SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Man's fear of death sometimes gives the impression as if it is instinctive. The curiosity to understand the phenomenon of death and know about the post-mortem happenings, has led to such speculations which look like a testing ground of hypotheses. Religious philosophies have, by and large, emancipated human mind from the fear of death. Major religions of the world like Hinduism and Judeo-Christian and Islamic systems offer a conception of after-life and guarantee continuation of existence. It appears that existence and identity are very dear to man, dearer than even their life. Life may come to an end but identity must continue. Besides, meanings are more important than anything else.

Philosophical systems also throw light on the problem of death. Modern existentialist philosophy and its varied versions pose intriguing questions as to the meaning of life and death.

It appears that religious outlook in general tends to minimize or even eliminate fear of death. Religions give us transcendental conceptions. When one transcends dichotomies of life and transcends the immediate and lending involvements of self and sets up higher spiritual goals, one perhaps begins
to transcend the usual attachments with life and consequently overcomes the fear of death.

Self-transcendence is generally encouraged by religions. Ideas pertaining to death, and even such notions as post-mortem existence, have recently come to the scientific limelight. Scientific studies pertaining to fear of death or death anxiety are also available in sizeable number. The present investigator was attracted by the idea that death anxiety might be considerably minimized in those who are religiously oriented. Besides, people having a transcendent attitude or those who have attitude of self-transcendence might be able to overcome fear of death much more easily than those who do not have this attitude.

With these ideas as reasonable hypotheses the investigator proceeded to conduct the study with the help of some well-structured tools on a younger and older sample of Muslims who were religiously oriented. The study may be said to have gone through two stages. The initial study included the religious variable with the view to serve its influence on death anxiety. At a later stage, the investigator brought in the variable of self-transcendence again with the view to observing its influence on death anxiety. Design of the study required the use of the technique of analysis of variance and comparisons of certain grounds required the use of t-test.
The hypotheses and expectations of the investigator were disconfirmed through the results. Following facts came to the limelight:

1. People who were religiously oriented were more afraid of death than those who were not deeply religious.

2. People who express an attitude of self-transcendence are more afraid of death than those who do express this attitude prominently.

We have assigned reasons for this tendency on the part of our subjects. Purposefulness in life has a deep meaning for individuals who are oriented toward a purpose and its accompanying uncertainties. Death tends to frustrate purpose and meaning in life. Hence persons having high purpose in life, seem to be more afraid of death than those who are not so consciously and deeply involved in purpose in life. It may be mentioned here again that the meaning of self-transcendence in Islamic religious philosophy is interwoven with the after-life conceptions and with seeking the will of God. This stands a purpose beyond self. Since the PIL does not cover this meaning and only includes purpose within a bounded conception of life, it yields the fact that death anxiety is prominent in subjects who are purposefully oriented according to PIL. Had PIL been
inclusive of the aforesaid meaning as well, we might have come across a set of different tendencies in our subjects. This, however, prompts us to suggest that further research with the help of newly devised tools is advisable in this area.