

M.N Roy: A New Interpretation of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT: M.N Roy, one of the eminent thinkers of modern India, has propounded a philosophy, which is distinct from other traditional schools of Indian thought. He called it Radical Humanism. The aim of this paper is to posit M.N Roy as a social philosopher in contemporary Indian philosophy. His philosophical explanation need to be studied both in Indian and western philosophical tradition. Roy's philosophical ideas remain one of the most original ones in contemporary India. Materialism is the only possible philosophy. He based his humanism on modern science and insists that no philosophical advancement is possible unless we get rid of orthodox religious ideas and theological dogmas. Roy has envisaged a very close relationship between philosophy and science and insists that religion is to be liquidated by science and philosophy must break away from religion. Roy has given a central place to intellectual and philosophical revolution in his philosophy. Roy states that philosophical revolution must proceed from social revolution. His new humanism reasserts the sovereignty of man. It accepts the moral spiritual freedom, reason and ethics.

KEYWORDS: Radical, Humanism, Socio-political, Materialism

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I. INTRODUCTION

Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, later known as M.N Roy is one of the greatest Indian Philosophers of twentieth century. Roy developed a new concept and termed it as 'Radical Humanism' or 'New Humanism' with a view to distinguish it from the humanist version of other thinkers. It is radical because it focuses entirely on the needs and situations of human beings. Roy's conception of 'New humanism' lies in the frustration of Roy with the subtle characteristics of Marxian philosophy. Roy had moved to make a propounding theory rooted in the integral scientific humanism, which he called as New Humanism. According to Roy, philosophy is the theory of life and it is supposed to solve the riddle of the universe. Philosophy was born of the efforts of man to solve the actual problems of life in the light of past experience. He was convinced that a philosophical revolution must be for any social revolution. One of the silent features of his new philosophy is that it must be a guide for all forms of human actions, abide by ethics. He also gives an important place to ethics in his philosophy and hold that man is the maker of his destiny. The present work comprises following chapters.

The first chapter begins with Roy's concept of New Humanism where Roy became a great critique of Marxism and propounded his own theory of radical humanism. He criticized

Marxism by saying it as a totalitarian ideology where there is no assurance of freedom and justice of individual.

The second chapter deals with Roy's conception on Materialism. According to Roy materialism is only possible philosophy. It represents the knowledge of the world as it really exists. Origin of all existence is matter and nothing exists but the matter. All other appearances are the formulation of matter. He accepts matter as ultimate basis of everything –body, mind and soul. All these according to him, are physical entities.

The third chapter is related to Roy's conception of Philosophy. Roy attempts to give a scientific exposition of philosophy unlike some other 20th century Indian thinkers. He distinguished philosophy from religion and said that no philosophical advancement is possible in the presence of religious belief and theological dogmas. Roy also makes a distinction between philosophy and metaphysics. According to him, metaphysics like philosophy discovers unity behind diversity. But it leaves the ground philosophy in question of a noumenon above and beyond nature. Roy would like to solve all philosophical problems in the light of scientific knowledge.

Finally last chapter discusses about Roy's ethical or moral theories where Roy wants to prove universe as a moral order which is govern by laws of inherent in itself; that means all other ethical values are governed by the nature and argues that rationality is morality.

II. ROY'S NEW HUMANISM

M.N Roy's Radical humanism is the reflection of Marxist capitalism. Marx initiated to replace socialism in the place of Capitalism. Roy thought that philosophy of history often ignores the factors of human life and disregards moral problems which can unreliable guide for constructing social action.

Roy's Humanism proclaims a new philosophy of history which would be a very comprehensive in a nature and would show civilized mankind as the man way out of crisis, Roy did not like to agree with several things in Marxism specially questions of class leadership for example proletarian and dictatorship or class domination.

