamal Mehta J talks about his humility. Vishnu Sahya J places him higher than mortal and D.M. Sen spells him the unique personality who embodied the “best thoughts of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Islam”. Sen finds him “a complete and total Indian-spiritually, intellectually and emotionally”.

“Corporate Visionary” is the title of the fifth part of the book. The first chapter of this part is authored by Ratan Tata who humbly

acknowledges Nani's 'enormous contribution to the Tata group, which is also the title of the chapter. Ajay G. Piramal describes him to be a phenomenal in Indian public life in last four decades of the 20th century. H.P. Raina remembers him as a legend. Tributes are also paid by Sucheta Dalal and T. Damu. This part clearly describes and analyses some of the aspects of Nani which a lawyer or a jurist may otherwise be unable to assess.

There was yet another facet of Nani Palkhivala, that of an author. He was a prolific writer and two of his most celebrated works are "*We the People*" and "*We the Nation – the last decades*". The clarity of thought (which is a *sine qua non* for the class of advocacy, Nani practised) was reflected not only in his oratory but also in his writings. The books or articles by Nani were clear, precise, with a message and a possible vision. And so is the sixth part of the book aptly titled "Renowned author and thinker". This part has the first chapter by his first cousin, C.R. Irani and could be a source of inspiration for any reader: the way Nani overcame his stand and writing problems, *etc.* to become one of the greatest orators and a brilliant writer. The second chapter is by Kuldip Nayyar who writes that Nani "seldom has such genius stalked the land of India with dignity and discretion". Other contributors in this part include Vasant Sathe, Ashok H. Desai, Bansi S. Mehta, Dadi B. Engineer, M.G. Arora and Gurjeet Singh who throw lights on different facets of Nani's personality.

The seventh part is titled "Versatile Personality" and its chapters are authored by L.M. Singhvi, M.R. Pai, S. Ramakrishnan, S.P. Sathe, J.N. Dixit, V. Laxmikantham, B.M. Hegde and Shyamla Pappu. The eighth part is titled "Communicator and Orator" and contributed by Fali S. Nariman, M.R. Shroff, Iqbal Chagla, Dinesh Vyas, J.E. Dastur and S. Divakara. "Role Model for Tax Consultants", is the title of the ninth part. Yogendra P Trivedi, J.P. Shah, Janak Raj Jai, T.D. Sugla, U.T. Shah, Kanishk H. Kaji and P.N. Shah have contributed different chapters, respectively. This part emphasis Nani's budget speeches and his role as a tax consultant, *etc.* "Great Personal Attributes" forms the tenth part of the book which focusses on the personal aspects of Nani. Atal Bihari Bajpayee, R.M. Lala, P.R. Brahmananda, Behram A. Palkhivala, Dhan B. Palkhivala, Arvinder Singh, B.K. Khare, Jehangir B. Palkhivala and Ramesh Chandra Chaturvedi with his Hindi title *Punya Smaran* have contributed to this part which makes the part melancholy since it deals with last stage of Nani's life and related problem.

The last part of the book titled "In the Eyes of the Armed Forces" has been written by the armed force personnel of our country. With

them, Nani shared a special relationship based on mutual respect. Nani considered the Indian armed forces as equal to any force in the world and was actively engaged with activities connected with their welfare. This part has four chapters, one each written by Lt. General M L Chibber Lt. General A.M. Sethna (Retd.), Lt. Gen. K. Chandrasekharan AVSM (Retd.) and Maj. Gen. Nilendra Kumar himself. The table of prominent cases in which Nani appeared, acknowledgments and bibliography of contributors with index lends a great credibility to the book.

A reader must surely read the back cover page of the book which describes Nani's desire when he dies. A simple reading would reflect the humanity and compassion that the legend possessed. A perusal of it would enable the reader to better appreciate Nani, his ideas and strive for excellence. The authors of the book are from different backgrounds as aforesaid. They are also of different age and experience and have interacted with Nani at different stages and capacities. This lends a great variety to the contents and style of writing and its flavour. The variety, however, is restricted thus far and does not extend to the praise or even the degree of praise for Nani.

The book also has a collection of rare photographs procured by the editor with great efforts. The photographs have been randomly collected. The total of 51 photographs include photographs of Nani's childhood, youth, adult, middle and old age. These also include his photographs with some of the most successful politicians, spiritual leaders, his lawyers days, his felicitation, personal office, his budget meeting, press conference, as scholar, as a diplomat, with the armed forces with his wife Nargesh and, finally, the photograph of the poster that an obliged society had put at the demise of Nani

'We the nation'
'We the people'
Have lost a Legend.

The book on the life and writings of initiator of the doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution may especially inspire the youths: law-students and lawyers, to keep the world's largest democracy functionally, intact and vibrant. The book under review throws enough light on the secrets of Nani's success.

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