Chapter I

The aim of this chapter is to make an elucidation of the fundamental concepts which constitute the theoretical framework of the present study. The investigator has tried to come to grips with problems of self-transcendence, its relationship with religious faith and death-anxiety. Certain assumptions concerning this relationship have therefore been highlighted in this chapter. The chapter also includes a discussion of the importance of this study, its scope, and the need for further intensive research on the problem.

Death and Human Destiny:

Man like every other living being is destined to die. All possible events which shape an individual's destiny end up in death on the physical plane. And death perhaps is the only experience which cannot be told back to others by the experiencer. Does human existence really come to end with death, or the event of death is just one among the countless other events of existence? This question has haunted human mind since millennia. It has therefore a deep significance. An individual is not prepared to part with his identity and existence. Life may come to an end on the physical plane but existence and identity must continue.
Man cannot possibly reconcile with the idea of total annihilation. Identity and existence are, therefore, dearer to a person than life itself. Identity touches the most glimmering and most oblivious and darkest realities of life. Man is not perhaps afraid of death. He is afraid of the annihilation of his existence through the inevitable process of death. If death amounts to a compulsory dissolution of identity, it is certainly a formidable challenge and man has been trying to respond to this challenge in a variety of ways. The challenge of death has stimulated philosophical, religious and scientific thinking. It has motivated man to transcend the dichotomy of life and death. We shall, therefore, try to expand the various thoughts which make the idea of death meaningful and worth studying.

**Death, Identity and Religious Faith:**

Religious faith leads into an unquestionable belief in a transcendental reality which is regarded as the ultimate. Mystic and religious experiences have only an experimental validity and cannot be brought within the purview of science. The incomparable spiritual power of prophets posthumously influencing billions of people through centuries and millennia throughout the development of civilization has its roots in faith. Faith is, therefore, a tremendous power in itself. Almost all religions based on faith support man's aspiration for the continuation of his identity and existence after death. The power of faith, therefore, gives an
unshakeable guarantee that death cannot dissolve identity or lead into a total annihilation.

The comparative position of Judeo-Christian, Hindu and Jain religions which has been clearly expounded by Smart (1968) leads into two major considerations in this regard. (1) That human existence is not limited to serially ordered spatial time, and (2) a new dimension of consciousness is released after the occurrence of physical death and it opens up an altogether new realm of experiences. Our existing consciousness, however, which is bounded by the serial time however ends with the moment of death. These two major considerations which stem forth from religious thinking give rise to the meaning of life and death in a variety of religious systems. The meaning of death in Buddhist religious thought is governed by the idea of re-birth. Existence tends to remain chained in the cycle of birth-re-birth so long as the individual continues to be a slave of desire and ignorant of his immense spiritual powers. Only through Nirvana one is released and emancipated from this endless cycle. An individual is actually bound by impermanent states whereas Nirvana is a permanent state. Buddha had however rejected the idea of an eternal and blissful state of soul and also the idea of a personal God. Without involving individual existence Nirvana exists in its own sake.

In Hindu religion, the Bhagavad Gita gives full
expression to the idea of ultimate reality. Brahmin is the ultimate reality and the goal of spiritual growth and endeavours. The cycle of birth and re-birth is tied to Karma, but it ends up with the attainment of Brahmin. According to one of the foremost exponents of Hindu religion, namely Shankara, the only one reality is the Brahmin-Atman, the Absolute self. Unlike Buddha, Shankara allows belief in a personal God because belief is the only path to realisation of one's true identity. This concept of the absolute stands out clearly through the writings of Ramanuj and Madhva, and in recent times, through the writings of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna. There is a consensus in these writings that the ultimate and the absolute is transcendental.

In the Islamic, Jewish and Christian religions the idea of the immortality of soul becomes pre-dominant. The conception of re-birth is explained in terms of resurrection. Re-union of soul with the ultimate reality guarantees the continuation of one's identity and existence. Death leads into an eternal existence which may be an endless bliss or an endless suffering. Pleasure and pain in the after-life depend upon actions. The deeds executed in the world, the abode of our mundane existence, determine the fate of an individual's after-life. Heaven and hell are often given a physical meaning by the interpreters of these religions. Since the present investigation takes into account a sample comprising only the Muslims, we shall, therefore,
make further comments on the Islamic religion. Islamic religious philosophy teaches us that an abiding existence begins when the mundane existence comes to an end. This worldly life is only a preparation for a lasting existence in after-life. The good and bad actions of an individual decide his fate in the after-life and the individual is entirely responsible for the seeds he sows and for what he reaps thereafter. One has to give an account of his actions before a supreme judge-God. The experiences whether painful or otherwise are the inevitable outcome of one's actions in this life.

