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### M.N. Roy Views on Man and Humanism

<sup>\*1</sup> Dr. Suchandra Neogi

<sup>\*1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Purbasthali College, Burdwan, West Bengal, India.

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#### Abstract

Humanism maintains that humanity is the centre of the cosmos. The only worthy object of study is man. According to humanism, man is the essence of reality. There is no other superhuman ontological reality outside him. M.N. Roy is regarded as one of the brightest and most illustrious philosophers in modern India. He is a revolutionary philosopher and political thinker. Roy was one controversial person in Indian politics. He held nationalist, Marxist, and humanist beliefs. His many liberation struggles influenced the way he thought. Roy's philosophy of New Humanism seeks to offer a comprehensive conceptual framework for the pursuit of freedom by the human race. He became a humanist because he was dissatisfied with the several humanistic theories that had been put out in different intellectual contexts. New Humanism is a comprehensive philosophy that touches on almost all of the important aspects of our existence. Roy is a humanist who disbelieves in all supernatural beings. Experience, in his opinion, serves as both the ultimate confirmatory and the foundation for all of our knowledge. Roy adhered strictly to materialism. He insisted that man is the ultimate result of evolution and that life originated from inanimate substances. Roy believes that because man is logical, he is moral. According to Roy, a person creates their own history and ideals. Man is the embodiment of civilization and the architect of his own destiny. Roy wants to lead a revolution in humanism. Presenting M. N. Roy's viewpoint on radical or new humanism is the aim of this study.

**Keywords:** Man, humanism, revolution, morality, society etc.

#### \*Corresponding Author

Dr. Suchandra Neogi

Assistant Professor, Department of  
Philosophy, Purbasthali College,  
Burdwan, West Bengal, India.

#### Introduction

##### Meaning of Humanism

##### Etymological Meaning

The English word "humanism" comes from the Latin word "Homo," which means "human being." Therefore, to put it literally, humanism is the ideology that centres around man.

##### Concept of Humanism

Humanism maintains that humanity is the centre of the cosmos. Man is the only subject worthy of study. Humanism serves as the benchmark for resolving conflicts in human existence. Contemplative people have looked for a reality criterion or standards to settle disputes in daily life ever since reason was introduced to humanity.

According to humanism, man is the essence of reality. There is no other superhuman ontological reality outside him. Since all human abilities that allow us to learn anything are knowledge abilities, he is the proper topic of knowledge. All truth is human, and there is no truth apart from humanity. Naturally, humanism is against super naturalism and super humanism in all its manifestations. It is unable to accept that any guy is inherently better than any other person. "Human

welfare" in this sense refers to the welfare of common people. Everything that has been demonstrated to improve people's welfare has been linked to humanism, including the development of democratic institutions, the idea of social welfare, and scientific viewpoints. It is solely directed at people, not Superman. Respect for human dignity is one of its core principles. Since humans are earthy beings, humanism is this-worldly and rejects all otherworldly philosophies. Humanist ethics are based only on the religious conviction that human dignity exists. Humanism condemns all types of discrimination against people on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity, class, caste, gender, religion, economic status, academic success, or aptitude since it cherishes every individual. Within the human race, there is no human being who is worth less than another.

M.N. Roy is regarded as one of the greatest and most illustrious minds in modern India. This is because of his extensive training as a revolutionary philosopher and political theorist. Roy became a controversial figure in Indian politics as a result of the three distinct stages his political beliefs went through in their creation. He held nationalist, Marxist, and

humanist beliefs. In the last stages of his political career, he came to the conclusion that creating a political system that is suitable for man's needs and rights is just as important as figuring out if and to what extent man enjoys freedom.

For Roy, independence is the most crucial factor. His many liberation struggles influenced the way he thought. His demonstrated conviction was that any battle, movement, or revolution—even one for freedom—will remain self-serving and surface-level without a solid intellectual basis. Roy's philosophy of New Humanism seeks to offer a comprehensive conceptual framework for the pursuit of freedom by the human race.

Radical humanism, new humanism, or M. N. Roy did not appear out of thin air. He became a humanist because he was dissatisfied with the several humanistic theories that had been put out in different intellectual contexts. Roy had spent many important years of his life researching, evaluating, and analysing many varieties of humanism. He had also gone to considerable lengths to do so. He has learned a great deal from the ideologies and social experiments of the past, including various industrial revolutions, Gandhism, socialism, communism, totalitarianism, liberalism, anarchism, fascism, democracy, nationalism, welfare state notions, and so on.

