CONCLUSION

Men may come and men may go but the world goes on for ever. Man is to live in this world and not to discard it to lead the life of an ascetic. He is to live life totally by participating with zeal in the social activities. He is not to live in any bondage but being a liberated man, he is not to die like a meek lamb. Following the path of truth and goodness during life time, he is to die a death which may become a guiding star for others.

There is no death of men who sacrifice their lives whenever there is suppression, oppression and chaos. Men stood steadfast without budging an inch from the stand they had decided to take for defending their religion, faith or ideology. Great men appear on the scene during uncertain and difficult times on different lands as if they are ordained by God, the Almighty, to save the humanity from degradation, depression and defamation. To keep alive the cause of righteousness and to protect, defend and save the interests of mankind irrespective of caste, colour or creed, some men stand at a revered platform as compared with others for they sacrifice their precious lives for
a cause or for a commitment to an ideology; and these selfless men are remembered with deserving respect ever generation after generation as martyrs. Later on men wonder at times at their marvellous act of supreme and disarming courage of laying down their lives. By choosing the most dangerous path, such great men create history and change the course of events to follow.

As a starting point to dig up and throw light on the psychology of facing death while in search of truth, the case of Socrates is taken up and political, religious and social conditions are discussed. Athenians were facing political unrest; they were experiencing ruthless despotism and were living in utter lawlessness. In order to re-establish the democratic principles and to liberate the human beings from uncalled for, unwanted and unexpected tyrannical behaviour, Socrates advocated without any fear of maltreatment, moral and spiritual liberation of his men. Since the men in power did not tolerate his preachings, Socrates was put to death. He died for his principles which he upheld sincerely all through his life. Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity stands alone as a solitary example of one man's course with unbending and unshakable conviction and he came
out triumphant in bringing about significant and everlasting change in all those who followed his religion. Palestinians, a small Jewish nation were the subject people and they were ruled by Romans. The Jews had restricted powers but were allowed to follow their religion, Judaism, which had become a bundle of ceremonies. In fact they had departed from the true path of worship. For Jews rituals and external purity was more important than the purity of heart. Jesus appeared on the scene and he condemned all religious ceremonies, traditions and religious groups. He believed in doing good, healing the sick and preaching unity among men who were considered to be sinners and were thus put under constant humiliation. Jesus faced death for the sins of others and to relieve them of sufferings.

Sufists have their own martyrs and Mansur Al-Hallaj is one of them. Mansur, a great Sufi saint, in a state of complete union with God went to the extent that he identified himself with Allah. He declared 'Anal Hay'. Muslim theologians interpreted his statement as his claim to equality with God. According to Islam, the most dangerous and unpardonable sin is joining other gods with the one True God. So Mansur was accused of being charlatan and was put to death. Our earlier discussion leads us to the conclusion that men sacrificed
their lives for a cause or for a commitment to an ideology.

The second chapter has discussed the concept of martyrdom in Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. It has been shown that different religions have their own notion about offering one's life for various causes. Guru Nanak introduced the idea of self-sacrifice in theory. He made it clear to his followers that the path of righteousness was exposed to dangers and it required sacrificing one's life if need be. One can be sure of ultimate triumph of truth and goodness after undergoing long sufferings. This brought in the idea of martyrdom in Sikhism. The fifth Guru Arjan Dev gave a practical shape to this idea by sacrificing his life by undergoing unheard of tortures, for his ideals. The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur carried forward the idea when he gave up his life for the freedom of worship of all. Later on this idea was firmly established and got a strong hold among the people and Sikhs sacrificed their lives for just causes.

Our discussion in the chapter on 'Prominent Sikh Martyrs' leads us to the conclusion that Sikh history is full of sacrifices of lives made by Sikhs for their beliefs and principles. The religious policy
of the Mughal Emperors which was mainly responsible for the sufferings of the Sikhs has been viewed. After the reign of Akbar the Great, his successors created an atmosphere of suppression, tyranny and religious intolerance. This state of affairs reached at its highest at the time of Aurangzeb and continued till the end of Mughal Empire. In order to put an end to evil and wrong doings, the Sikhs gave up their lives willingly and without an iota of remorse. These selfless sacrifices for others are of unique nature.

In the research work in hand, the mission of Sikh martyrs is discussed in the fourth chapter. According to the Sikh Gurus the aim of one's life is to bring about spiritual upliftment i.e. salvation which can only be attained in a society that is free from social, political and religious bondage. But at that time, the atmosphere was not conducive for it. The Gurus faced many hardships and struggled hard while preaching and practising such values of life as truth, courage, love, contentment, fearlessness, self-surrender, service of humanity etc. In order to achieve their mission, the Gurus and their followers laid down their lives in the face of opposition from both the state and the church.

In the fifth chapter, we have discussed how Sikhs -
the martial race of principles, have created and given a new dimension to the Sikh history. The Sikh martyrs have greatly influenced the masses by reversing the prevailing state of affairs. The Sikh Gurus changed the basic psychology of the masses and prepared them to fight for their rights and challenge the black deeds of men in power. The Gurus started a new movement which threw away the shackles of slavery. The famous Bhakti movement had no ideology and it failed to create its own history. Whereas, Sikhism with its own ideology inspired men and showed them a new ray of optimism and confidence. The Sikhs made new history and ultimately established their own rule in Punjab. The Sikh martyrs' ideology based struggle for the emancipation of mankind has a definite bearing on the future Sikh history.

In the sixth chapter, the influence of Sikh martyrs on Indian society is considered from social, religious, political and economic angles. The seeds for liberating the mind and soul of a man from any kind of suppression were shown by Guru Nanak. The other Gurus nurtured the seedlings from time to time. They not only kept the spirit alive but were successful in making it grow. In the end, the last Guru, Gobind Singh, created a socio-religious military force - the Khalsa,
which fought bravely and tirelessly, to liberate the masses. The dormant and hidden heroic spirit which lost the power of putting up any resistance whatsoever was awakened by the Sikh martyrs. This very heroic spirit helped them in creating a new society with new ideology.

In the end it can be safely said that there are always some persons who uphold history, society and higher values of life. There is no shortage of such men in history. People of different origins and of different lands have produced such martyrs who sacrificed their lives for one or the other cause. If evil has enough strength, the people who commit themselves to face it are also there with more strength to root it out. History of mankind is full of events where evil in its crudest form was challenged by the noble people and ultimately was overpowered by them. Such people are the pillars of society which save it from disintegration and they emanate the spirit that moves the history ahead.

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