Islamic religious philosophy develops a kind of psychology in the individual where he develops the fear of death in terms of its consequences. But, at the same time, it encourages the love of God to the extent that one can shed away the fear of death entirely. Death can bring for him a better and lasting existence where he can re-unite with his Lord.

However, death anxiety may even be aggravated when one thinks of its consequences in terms of punishment in the after-life. One of the interesting aspects of this fear is related to the idea of punishment in the grave. According to Islamic thinking, when the dead body is placed in the grave some experiences begin to occur shortly thereafter. The dead is risen from death by slumber for a few moments and he is put certain questions concerning his faith by two angels who visit his grave.
for this purpose. If the faith is shaky, he is punished there and then and the punishment is visualised in terms of hell fire. The rising in the grave is one episode of post-mortem existence. Between this and the episode of rising on the day of judgement there is an interval. But one's post-mortem destiny is shown to him when he is risen in the grave. Religious attitude and deep religious conviction make the attitude so overwhelming that fear of death may become highly pronounced in some individuals who give thought to it of and on.

The Chinese Taoism advocates identification with the eternal Tao. This identification depends upon passivity and inaction which lead into the path of highest spiritual attainments. Contentment is the natural outcome of the attainment. In order to achieve contentment, desires must be eradicated because they happen to be the permanent source of discontentment. Taoist idea of after-life looks materialistic because it assigns a material place to immortals which, of course, is the paradise.

From the above discussion it appears that despite their different versions, religious outlook tends to do away with the fear of total annihilation of one's existence after death. Death may destroy the body but it does not destroy the soul and identity

Self-transcendence, Death and Religion:

Maslow (1969) has discussed thirty-seven meanings of
transcendence in his paper entitled 'Various Meanings of Transcendence'. Within these meanings are included transcendence of death, pain, sickness, evil, etc. If death is taken as a necessity the attitude enables one to transcend the fear of death. The view that death is a necessity has also been advanced by the well-known Belgian scientist, Le Comte du Nouy, in his famous book 'Human Destiny'. The necessity of death may be organic in this sense because the organism out of necessity completes the cycle of its stages, inorganic state - organic state - inorganic state.

The meaning of death, however, becomes completely altered in terms of self-transcendence. Self derives its power and meaning through identifications. Consequently, the stability, inner integration and the capacity of endurance of self, depend upon the nature of these identifications. Identification takes place at the plane of physical needs or identification may arise from involvements in persons, things, values and goals. Self-transcendence in a dynamic sense implies dis-engagement of self from identifications with persons, things, physical needs, and involvement in goals and values that are intrinsically more enduring and do not exhaust their meaning within the space-time limitations.

Religious philosophies tend to transcendent goals, spiritual endeavours, and higher identifications; the power of self according to religious philosophies becomes inexhaustible
through such enduring identifications which cannot be dissolved through time and space.

Death is a physical event like any other event; it tends to dissolve all the identities which carry with them the space-time limitations. Death, in this sense, implies complete annihilation of self, identity and existence. But religious philosophies do away with the idea of death in its entirety. Since the enduring identity transcends everything which can be dissolved by death, self is not annihilated by it. Death on the contrary leads into real existence - the existence characterised by enduring identity. Religion, therefore, sets forth transcendent goals - goals which extend beyond those involvements of self that are determined by physical needs and transitory interests.

Man is not perhaps afraid of death as much as he is afraid of its consequences. In order to understand the fear of death, one has to take into account the fact that our involvements in life itself have much to do with it. An individual's concern with death is determined largely by his attitude towards life and his concern with it. Since man is essentially meaning-oriented, his identity becomes interwoven with meaning; when the idea of the inevitable event of death begins to threaten identity and tends to dissolve meaning, it becomes anxiety-arousing. If the identity of an individual is totally exhausted by those experiences which are tied to transitory events, fear of death looms large
over life. If, however, one's identity transcends these experiences through a positive faith, fear of death loses its grip over human mind. Under such circumstances, one begins to transcend his self through a transcendental faith. Self and identity become more dynamic and cease to remain within a bounded conception of life. Life does not remain an end in itself; hence, it does not end up with death.