Roy had dramatic changes in perspective twice throughout his lifetime. He initially held strong nationalist beliefs before becoming a well-known international communist. Subsequently, he began to embrace a radical or New Humanist perspective in 1948. Every change broadened and enlarged his vision. In his humanist phase, Roy sought to free the individual from being engulfed by the totalitarian tendencies of society, the production apparatus, the mob, the country, the state, and religion. In his nationalist phase, Roy battled to free India from foreign rule. In his communist phase, he tried to free the working class as a whole from capitalist exploitation. Consequently, the only part of his viewpoint that interests us is the New Humanist perspective, which is the last stage.

New Humanism is a comprehensive philosophy that touches on almost all of the important aspects of our existence. Roy is not a purely theoretical person. Actually, he wanted to start a social revolution with his beliefs.

### **New Humanism or Radical Humanism Philosophy, Science and Religion**

According to Roy, asking questions is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human and gives rise to philosophy because humans are naturally curious beings. Despite the fact that both philosophy and science emerged from the human desire for deeper explanations, there are important differences between the two. Regarding their viewpoints and the kinds of knowledge they possess, the two diverge greatly. Most scientific knowledge can be verified and is accurate. It is typically a logical collection of accurate facts. Philosophy offers a radically different perspective on the matter, but science has a positive one, assessing the facts only on a true-false basis. There are no accepted universal facts. For example, the attributes of the ideal political, religious, moral, or economic system, as well as the origin, nature, meaning, and purpose of the universe, are all speculative. Since these are all broad questions, the only possible responses are speculative and ambiguous. Philosophy exclusively deals with these kinds of responses. Consequently, philosophy is not universally applicable, unlike science, which is naturally the same everywhere. There are countless schools of thought worldwide.

Religious explanations also developed as a result of human curiosity. The earliest phases of human knowledge and precarious living conditions gave rise to religious justifications. Today's orthodox people still live in ignorance and instability of life-conditions that are now psychological.

Religions depend so heavily on faith that the term "faith" is frequently used to describe religion itself. This results in dishonesty as well as intellectual stagnation. Roy believes that knowledge and religion are incompatible. Despite the progress made in science and technology, religious people continue to adhere to the beliefs and doctrines of prehistoric man. For them, God is a large, benevolent father who is well blessed and resides in paradise. He is a flawed human being with his own feelings and emotions. In its most basic form, religious morality boils down to a prescriptive framework that tells people to do as they are told, to believe that only believers will succeed and that unbelievers will perish, and to follow the authority of scriptures, priests, and prophets without question. For believers, humility is more important than confidence. Instead of revolting against injustice, they are urged to put their faith in God's plan, pray to Him, and wait for His goodness.

He concludes that whereas philosophy and science are naturally human pursuits since humans are naturally curious, religion necessitates belief, the development of one's faith, and total surrender to the priest and prophet. However, science and philosophy are mainly based on the intellectual side of man, while religions are mainly focused on the non-rational parts of human nature, such as sentiments, emotions, faith, superstitions, etc. Consequently, religion is based on the irrational parts of human nature. Roy finds it astonishing that most religious people behave irrationally. Thus, all criticism of religion is a reaction against religion, and all escape from God comes from God.

### **Ontology, Physical Realism**

Roy rejects the existence of any supernatural entities and is a humanist. He believed that experience is the ultimate confirmation and the basis of all of our knowledge. With such a perspective, only a materialistic ontology makes sense. Roy calls his ontology physical realism, but he is a materialism supporter as well.

Roy denies the reality of gods, souls, heaven, hell, and other supernatural entities. God is in no way required to provide an explanation for the universe. In actuality, the purported proof offered for God's existence is not proof at all. If everything has a creator, then God must also have a creator. Why should God be the source of all creation's causes and effects? As the First Cause who is uncaused, the concept of possession is irreconcilable with God. Like God, matter is capable of existing on its own. Moreover, the status of the world today scarcely suggests the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and loving God.

There is so much evil in the world that it would be more appropriate to say that it was created by the devil. It would be more appropriate to say that the devil created the world since it is full of wickedness. God was formed by primitive man, in the early days of human knowledge. It is therefore not that God created man, but rather that man created God. According to Roy, the Bible says that God created man in his image, but in reality, man created God in his image. The existence of God in heaven is a lot like the indulgent, remote, and careless proprietor of a large estate. This is just superstition, and the sooner we get rid of it, the better off we will be. Our morality should be developed for clear, rational reasons rather than out

of fear of God; this would produce a morality that is really superior to that found in the scriptures.

