**Question: Discuss M.N. Roy’s Radical Humanism.**

**Answer:** Manabendra Nath Roy was an Indian revolutionary, radical activist and political theorist, as well as a noted philosopher of the 20th century. Roy was a founder of the Mexican Communist Party and the Communist Party of India. However, later he was disappointed with both bourgeois democracy and communism, and devoted the last years of his life to the formulation of an alternative philosophy which he called Radical Humanism. His ideas are presented in his book New Humanism. It is the theoretical basis for the philosophy of radical humanism.

Humanism is an approach in study, philosophy, or practice that focuses on human values and concerns. It represents a system of thought concerned with human affairs in general. In keeping with this definition, Radical humanism recognizes the value and dignity of man. It accepts the individual as the central point of all social thought and action. It stands for decentralization of political and economic power, and suggests party-less democracy for purifying politics.

**Criticism of existing political ideologies:** Through his experiences with communist states, Roy found that in communism, man had been reduced to the position of a helpless pawn in the hands of blind economic forces. He was denied independence as well as sovereignty. Instead of liberating man, he was made a slave of an almighty State run by a party under the dictatorship of the party leader. He suffered the same way under capitalism as well. It was therefore necessary to go beyond both capitalism and communism and think of political and economic institutions that would guarantee freedom and progress to man as man and not as a member of a nation or class. Roy thought that organised democracy and co-operative economy was the solution and attempted to give these a philosophical foundation through his philosophy of radical humanism.

**Emphasis on Freedom:** Freedom is the basic value in radical humanism. It is the source of all human values. Roy believed that everything that man has done from cultural progress to scientific achievements to artistic creation has been motivated by man’s endless struggle for freedom. In fact, the amount of freedom available to the individuals is the measure of social progress.

**Emphasis on the Individual:** According to Radical Humanism, the individual is an end in itself and every other organization in the society is simply the means to that end. Roy pleads that everything else is below individual freedom which should not be subordinated to anything else. He is not ready to subordinate individual freedom even to religion or morality or to any other super-natural power. This is why he criticizes communism. In his view, the communist political system and its economic experiments subordinate the man of flesh and blood to an imaginary collective ego, be it the nation or class, and thus it cannot possibly be the suitable means for the attainment of the goal of freedom.

**Criticism of Contemporary Democracies:** In addition to communism, Roy has discussed the shortcomings of formal parliamentary democracy too in his writings. These flaws, according to Roy, are outcome of the delegation of power. Atomized individual citizens are, in Roy's view, powerless for all practical purposes. They have no means to exercise their sovereignty and to wield a standing control of the state machinery. The alternative Roy gives is the ideal of radical democracy, consisting of a highly decentralized democracy based on a network of people's committee's through which citizens wield a standing democratic control over the state.

To conclude, Roy’s philosophy of radical humanism implies a secular ideology which espouses reason, ethics, and justice, whilst specifically rejecting supernatural and religious dogma as a basis of morality and decision-making. His philosophy aims at establishing “a social order in which the best in man could be manifest."