CONCLUSION

From our foregoing critical survey of modern Indian aesthetic thought, it is observed that each of the leading thinkers of the modern age has his own distinctive style of expression and specific aspect of emphasis. Each ascribes to his aesthetic thought a quality from his own standpoint. But when we fathom deep into modern Indian Aesthetic thought in its totality, we find that the differences among thinkers become negligible and a common spiritual bond is noticed.

Diversities persist in their achievements. In spite of that the thinkers of modern India are united by a positive approach to their spiritual inheritance. Instead of rejecting the past they go ahead with enriching and revitalising the past in their ventures. Their attitude towards tradition is, on the whole, balanced and rational.

Viewed as a totality, Indian aesthetic thought in the modern age reflects those fundamental qualities which have always characterised the evolution of Indian Aesthetic thought from remote antiquity. At the core of Aesthetic thought, there lies a unique balance and equipoise.

It appears from our foregoing observations in the different chapters of Modern Indian Aesthetic thought that the real agreement in the views of the writers on Aesthetic thought
consists in the fact that they all, though with variations, represent art to have intrinsic value for aesthetics. The work of art is not to photograph nature, rather, artistic creation is the revelation of a higher reality, of a principle hidden under the appearance of forms. The artist therefore, must seek to perceive the inner reality of things, and if the artist does so sincerely, he is finally able to give rise to that kind of delight which is known as Ananda in the Indian Aesthetic. The highest and the deepest artistic delight is, in the ultimate analysis, akin to that beatitude and bliss realisable by the yogis as Brahmananda or Sachchidananda.

Traditionally, harmony has been given major importance in the discussions of beauty. Some aestheticians even have wanted to identify beauty with harmony. Nearly everyone has made "harmony" or some clearly related concept of at least a part of his theory of beauty. The life of happiness is a state of harmony in which there are no discords, no doubts, no conflicts. It is an ideal for the realization of which men and women are called upon to do creative work. The strength of mankind is in their union. The more they unite, the greater their power becomes. The more life meets life and exchanges the gifts of life, the more abundant will life become and the more intense will be the realization of God, who is life-abundant and harmonious. We have observed the equal emphasis on harmony in Modern Indian Aesthetic thought.
Tagore, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Iqbal, Coomaraswamy, Radhakrishnan — all agree that beauty is in harmony, so we can actualise aesthetic delight from harmony. At the end of the Rgveda, there is a hymn on harmony, where people are called upon to come together, to think in harmony and to speak in harmony.

In Indian Aesthetics, two grades of joy have been discerned: the realization of joy and bliss (Ananda) is the means for the attainment of a higher and eternal joy. The latter is called Brahmananda. The enjoyer of Brahmananda becomes a Jivanmukta (a liberated soul). Jivanmukti, in Indian Aesthetics, does not mean the end of life, it means the liberation of the soul from the personal desires. Liberated soul is above the feeling of differences between mine and thine. He develops in him that capacity with the help of which he may consider suffering and happiness as equal. The Westerners, while realizing the spiritual aspect, stop short there, whereas, the Indians go ahead with it for further spiritual conquest and advancement. It is this experience which becomes the basis of the saintly life, the life of a liberated being (Jivanmukta). Modern Indian aesthetics strives towards the attainment of such an ideal. It is, thus, revealed that Modern Indian Aestheticians stress more on the close resemblance between the spiritual joy and aesthetic delight.

Thus it becomes an undeniable fact that Indian Aesthetics has tried to purify man by its richness and put him
into a state of delight. It strengthens the spirit of man, cures him of any maladies to which he may become subject, gives him a new meaning of life. Such a spiritual perfection is sought by contemporary Indian Aestheticians.

We have found that such a spiritually perfect being is a true aesthete. His delight is of that magnanimity which neither pleasures can uplift nor pain can degrade. His conduct does not annoy anybody; he behaves like an ideal citizen and is a friend of all. Outwardly, he is very busy, but at heart very calm and quiet. He finds equal pleasure in old age, misery, poverty and in happiness of life.

It becomes explicit from the above discussion of the essence of aesthetic enjoyment, that it is very different from the worldly enjoyment which is always characterised by hankering and a lack of sufficiency. Enjoyment in daily life is often touched by sorrows and is sometimes clouded with stupor. According to the conception of art in Indian Aesthetics, its ultimate purpose is to provide Rasa of the very Supreme Reality ("Raso vai sah"). God creates the universe and He finds delight in His creation, that is his relish. Artists also feel delight in their creation and this is aesthetic delight. So aesthetic delight is of the same kind, may be less in range and vividness, than the sublime delight of God. Thus aesthetic delight is regarded as akin to the relish of God in Indian Aesthetics. We find the same treatment of the aesthetic
tradition in Modern Indian Aesthetic thought of the contemporary Aestheticians.

