



Glimpses of Life of late Mohammad Abdullah Sozer known as M.A. Sozer.

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OBITUARY OF (LATE) M. A. SOZER

The longest surviving male member of Jetpur Memon Community aged 93 breathed his last at Karachi on 6th November, 2005 coinciding with Shawwal 04, 1426. Late Mohammad Abdullah Sozer popularly known as M. A. Sozer happens to have attended the renowned Dawar's Commerce College, Bombay in 1935 to qualify for a diploma as the Chartered Secretary from London's Chartered Institute of Secretaries. As a first Chartered Secretary, FCIS, from Memon community of pre-partitioned India, he was privileged to work concurrently as PA to Sir Adamjee Haji Dawood the founder of the Memon Educational & Welfare Society (MEWS) in 1933 at Calcutta and also Secretary of MEWS from 1935-36 till latter's death in 1948 at Karachi. A legend such as he was by virtue of his dedicated service to the MEWS in its formative years, he is known to have played a vital role to advance the cause of education among Memon community spread over erstwhile Bombay, Gujarat, Kathiawar and Saurashtra. Thousands of applications from poor and needy students were processed by him leading to the emergence of a number of doctors, lawyers, engineers and commerce graduates some of whom are still living in happy retirement to remember him in gratitude. The history of MEWS will be incomplete without the mention of its premier secretary Sozer.

Married to Zulekha D/o. Haji Mohammad Tayab Soorty in 1938 his marriage lasted till 1997 when his wife left this world leaving behind five sons and a daughter to mourn her death. During his life time he saw his third generation growing up in the line. Gifted with the "help others" attitude when he could not

spare money he was generous to help friends and strangers alike by a word of mouth or pen to recommend or issue certificates for promotions or employment and never looked for any favour in return. He did not remember the number of people benefited from his act of kindness.

In the words of Yahya Hashim Bawany.....

Someone from Adamjee Pariwar remarked after MAS parted with MEWS "In Adam Noor we found another Sozer."

Being a no "yes boss" man and ready to react in matters of principles without caring for the status of man at the opposite end he faced humiliation on several occasions and paid heavily in price. A staunch believer in freedom of expression and freedom of criticism he managed affairs of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry as its founding Secretary till 1963 when he was ousted from the service by the then sitting President. That brought to an end his professional career. MAS gave Karachi Chamber its present Constitution and Memorandum & Articles of Association to function in a transparent and democratic manner according to the rules of conduct laid down therein with the result that this apex trade body has never been derailed off its basic structure. For some strange reasons he never claimed his accrued dues and benefits from the Chamber. As a founder member of Karachi Stock Exchange he came into clash with its management by criticizing their errors of commission and omission which resulted in the termination of his membership in 1982 though he was never a defaulter. Similarly a senior man like him was unfairly treated by his own people when a flat booked by him in Jetpur Plaza, Karachi and fully paid for was unilaterally cancelled by the office bearers of the Jetpur Memon Relief Society for "crimes" of his letter writing pin pointing the things they would not like to be exposed.

He was strongly opposed to back biting (gibbat) and stressed never to abuse any one behind his back. "Say it on his face or better still give it to him in writing if the person deserved to be abused" he insisted. Likewise he was prompt in response to anyone, irrespective of his position, who wrote to him or sought his guidance. He would certainly call back a person at the first opportunity no matter the caller was a friend or foe.

The whole population of Jetpur at the time of partition did not exceed a quarter of one lakh comprising Muslim Memons and Hindus among whom Sozer was

regarded as highly educated and in fact with leadership qualities he enjoyed respects from all. Contrary to the present trend in those days, education was regarded as real assets rather than money, with rich people saluting the men of letters. The late headmaster Chatra Bhuj Davay of Anjuman-e-Islam School of Jetpur held him in very high esteem and implemented his suggestions to upgrade the system and in appreciation of his assistance placed a plaque of bronze with his name engraved in its library. He was among first few who opted for and migrated to Pakistan in Dec 1947. The news of his migration spread next morning like wild fire which prompted the rest of our people to follow suit.

As a freelancer he contributed his articles to BUSINESS RECORDER and often addressed his woes in the Letters to the Editor columns of daily DAWN English. But he could not tolerate things not working in his own way so when the editing staff of DAWN slashed his writings to abridge his work, the letters obviously deviated from his point of view. Infuriated on such treatment he visited its office where heated debate ensued with the editorial staff. Thereafter DAWN vowed not to accept his correspondence after publication of his last letter a decade back.

The closing years of his life saw him confined to bed only to come out once in a week to offer Juma prayers at nearby Mecca Masjid with the support of his eldest son. With hearing gone he had grown unstable and infirm though his senses were in place to recognize relatives and friends to answer their queries.

Yours Sincerely,

A. Rauf Sozer,
99/A, Adamjee Nagar,
Karachi-75350 (PAKISTAN)
Tel # (9221) 4520285
Email: rsozer@hotmail.com
sozersons@yahoo.com

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