### **Nature of Human Being**

#### **a) Man has emerged from Biological Evolution**

Roy was a staunch materialist. He argued that life began with inanimate objects and that man is the ultimate product of evolution. Although materialism is a hypothesis, according to Roy, it is better than metaphysical or spiritual forces since it provides a physical explanation for human cognition and emotion. This is mainly because if man believed in God's dominance, there would be no such thing as human freedom. Roy claims that people's nature is dynamic and ever-evolving. There are still some similarities despite differences. Roy emphasized two essential traits in his notion of human nature: reason and freedom. The biological category is reason. All phenomena are governed by certain laws. Man is a part of it. Just as reason is an inborn idea.

#### **b) Rationality is the Basis of Morality**

Roy thinks that man is moral because he is logical. Through generalization and experience, one learns to discriminate between right and wrong as well as good and terrible. For man to reach his full potential, society is essential. Therefore, social rules are made for human benefit. Man is moral, not because he is compelled to be moral, but because of these justifications.

#### **c) Man is the Maker of his Values**

According to Roy, a man creates his own values. Everything is measured by man. Things acquire value due to human preference. However, it's important to remember that, in Roy's opinion, each individual human being possesses the innate ability to construct values, not just organizations, groups, or mobs. Someone who offers a fresh perspective and new principles is welcomed by society since they have created new vision and outlook on things. It is false to believe that the origin and reservoir of values are either God or nature. Values would never have changed if that were the case. However, the prevalent occurrence of novel values emerging in lieu of the conventional ones can only be adequately clarified if we acknowledge that humans are the originators of values. Men change, and values shift with them.

#### **d) Man is the Maker of History**

Man is the rational being who creates history. Things changed or rather evolved before the arrival of man, but it is in his nature to bring about revolutions since he is capable of making deliberate, logical, and planned efforts. Roy argues that people are naturally revolutionary beings. We shouldn't overlook this information.

#### **e) Man is the Maker of his own Fate**

Man himself, and the nature of his efforts, will determine much about the kind of life he leads. Additionally, there are physical and environmental constraints on what man can achieve, therefore human powers are likewise limited. However, with real effort, man can shape a desirable future.

#### **f) Man is the Archetype of Society**

Society comes after the individual man. Regarding significance as well, society comes second to the person. Society views man as its ideal. Nothing of society is left when we remove its individual members. Nobody ought to be sacrificed for the sake of the state, the country, society, or

God. In order to liberate the person and allow for his full potential, our social reconstruction should be designed with this in mind. Cooperation with other men is innate in the human condition. The ability of man to create different types of cooperatives is a result of this trait.

#### **g) Man has an Inherent Urge to be Free**

The last, and perhaps most significant, quality of man is his innate need for freedom. Everyone wants to be more free than they already are; nobody enjoys being in slavery or bondage. The amount of freedom we ultimately attain depends on the kinds of efforts we make to achieve this goal. Freedom is the progressive elimination of all limitations on people's ability to be productive and creative. Roy argues that the ultimate value is freedom, and that the best way to gauge a society's growth is to look at how much freedom its members enjoy, or how much freedom they have.

### **Ethics and Morality Should be free from Religion**

Religion originated during a period when humankind was living under unstable circumstances. People still suddenly get religious if there is a rise in instability, etc. To keep people religious, the priests purposefully portray our lives as being full of uncertainty, suffering, terror, etc.

In a religious context, ethics is reduced to following the prophetic or divine or scriptural precepts. Relating morality to religion limits the scope of morality. Thus, it implies that you can be immoral and do so with a clear conscience in areas where religion is not relevant, such as politics, economics, etc. Roy disagrees with this statement. Morality, in his opinion, has to come first. Roy criticizes religious morality for drawing our focus away from the world and toward the Church, God, prayer, scripture study, and other related topics. Since everything is said to be predetermined by God or that our suffering is entirely our own fault, the majority of religious people will actually refuse to take responsibility for ending the suffering, agony, disease, injustice, folly, wickedness, illiteracy, inequity, etc. that are pervasive in the world. Evil is viewed by many religious people as being an illusion. Roy believes that such a mind-set is a diversion from the labour-intensive tasks required to make the world a better place. Because of this, he believes that only materialism and atheism allow for true and noble ethics to exist.

The suppression of all scepticism and doubt is another detrimental consequence of religion and religious morals. For males who are naturally curious, this results in an extremely oppressive environment. Finally, fanaticism and blind faith result from this. People become resigned to their even dismal lot and do not even consider protesting against it because of their naive faith in destiny and God's mysterious ways.

