

Heroism, vigour, firmness, resourcefulness, not flying from battle, generosity and lordliness are the duties of the *Kshatriyas* born of their own nature. 43

In the scale of spiritual evolution the *Kshatriya* comes next to the *Brāhmaṇa*. While the topmost man is the embodiment of divinity, the second best man is the embodiment of dharma. While the *Brahma rishi* gives all attention to the godliness in man, the *Rāja rishi* pays all attention to the manliness in man. It is only after being an ideal man that one becomes a god-man. The ideal man is found in the *Kshatriya*, who is devoted to putting the earthly life of man in perfect order. The literal meaning of the word *Kshatriya* is he who always protects others from hurt and injury क्षतात् त्रायते *Kṣatāt trāyate*. The *Kshatriya* has dedicated his body for the good of the world. While in that noble endeavour his body may be hurt or may even be destroyed. The destruction of the body is no loss to him; but reconciliation with *adharma* is the worst loss that he sustains. Bhishma's life illustrates the relative value that a *Kshatriya* gives to his bodily existence and to his frame of mind. While his body was being hurt to the core, his mind remained pinned to the ideal. All the spiritually evolving souls require to be processed in the *Kshatriya* mould before they can aspire to the *Brāhmaṇa* mould. The intensity of the training may vary but the process cannot be avoided.

Just as the farmer is obliged to eradicate the pest that attacks his crop, the *Kshatriya* is in duty