He advocates physical realism. His development in materialism is the post Marxian specially Physics and Biology. The new humanism of Roy tries to bring morality in social order or in a social revolution because without morality social revolution is meaningless and futile to the community. Roy regarded Marx as Humanist also thought that Marxist socialist society was not to be created by men rather it was the outcome of the forces of production of historical developments as a matter of fact it gives birth to socialist a new order in the form of new humanism. According to Roy, Marxist socialist society was not to be created by men; rather it was the outcome of forces of production of historical development. As a matter of fact, it gives birth to the socialist new order in the form of new humanism.

III. SOVEREIGNTY OF INDIVIDUAL

According to Roy, Marxist humanism is called radical because it is based on moral appeal. Marx as a humanist stood for the freedom individual. Marx talks of socialism as a 'Kingdom of freedom' where men will be regarded as the master of social environments. In new humanism which will work under socialism, human reason will overcome irrational forces. As a rational being, here man will be in charge of his own destiny. Roy conceived Marxist humanism as the model of the builders of the future human life best on human legacy.

According to Roy Individual is prior to any system social or any collective, Roy's position is not religious. Roy successfully establish this core of humanism by synthesizing the physicists postulate of the world as a causally determined and law-governed system and biological theory of the academic evolution of life culminating in the unique powers of Homo-sapiens.

IV. RATIONALITY

"Man is essentially a rational being. His basic urge is not to be believed but to question to know." Roy traces back to the origin of human rationality to the cosmos or the law govern universe that is why Roy clearly defines Human Rationality of the individual as the 'microcosmic echo of the macrocosm'. The reason in man is an echo of the harmony of the universe. Human being become a natural has a product of nature. There is nothing mystic about the rationality of human being. It is only the biological heritage or echo of the harmony in the universe.

V. FREEDOM AND MORALITY

Human freedom is rooted in the biological natural life of spaces. The archetype of freedom is nothing but the struggle for existence that is a universal in the worldly of living being. Human being in the pursuits of freedom also attains add to his knowledge. They want to liberate himself from the constraints of nature for continuing liberation continually new knowledge, that is the supporting mechanism of human life on the earth. His concept of morality is unique. Roy did not like the term materialism mainly materialism sometimes implies negation of morality. Materialist are not clear about moral postulate. M.N Roy avoids

this and wanted to develop in physics to concept of humanism, that he usually used the term physical realism in place of materialism. He was most specific about the equation of morality. He argued that morality is not a divine faculty. God has nothing to do with morality even society does not guaranty morality because rationality is a natural development and rationality create society, but in according to Marxism society is molding everything. Therefore, rationality is the essential faculty of human being.

VI. MATERIALISM

One of Roy's famous book 'Beyond Communism' he state that this philosophy of new humanism in the "Twenty Two Thesis on Radical Democracy" is outcome of materialist philosophy. Roy said that materialism is the only philosophy possible. Roy did not use the term 'materialism' in a sense that Marxist did.

Roy's concept of "materialism" has been discussed detail in his book Roy says – Strictly speaking philosophy is materialism and materialism is the only possible philosophy, for it represents the knowledge of nature as really exist, knowledge acquired through the contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomena of nature itself.

Roy thought that materialism is not the cult of "eat drink and marry". It maintains that the origin of everything that really exist is matter, there doesn't exit anything but matter, and all other living or nonliving things are transformations of matter and this kind of transformations are govern necessarily by laws of inherent in nature. The fact of matter as classically conceived is not the ultimate physical reality doesn't prove maintains Roy, that ultimate reality as known today is immaterial, mental or spiritual.

According to modern materialism it is the outcome of scientific thinking since the time of Democritus. Explaining the meaning of “materialism” in the sixth chapter titled ‘Modern Materialism’ Roy describes materialism as the explanation of the world without the assumption of anything supernatural. According to Roy, The efforts made throughout the age for such an explanation have established a monistic view of universe, and revealed substratum of everything –body, mind, soul as material substance, a physical entity, largely known and progressively knowable; Existence precedes thought things; idea, matter, spirit.