An average person, however, reacts to his experiences of life with the conviction that they are an end in themselves. Hence, if the experiences of life turn out to be painful and agonizing, death is considered to be a source of relief. But this is more a negative appraisal of death. If, on the contrary, life experiences are pleasurable, death appears terrifying because it tends to deprive the individual of his pleasures and happiness. The attitude of self-transcendence tends to dissolve this polarity of pleasure and pain vis-a-vis death. Religious philosophy tends to develop a more detached and objective attitude towards life and death. Both become more coherently meaningful through a transcendental attitude. But these are not the only reactions toward death. One can even become indifferent to death, or might overcome the fear of death, through creativity because one begins to feel that his creative work would outlast his life.

There seem to be two basic attitudes towards life as well as death. The one may be called this-worldly and the other
the other-worldly. For both these attitudes, consequences of death are more important than death itself. We have seen from the above discussion that in the predominantly this-worldly attitude, reactions to death are largely determined by the type of life experiences, and the fear of death is governed largely by the consequences death might have for such experiences. In the other-worldly attitude as well, the consequences of death determine an individual's reaction toward it. He perceives the consequences of death in terms of heaven and hell and in terms of an endless process of birth - re-birth. Death may be a desirable experience for one who believes that it leads to the attainment of a transcendent goal, namely, the re-union with the ultimate reality. The meaning of death given by religion has also a deep impact on life. It tends to minimize the fear through inculcating hope of the continuation of identity and existence after death. Toynbee (1968) in his essay on 'The Changing of Attitudes Toward Death in Modern Western World', writes "Monks can speak serenely and even cheerfully about death - not excluding the death of those people who are the most dear to them - because they have an unshakeable belief in personal immortality. In their belief the parting inflicted by death is temporary and is, therefore, tolerable; and, though their own and their fellow human beings' destiny after death hangs in the balance as long as life in this world lasts, their destiny is going to be decided by their conduct during this life, and conduct is something that, with God's help,
lies in a human being's own hands. A present-day Christian monk's stalwart Christian faith makes death, for him, a comparatively unimportant incident, as it is for a Buddhist who believes in the possibility of obtaining Nirvana, or for a Hindu who believes that "the dweller in the innermost" of a human being's spirit is identical with the Ultimate Spiritual Reality that lies behind a universe that is illusory". Toynbee's observations seem to be corroborated when we talk with people who have a deep and unflinching faith in God and the religious teachings. They express more or less the same attitude which has been described above. It is quite evident that the entire logic of religious philosophy and the nature of its system of beliefs tends to lead an individual out of the fear of death. Religion thus alleviates the fear on grounds of faith and belief. One is tempted to conclude from these arguments that death anxiety should be minimum with people who are religious. But this question is open to test. Actually, the present investigator was prompted by these very arguments to undertake a study of this problem independently, disregarding all the contradictions in the hitherto findings that are available in this area. The core of the arguments on which the investigator has based his main assumption is that existence and identity are very dear to a human being and, since religions inculcate the belief that death cannot deprive him of his identity and existence, its fear is thereby minimised. Death has some positive aspects too for a religious mentality. It makes existence eternal, and it eventually brings reward for good conduct in life.
Self-transcendence in Islamic Religion:

The meaning of self-transcendence in Islam is interwoven with its spiritual development which is characterised by the love of God, unselfish love for man, and control of one's passion and desire. Mystics like Rumi, and thinkers like Al-Ghazzali, have expounded the Quranic thought in this regard. Self-transcendence, according to them, involves certain stages of Nafs (the essence of self) which include the physical and spiritual stages. The development of self remains incomplete if one fails to transcend the immediate physical, biological and psychological involvements of self. Self-transcendence implies a purpose beyond these immediate involvements. This purpose is defined in terms of a full-fledged realization of the will of God and a state of spiritual consonance with the will of God. The methods of attaining this purpose include training and control of passion, disciplining of desires and biological cravings, and an attitude of detachment with regard to psychological involvements. These methods cannot be put to one's advantage without faith. Faith, therefore, is the first step toward self-transcendence. Faith opens up a new dimension of consciousness which enables one to grasp the meaning of the relationship which links up the inner self with the outer phenomena and a transcendent reality.

Self-transcendence, therefore, involves a religious attitude. Fear of death has no place in the context of this
attitude. Since life is a continuous process, death is not a terminal stage of this process. Death only leads to a realm of existence where immediate and direct experience of God becomes possible. The concept of life after death determines the meaning and significance of death in the Islamic thought. The state of life-after-death is a state where the consequences of one's actions in life determine the fate of an individual. A person having a strong and lively faith in God, charged with the love of God, tends to transcend the fear of death and even welcomes death because it extends the meaning of existence. Death anxiety cannot, therefore, overtake and haunt the mind of an individual who carries a faith leading to self-transcendence. The investigator, therefore reasonably assumes that death anxiety would be minimum in individuals who have a strong religious background. We may now turn to philosophical studies pertaining to death and death anxiety.