Roy believes that morality and ethics ought to be derived from human nature's natural rationality, not from religion. Any reasonable individual would assume that what is beneficial (or harmful) for oneself will also be good for all other beings who share that same characteristics. This is morality's foundation. Roy believes that all issues can be resolved in a satisfactory manner with this strategy. A conscience is merely an understanding of our social obligations. Morality will be a morality of one's own choosing rather than one that is imposed upon us because it will be based on our innate capacity for reason. All values, including morality, are creations of man. In a situation like this, man is probably moral because of his own free will; he will be moral because he chooses to be moral. Roy thinks that when religious morality preaches that being good will get you into



paradise or keep you out of hell, it turns into a utilitarian morality. Roy is not a fan of this utilitarian mind-set. He wants people to choose morality and to be moral beings.

### **The Three Intrinsic Values Roy Philosophy**

Roy asserts that the three fundamental values are truth, knowledge, and freedom. He regards freedom as the greatest value among them all. Rationality includes truth and knowledge. Man's natural desires are to seek truth and freedom. This makes them what are known as absolute and universal values. These will never go out of style as human values since they are founded on basic human desires. Roy therefore rejects the idea that values can be relative. He worries that the relativity of values could even result in a nihilism of values.

### **There is no Absolute Knowledge**

Roy defines "knowledge" as merely the several kinds of information about the world and things in it. This knowledge comes from a variety of sciences. Absolute, flawless, and limitless knowledge does not exist. However, since there are an infinite number of objects to learn about, the process of acquiring knowledge is undoubtedly endless. When our knowledge or beliefs match reality, they are true; when they don't, they are untrue. Until shown otherwise, knowledge is assumed to be true. Our strategy shouldn't be rigid or obsessive as a result. Everywhere there must be a scientific mind-set. Knowledge contains the content of truth. Although the truth of what we know may vary, it is never totally accurate.

### **Freedom is the Highest Value**

Roy believes that freedom is the most important virtue among knowledge, truth, and freedom. The concept of freedom is merely commonplace. It entails reducing the different barriers that impede people's ability to be creative and productive. These obstacles could be objective or subjective. Some subjective obstacles include ignorance, foolishness, prejudices, and a closed-minded mind-set. Some objective obstacles include the wrong kinds of social, political, economic, educational, and other institutions; unfavourable environments at home, at work, in clubs, etc.; and some objective obstacles include disease, insecurity, poverty, repression, inequality, and want. In order to obtain liberation, both the objective and subjective aspects must be appropriately changed. It is a thorough and endless process that calls for patience and knowledge. Every individual in society has the right to experience and enjoy freedom.

Roy opposes the use of unethical tactics in any endeavour, not even the fight for freedom. Roy has discovered via studying history that when immoral means are employed to further noble goals like justice, equality, and freedom, those goals can be undermined. Roy believes that the claim that poor methods can lead to excellent results is nonsensical. He believes that the goals we pursue will determine the kind of goals we succeed in achieving.

Social progress is the same as moral progress. In Roy's opinion, the true problem has always been a moral dilemma. The greatest value, in his opinion, is freedom. The only and most significant criterion for determining a society's progressive nature is, of course, the degree and nature of the freedoms that its citizens enjoy. Remember that achieving freedom or enlightenment is a continuous process rather than a destination; as such, the path and the opportunities are limitless. There is no such thing as a predestined bright or sad

future. Whether or not man will be more free in the future will depend on the kind of work he puts in.

### **Roy Social View**

Roy believes that many aspects of our current social life are flawed, which is why we see people becoming more and more atomized, disorganized, helpless, insecure, oppressed, frustrated, and taken advantage of. Roy acknowledges that wealth concentration is a terrible thing, but he also emphasizes that power concentration is a much worse thing. These evils and similar ones ought to be eliminated. In order to preserve the sovereignty of the individual citizen, Roy has proposed the establishment of novel and revolutionary social structures. Adhering to his recommendations will preserve individual autonomy and independence while also promoting the achievement of humanist principles such as liberty, equality, fraternity, reason, collaboration, social justice, and empathy. The following are his recommendations in this regard:

Our perspective on the individual and his relationship with society needs to be drastically altered. He believes that the goal of society and other institutions was to be served by man. The individual therefore has inherent value and is of utmost importance. The welfare of the person must be the priority for society and its many social institutions. Roy argues that individuals should come first in society, not the other way around.

### **Roy's View on Democracy**

Roy considered explaining politics with logic. Roy's political perspective underwent a significant shift as a result of the Russian Revolution. He believed that achieving freedom could not be accomplished through a political system that subjugates people.

He placed great importance on the issue of power and the relationship between the state and the person. Roy never claimed that having a lot of power is bad in and of itself, only that it can have a detrimental effect on others. He felt that various institutions should have varying degrees of power. According to Roy, society and the state are merely human constructs meant to uphold social order, law, and order. Individual liberty must therefore take precedence over social structure.