VII. ROY’S CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Roy broadly discussed the nature of philosophy together with its relationship with religion and science in his famous books ‘Science and Philosophy’ and Materialism. In his Book ‘Science and Philosophy’ Roy defines philosophy as ‘theory of life’. The function of philosophy, in words of Roy, is to solve the riddle of the universe. Elaborating on his definitions of philosophy Roy says -

“Philosophy is the theory of life, because it was born of the efforts of man to explain nature and to understand his own being in relation to its surroundings; to solve the actual problem of life in the light of past experience, so that the solution will give him encouraging glimpses into the future.”

Roy states that his philosophical system is a materialistic system. But Roy does not consider philosophy as a different from materialism. “Strictly speaking, Philosophy is materialism and materialism is the only possible philosophy. For, it represents the knowledge of nature itself. It simply maintains that the origin of everything that really exists is matter; that there does not exist anything but matter, all other appearances being transformations are governed necessarily by laws inherent in nature.” Within this framework he has attempted to construct an ontological an epistemological and an ethical theory.

VIII. PHILOSOPHY AND METAPHYSICS

According to Roy, man is a natural creature, inseparable from nature. Roy argues that human nature is determined by natural, biological evolution. Roy opposes not only the speculative philosophy but also to the identification of philosophy with theology and religion. For the average educated man Philosophy has a very vague meaning, but sweeping application; it stands not only for speculative thought, but also for poetic fancy, In India particularly, this vague, all embracing sense is generally prevalent. Philosophy is not distinguished from religion and theology. Indeed what is believed to be distinctive features of Indian philosophy is that it has not broken away from the medieval tradition, as modern western philosophy did in the seventeenth century.

According to Roy “Faith in supernatural does not permit the search for the cause of natural phenomena in nature itself. Therefore rejection of orthodox religious ideas and theological dogmas is condition for philosophy.”

Roy is of the view that, “Religion is bound to be liquidated by science, because scientific knowledge enables mankind to answer questions, confronted by which in its childhood, it was compelled to assume supernatural forces on agencies.”

Therefore according to Roy in order to perform its function, “Philosophy must break away from religion” and starts from the reality of physical universe.

IX. ETHICAL THEORIES

Man is a rational and therefore moral, by which Roy implies that man is a creature, is determined by nature. And nature, Roy argues, is a law-governed causal system. Further, this law-governed system is a moral order. Roy states this clearly, “The universe is a moral order governed by laws inherent in itself, Man grows out of that background.” Since man as a part of nature, he is also determined therefore, he is rational and consequentially moral. Man according to Roy is innately and constitutively rational and therefore, moral. Reason which is causality is also morality. He writes “All ethical values are determined by the nature and are derived from the biological heritage of man.” Roy holds that ethical values are determined by nature because the psyche is a daughter of the mother earth. Having argued that rationality is morality, and that is an ontological fact. Roy believes, he has evolved a correct moral theory.

For he says –

“Moral values are placed on a firm foundation when they are referred back to the innate rationality of man. They need no other sanction of conscience which is not the voice of God, but result from rationality. The discovery of the physical basis of reason and rationalist secular sanction of morality free humanism from the mystic connotations traditionally associated with it.” Roy perceived no distinction between morality and ontological reality.

X. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have given a brief discussion upon M.N Roy’s philosophical approaches in various fields, and attempts to understand the philosophical foundation of these theories. From this study we can now

define some problematic regarding this concept .We have come to the point that in Roy's philosophy, reason, reissuance and revolutions are the fundamental concepts. By analyzing this core concept we could able to unfold the whole philosophy of M.N Roy. Reason is the central concept upon which he built the rest of theory. Roy's purpose is to bring back reason primarily to provide a solution to crisis which he maintains confronting the world. Reason according to Roy is a biological function in a man or an ontological fact of nature; because man is a natural being he also rational subsequently. Roy deduces that man is a moral because he is rational. Roy attempts to solve the moral problems through reason and says that which is rational is moral and his search for rationalistic humanist ethics based upon materialism and questions of morality emerges as an answer to man's quest for social harmony and beneficial social accommodation.

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