Philosophical Approach to Problem of Death:

Philosophical approach to death tries to come to grip with man's efforts to reconcile with the fact of death. Philosophical studies also take into account the phenomena known as 'out-of-the-body' experiences and tend to explore the possible nature of experiences of death.

Toynbee (1968) describes nine possible ways through which man has reconciled with the fact of death. (1) Hedonism.

Out of these nine ways to circumvent death, the fifth one is self evident, and ways six, seven, eight and nine have already been touched upon in the context of our discussion of the religious outlook on death. The rest we shall see in order. Hedonism minimises the thought of death by focussing attention entirely on life. One should eat, drink and be merry and forget about the next world. One should enjoy to the fullest extent the pleasures available in life because life is not going to occur twice. The Greek men of letters, Herodotus and Epicurus, held the belief in this philosophy. The Iranian scientist and poet, Omar Khayyam, also had the same view. Pessimism is the opposite attitude. Twenty four centuries ago Greek pessimists, like Sophocles, said that 'it were best if one were never born'. The key-note of pessimism is that life is so wretched that death is a lesser evil. Indian pessimism is more radical. It treats this an world as illusory, and even the soul as illusion. But the sufferer who is chained in the Maya through life, has the highest spiritual
prospects through post-mortem existence. Thus the radical Hindu pessimism compensates for mundane sufferings.

The Egyptians used to put food, drinks and other paraphernalia along with the corpse because they believed that the dead person's life could be prolonged that way. The tombs of Pharos contained elaborate provisions of all sorts. Apart from these types of physical counter-measures, people have also gone in search of some Tree of Immortality, or in quest of an Elixir of Life. Since the recorded history, attempts have been made to undo the effects of death by putting treasure in one's descendent.

In Hebrew scriptures we come across instances when God promises a prophet, e.g. Abraham, that He will bestow upon him personal immortality by making his nation mighty and through multiplying his descendents. Each human being in his capacity tries that he should survive through his descendents, his sons and grandsons. Some people try to pass their traditions to future generations. A great leader or a reformer of a nation leaves his treasure to the nation. According to Toynbee (1968) this urge is so essential and so antiquated that one begins to feel that it is perhaps innate in man. Toynbee holds the view that death and the dignity of man are quite incongruous. Death is a disgrace to body at least, and every effort is, therefore, made by man to preserve dignity of the corpse through funerary rites. In all the above mentioned efforts of man to circumvent death, with the exception of Hedonism, one thing perhaps seems to stand out very distinctly.
Existence and identity are upheld on a physical and metaphysical or spiritual plane. Hedonism, however, makes a mockery of death because existence, however, short-lives it may be, is so overwhelming that death looks quite insignificant. Hedonism, therefore, reduces the significance of death to such an extent that it is not even worth thinking of.

Pessimism of Greek origin takes death as a better alternative because existence has permanence after death. The austerity and single-mindedness of Indian pessimism is well demonstrated in its forthright declaration of reality as illusory. Real existence, therefore, is to be sought elsewhere. Death is a gateway to real existence.

We would now turn to other types of studies which look more philosophical and romantic than scientific.

Heywood (1968) in her article entitled 'Attitudes to Death in the light of Dreams and other out-of-the-body Experience' has collected a variety of instances of highly authentic nature which compel us to say that one must exercise caution in rejecting phenomena which cannot be grasped through sense organs and through our existing modes of consciousness. Such reports have been given by such unfailingly authentic persons like Geddes (1937), a physician and Professor of Anatomy of London University, the famous Koestler and the English anthropologist Turnbull (1961).
Many other autobiographies of such renowned persons like Wordsworth, George Eliot, Emile Bronte and Tennyson contain accounts of this sort of experience. The gist of these reports and accounts is that at certain moments of waking consciousness the individual feels that he has left his body and has turned ethereal. His consciousness spreads over the wide expanse of universe and the temporarily supersedes time-space limitations. Koestler describes his experience as a kind of mental osmosis through which he felt he was dissolved in a universal pool which gave him an oceanic feeling. The reality thus experienced is felt as real reality. Other reports, e.g., the one given by Geddes says that the experient felt that he had left his body lying on bed and the consciousness had moved out to some other plane. The time-space dimension was transcended perfectly and the universe acquired a fourth or fifth dimension. These experiences have led notable thinkers of no less a stature than that of Price and Broad to say that death is not perhaps the terminal event of our life and consciousness, but is rather a for us to enter into a wider reality. Out-of-body experience is very close to the more intense and lasting experience of death.