Roy is a strong proponent of human freedom who opposes representative democracy and favours direct democracy. "Peoples Committees" is the little entity he referred to as "Direct Democracy." They would put forward candidates who would answer to the committee and work to find solutions to the issues facing the populace. Making people aware of their own reason, freedom, and morality would therefore be the goal of this.

### **Roy's View on Education**

The new humanistic revolution is mostly ushered in by education. Roy is of the opinion that education ought to address every facet of human existence, including the cerebral, physical, ethical, artistic, spiritual, individual, and social. According to Roy, someone should not be referred to as educated if they possess academic degrees but are spiritually enslaved, indifferent to human suffering, and lacking in aesthetic sensibility. He believes that people should be encouraged to use their critical, constructive, and creative capacities in particular. Education ought to initiate an individual's journey toward spiritual emancipation. In this sense, Roy hopes that new social structures will arise, giving

rise to a contented, harmonious, enriched, and spiritually free society made up of contented and spiritually free individuals.

### Roy's Concept of New Humanist Revolution

Roy hopes to bring about a revolution in humanism. His goal is to establish a completely new kind of society with completely new kinds of people living in it—people who are self-assured, content, healthy, clever, well-adjusted, and who gradually improve society by their positive and creative contributions. He wants our lives to undergo a complete revolution. It is noteworthy, however, that Roy's interpretation of the word "revolution" differs drastically from the meaning that is commonly associated with it. A typical definition of a revolution is an abrupt, covert, and violent transition of power in politics. When the established rulers are deposed, exiled, imprisoned, or killed, the revolution is declared complete. It is thought that the new authorities have fulfilled the revolution's goal. Roy does not want for revolution to mean this much. Roy advocates for democratically elected officials to be replaced by individuals who first improve themselves. Roy has the following idea about revolution. A revolution must be broad and all-encompassing, bringing about a complete transformation not just in the political sphere but also in the social, ethical, economic, and scholarly domains. According to Roy, the masses, or the lower classes, must lead the revolution.

The democratic process will then be used by the people to replace the rulers. Prior to any such revolution, there must be an intellectual revolution, or a new awakening, in which the new ideas must permeate the entire society. According to Roy, a revolution will occur gradually and peacefully rather than abruptly and violently. Mutual consent and education will usher in a revolution. No confidentiality of any type will be required; all matters will be discussed candidly, and decisions made as a result. There is no room for violence, haste, deceit, etc. in bringing about a revolution. The revolution will be dominated by calm, logical activities rather than frenzied ones. Naturally, Roy's vision of revolution will not include hatred or retaliation.

According to Roy, a revolution is an essentially endless process that continuously ushers in beneficial changes to both social structures and individuals. Typically, revolutionaries go on to become the nation's future leaders, but this idea of revolution. The leaders of Roy's proposal will be saintly, spiritually enlightened individuals who serve as the public morals and lifeguards. They will abstain from engaging in power struggles and such trivial affairs. To understand that the new humanist revolution should be total, one further way to put it is that it should encompass all of humanity rather than just this or that nation. It goes without saying that these revolutions will continue for many generations. Therefore, whether a stride or a lifetime, progress is measured in terms of moving in the proper direction.

### Roy's Concept of the Revolutionary Person

Roy has a distinct conception of the revolutionary individual than the general public, which is consistent with this revolution. Roy's revolutionary is not the kind that burns brightly, silently preparing for this or that dramatic outburst. Roy's conceptual revolutionary is a spiritually enlightened individual who is confident in his ability to transform society. No revolutionary should have unrealistic expectations of changing the world, nor should others expect him to do miracles, because the world, with its pre-existing beliefs, vested interests, and lethargies, is so extremely

unmanageable. He must, however, remain actively engaged in the on-going struggle against tyranny, totalitarianism, social injustice, parochialism, suffering, ignorance, blind beliefs, disease, inequality, exploitation, fanaticism, and other related issues while also promoting morality, the scientific outlook, freedom, justice, and cooperation, as well as promoting constructive and artistic endeavours. We must continue our unrelenting battle against tyranny of all kinds, particularly spiritual oppression. The revolution's leaders must be satisfied with the correct kinds of efforts—obviously not achievements.

### Conclusion

Most people now believe that man is merely an economic and political entity. Roy made the observation that this kind of thinking is flawed. Rather, he made the case that man is fundamentally a cooperative, moral, and logical being and that his natural impulses are to seek out freedom and the truth. On this rational and scientific basis, Roy hoped to construct a new society. Such a society will, of course, differ greatly from the predetermined one, which is inadequate in numerous respects.

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