It may be recalled that according to Abhinavagupta, one of the Supreme exponents of Indian Aesthetics, the true aesthetic feeling is not an ordinary feeling but a kind of spiritual joy akin to the joy in the realisation of God.

In modern times, too, we find that Tagore equates the aesthetic delight more or less with the delight which is experienced as the result of the play not of the mind or the senses or imagination but of the soul itself. True joy springs from the plentitude of our spirit. This joy is neither intellectual, nor affective, nor is it conative, it is spiritual and is realised when the spirit of man functions unhindered.

Coomaraswamy is one of the greatest and most authoritative exponents of Indian art in our times. He thinks that all the arts are to be thought of as having a divine origin, and as having been revealed or otherwise brought down from Heaven to Earth. According to Coomaraswamy, pure aesthetic experience is theirs in whom the knowledge of ideal beauty is innate.

Through Involution, Aurobindo attempts to bring down the divine into the earth to make the earth spiritually rich where no discords will be there, instead harmony will prevail
pouring out beauty everywhere. Aesthetic delight belongs to such life divine.

The Indian Aesthetic tradition thus from the ancient times to the present, is found on the distinctive spiritual nature. The outstanding fact which we observe is that in the deeper moments of one's aesthetic consciousness, art has always been taken to be a product of the deeper, the very divine spirit of man. This is the source of spiritual delight, or divine bliss and beatitude or Ananda.

But the contribution of the contemporary Indian aesthetic thinkers is not merely a rehash of the old view, making no advance on traditional thought. Rather, most of these renascent thinkers have been deeply influenced by modern thought and science. They have reinterpreted Indian aesthetic thought in the idiom of our age and have restored the lost relationship between the power of the spirit and scientific values.

Of course, the contemporary aesthetic thinkers are not alienated from the past but they try to find out new ground. To deny the past and break with it completely is to uproot ourselves and become sapless. It was the virtue of Gandhi to keep confidence firmly in the rich tradition of our race and our soil and at the same time to function in a revolutionary plane. Both Tagore and Iqbal looked to the future and
interpreted the idealist teachings of the past in terms of the needs of the twentieth century. Aurobindo is also of the view that artistic creation must be consistent with the abiding spirit of India and must be elastic to the call of a luminous spirit. The same is true in cases of other contemporary Indian philosophers. If we make the past a fetish instead of an inspiring impulse, Modern Indian Aesthetic thought will not have a healthy base.

The contemporary Indian philosophers are found to have reverence for life. The traditional outwardly attitude to the things of life stands corrected in the writings of them. They believe that the development of the human personality is the highest aim of life as only developed personality is fit to have spiritual upliftment and so to have proper aesthetic delight.

Contemporary Indian thinkers do not consider renunciation as giving up of all activity and being indolent and selfishly seeking individual salvation. They have no faith in running away from social agonies to mountain tops and monasteries. Renunciation does not mean the absence of actions rather it means the active performances of actions, but the most noticeable factor is this that actions are to be non-selfish and disinterested (not uninterested) for the welfare of society. Aesthetic enjoyment is there in this disinterested performances of actions. Gandhi has great
regard for what could be achieved with man's hands and feet. Tagore has also taken up this problem. Tagore himself a poet, spoke highly of the mobility and dignity of the human tasks. To Gandhi, work is worship, real beauty lies in this disinterested actions. For Iqbal, disinterested actions make a man perfect. Perfection is beautiful.

Contemporary Indian thinkers do not interpret bhakti as an emotional slush or sentimental love of God, resulting in complete self-abasement and loss of the sense of individuality. It is the sincere love of God based on ethical life. Gandhi points out that to serve and love the persons of human beings is to love God as God represents Himself through human beings. They strongly believe that real beauty lies in this sincere love for the whole creation. They upheld the idea that we are to love men, the nature as well. All the creatures of nature are the creations of God. Hence to love all is to reveal nothing but the essence of harmony where beauty in true sense is prevalent. Tagore conceives that we are more concerned particularly with the creations of God than the Absolute. Radhakrishnan also conceives that we are not interested in the Absolute in its purity but with the universe which as a whole is the creation of God. For them, we are less concerned with the background or the canvas than with the painting done on it. We directly come into contact with the creation of God. So to love the creatures of the universe is more charming and beautiful than to pray God on the hill-tops. To love is to
serve is followed by them all.

Yoga is not interpreted by them as mere acquisition of supernatural powers, but as the integration of life at three levels, integration with one's own self through self-control and harmonisation of all the instincts and emotions, integration with fellow men through love and sense of social justice and integration with Nature through a knowledge of science and technology. This ultimately leads to the unity of all and this unity is itself beautiful. Tagore sings of this unity as:

Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not
Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own.
Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.¹

¹ Roy, Niharranjan, An Artist in Life, p. 61