This view receives further support from certain neuro-physiological inquiries. In 1966, a symposium was held on "Brain and Consciousness" in which men of the highest stature
like Adrian, Penfield, Sperry, Thorpe and Gomes categorically rejected the physicalist view that brain is capable of generating consciousness. Consciousness transcends brain activity because "what is known of the Chemistry of the nerve-cell and the physics of nerve conduction indicates that the processes involved alike in the parts of the nervous system which are accompanied by consciousness and in the parts which are un-accompanied by consciousness, differ in no essential way from a muscle cell; there is no unique physical or chemical process specifically associated with the emergence of consciousness". The inevitable logical corollary of this view is that consciousness survives the death of our nerve cells because it is not generated by brain. Consciousness of different order than physico-chemical and electro-chemical processes of our brain. Brain is considered to be an organ which only detects and transmits consciousness but does not generate it. The famous Sherrington who holds the foremost rank in neurophysiology held the same view. Eccles (1963), the world known brain specialist had also made the same point. "Contrary to the physicalist creed, I believe that the reality of my experiencing self cannot with propriety be identified with brains, neuroness, nerve impulses or spatial temporal patterns of impulses.... I cannot think that the gift of conscious experience has no further future, no possibility of another existence under some intangible conditions. At least I would mention that this possibility of a future existence cannot be denied on scientific grounds".
Price (1968) has presented a speculative account of the nature of post-mortem existence. He believes that life after death is analogous to dreams. Dream images have a space of their own within which they have spatial relations. But so far as physical space is concerned they are nowhere. From a physical point of view they are unreal but they are as real as anything can be. In this kind of a next-world, telepathy will be more extensive and continuous than it is now. Hence our consciousness would be able to communicate with the other. This conception of a disembodied existence transcends time-space limitations and makes post-mortem existence permanent and lasting, without involving any fatigue, boredom and monotony. In one of his most illuminating essays entitled "The Soul and Death", Jung (1959) points out that regarding the post-mortem continuity of psychic process which according to him merges into an indivisible continuum and emerges into spaceless dimension. He writes, "it is not only permissible to doubt the absolute validity of space-time perception, it is, in view of available facts, even imperative to do so. The hypothetical possibility that the psyche infringes on a form of existence outside space and time, presents a scientific question mark that deserves serious consideration for a long time to come". According to Jung it is the unconscious psyche that appears to possess qualities which throw peculiar light on its relation to time and space. Jungian view actually points towards an unexplored dimensions of psyche, a question which is likely to have increasing impact on scientific minds.
Death and Existentialism:

The theme of death is prominent in existential philosophy. For Heideger (1959) death is an issue of major concern. Heideger talks mainly about an individual's concern and anticipation of his own death. When one is dead he can never be replaced. Heideger's main interest had been an ontological exposition of the way human existence deals with itself as moving towards death, because he regards it as more fundamental than anything biology, medicine, psychology or even theology say about death. Death is that "unique potentiality of 'being there' as man is - which involves 'being' no more. An individual who takes upon himself enters all relations to the world and human beings". Heideger believes that if one treats the anxiety as an occasional marked mood, one is not working on an authentic level. Warding off death anxiety superficially and thus attempting to reach tranquillity, leads into estrangement from one's innermost and absolute personality. The authentic attitude leads towards its own end. Through an authentic attitude one does not regard death as a mere external event, but as something whose inward significance is more certain than anything else. The authentic anticipation of death means continual confrontation with nothingness. Of all human potentialities, according to Heideger, the extreme potentiality is the impossibility of existence. Among other existentialists, Jaspers faces the problem squarely by rejecting
immortality as well as the scientific and objective attitude towards death. It is more 'courageous faith', to believe that because of death, life is incurably meaningless. The threat of nothingness can only be conquered by such faith. Life is destructible, but authentic self-hood, whose meaning is realized only by facing death realistically, is imperishable. We become firmed, resolute, decisive to finitude through courageous faith. According to Jaspers (1959) one has lived for 'ends in themselves and has entered into an existential communication with others, and he who has realized what is important in his life and in the life of his friends, cannot be annihilated by death. These views which we have presented are the examples of the most sophisticated thoughts of our age. What is unique with Heidegger (1959) and Jaspers (1959) is the attempt to face the issue of death by accepting nothingness and finitude. Even death is a potentiality which makes existence impossible and tends to look towards higher and greater potentiality through which existence and identity survive. This may be 'authentic selfhood' and 'courageous faith' in the case of Heidegger and Jaspers. Nothingness, the inevitable consequence of death, can thus be overcome and surpassed. Another notable existentialist, Gabriel Marcel, totally rejects the idea of nothingness and finitude. He points out that abandonment of belief in eternal life is expected to lead us into a more loving care for life in this world; but what has actually happened is the opposite. Life has been looked upon as a worthless phenome
through his attitude. Meroel believes that human love, which is characterized by openness, and divine love charge existence with infinite possibility. The problem of death cannot be circumvented either through the attitude of finality which, according to him, is the most terrible evil of our age, nor through a pseudo-religion, but through the acknowledgement of the power of altruism. By and large, in the history of western philosophy, the ontological affirmation of death looks quite prominent. In his essay, 'The Ideology of Death', Marouse has highlighted attitudes which have developed out of the impact of this affirmation.

Western which have realized that to see directly into the face of death means inevitable confrontation with anxiety. This inevitable confrontation either be dealt with on a still more realistic plane through such normal attitudes like fight for the prolongation of life, painless death, to take life as an end in itself; and to experience death as a technical limit of human freedom and so on; or also this confrontation may be dealt with through accepting the wish to lie.

As regards the significance, Jackson (1959) points out that practically the religion's function with the community is to protect the individual against destructive fantasy and illusion by surrounding the fact of physical death by a framework of reality that is accepted by both the grieving individual and the supporting community. This framework of reality is conceived to stimulate and make valid the expression of all the emotion that
is a part of the process of mourning in a way that is acceptable to the community, at the same time, that it satisfies the deep inner needs of personality. Philosophically this practical experience of the religious approach to death and dying also tends to determine the attitude of the individual towards his own death and life and the lives of others, not as vehicles and extinguishable, but rather as value filled and thus measured by a standard different from that used on all material things. This attitude has the quality of being eternal beyond space and time and for an individual it gives physical death a dimension opening up the spiritual possibilities.

Before we turn to scientific studies throwing light on the meaning and problem of death, we would try to bring out certain assumptions concerning the relationship of self-transcendence, death anxiety and religious faith.

1. Man has attempted in a variety of ways to reconcile with the fact of death and tried to overcome the fear of death.

2. Man has an undying urge to live with himself and identity and to continue his existence after death.

3. Religious philosophy and some other philosophical doctrines support this aspiration of man to the fullest extent.

4. Religion tends to develop in man an identity and selfhood which cannot be dissolved with the dissolution and end of his physical existence.
5. Self-transcendence implies that the true meaning of self be beyond its immediate involvements in the perishable aspects of man's nature.

6. Religious philosophy encourages and develops the attitude of self-transcendence and thus enables the individual to overcome fear of death.

7. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to assume that death anxiety is considerably minimized in the people who have religious faith and an attitude of self-transcendence.

Significance of the study:

The significance of this study is derived from the fact that death anxiety has been studied in a cultural background where attitude towards death differs drastically from the attitudes which have their roots in the modern western civilisation. Death is not abhorred by the Indian people, nor do they consciously or unconsciously avoid talking about death. On the contrary, death has meaning and significance for the Indian mind in the context of their religious background. One can reasonably assume that these attitudes would have their effect on death anxiety. It may also be reasonable to assume that death anxiety may even be minimised through religious attitudes which link up the meaning of death and the life after-death with our mundane existence. We have already pointed out that a definite concept
of self-transcendence is associated with the Muslim religious outlook, and the idea of death has a deep meaning in this context. Hence, the study of death anxiety can be most fruitful in this religious and cultural background. No study of this sort has come to the knowledge of the investigator through a survey of literature in this area. Hence, this study can be said to be of an original nature and is thus worthwhile and significant in its own right. It would enable a researcher in this area to know more about the impact of religious attitude on the fear of death.

This investigation is actually an extension of the previously conducted investigation and it includes a new variable of self-transcendence. This investigation gives us an advantage in the sense that since religiosity, whether high or low, carries a more intrinsically developed meaning when self-transcendent attitude is taken into account. In other words, religious outlook so far as its effects on life are concerned, become much more meaningful in terms of self-transcendence because the latter bears a deep philosophical relationship with the religious thoughts.