



Guru Atma Ek Diksha

Nearly five thousand years ago a tribe used to live in the forests of **Hastinapura**. The chief of the tribe had a son named **Eklavya**. He was loved by everyone in the clan. However, there was a time when he was extremely sad with his life. His father saw that something troubled his son, Eklavya. More than once he found his son lost deep in thought when other boys enjoyed the pleasures of hunting and playing. One day the father asked his son, **"Why are you so unhappy, son? Why don't you join your friends? Why are you not interested in hunting?"**

"Father, I want to be an archer" replied Eklavya, **"I want to become a disciple of the great Dronacharya, the great tutor of Archery in Hastinapura. His Gurukul is a magical place where ordinary boys are turned into mighty warriors."** Eklavya saw

his father was silent. He continued, **"Father, I know that we belong to the hunting tribe, but I want to be a warrior, father, not a mere hunter. So please allow me to leave home and become the disciple of Dronacharya."**

Eklavya's father was troubled, for he knew that his son's ambition was not an easy one. The chief was a loving father and he did not want to refuse his only son's wish. So he gave his blessings and sent his son on his way to Drona's Gurukul. Soon Eklavya reached the part of the forest where Drona taught the princes of Hastinapur.

When the boy reached Dronacharya's Gurukul, he saw that it consisted of a group of huts, surrounded by trees and an archery yard. The disciples were practicing to shoot arrows with their bows and arrows in the yard. It was an engaging sight. But Eklavya's eyes impatiently

searched his Guru, Dronacharya. Where was he? Will he be able to see the man? Without Drona, all his purpose of coming here would be meaningless. But all his worries soon subsided. He didn't have to wait for long. There was the man standing near a tree busy instructing a boy, who was none else than the third Pandava prince Arjuna. Though Eklavya had never seen Drona before, he put his guess at work. He went near Drona and bowed.

The sage was surprised to see a strange boy addressing him. **"Who are you?"** he asked.

"Gurudev, I am Eklavya, son of the tribal chief in the western part of the forests of Hastinapura. Please accept me as your disciple and teach me the wonderful art of Archery.", Eklavya replied.

Drona sighed. **"Eklavya, if you are a tribal hunter, you must be a Shudra, the lowest social community according to the Vedic Caste System. I am a Brahmin, the highest caste in the kingdom. I cannot teach a Shudra boy."**

"And he's also a Royal teacher," interrupted Arjuna. **"Our Guru has been appointed by the King to train us, the princess and the highborn. How dare you even come inside the Gurukul and seek him? Leave right now!"** Arjuna considered this action of Eklavya as a disturbance.

Eklavya was stunned at Arjuna's behavior. He looked at Drona for some kind of support, but the sage remained silent. The message was loud and clear. Dronacharya also wanted him to leave, he refused to teach him. The innocent tribal boy was deeply hurt by Drona's refusal.

He left the place with a broken heart and a bitter taste in his mouth. But it could not shatter his ambition to learn archery. He was still determined to learn archery. **"I may belong to a lower caste but does it make any difference. I am as strong and hardworking as Drona's princes and disciples. If I practice the art every day I will surely become an archer."**

Eklavya came back to his forests and prepared a statue of Dronacharya with mud and selected a secluded place in the forests for practice. Eklavya did this because he faithfully believed that if he practiced before his Guru, he would become an able archer. Thus he will hold him in high esteem and worship him as his Guru.

Day after day, he took his bow and arrows, worshipped the statue of Drona as the

first thing and then started the practice. With full devotion and dedication, Eklavya got transformed from being a mere tribal hunter into the extraordinary archer. Eklavya became an archer of exceptional talent, much superior to Drona's best pupil, Arjuna.

One day while Eklavya was practicing, he heard barking of a dog. At first the boy ignored the dog, but continuous disturbance in his practice enraged him. He stopped his practice and went towards the place where the dog was barking. Before the dog could shut up or get out of the way, Eklavya fired seven arrows in rapid succession to fill the dog's mouth without injuring it. As a result it roamed the forests with its mouth opened.

But Eklavya was not alone in his practice. He was unaware of the fact that just some distance away, the **Pandava princes** were also present in that area of the forest. As fate would have it, that day, they had come with their teacher, Drona, who was instructing them about some finer details of archery by making them learn in the real-life condition of the open jungle.

As they were busy practicing, they suddenly looked at the poor dog and wondered who could have pulled off such a great show of archery. Drona was amazed too. **"Such an excellent aim can only come from a mighty archer."** he exclaimed. He told his disciples that if somebody has such great skills then such a person must be visited. The practice was stopped and together they began searching the forest for the one behind such great deed. Soon they reached at the place where Eklavya was practicing.

"Your aim is truly remarkable!" Drona praised Eklavya, and asked "Who is your Guru?"

Eklavya was thrilled to be praised by his own Guru. How much will he be delighted to know that he himself is his Guru!

"From you only Gurudev!" Eklavya replied humbly.

"Me? How can I be your Guru? You have never lived in my hermitage!" Drona exclaimed in surprise. But all of a sudden he remembered something. He remembered about an eager boy who had visited his Gurukul several months ago. **"Now I remember," said he. "Are you not the same hunter boy whom I refused admission in my Gurukul some months back?"**

"Yes, Gurudev! After I left you, I came

here and made your statue, worshipped it daily prior to the practice and practiced before your idol. You physically refused to teach me, but your statue did not."

Hearing this, Arjuna became immensely angry. **"But you promised me that you'd make me the best archer in the world!"** he accused Drona. "Now how can that be? A common hunter has become better than me!"

The other princes remembered their master frequently praising Arjuna that he had immense talent and will be the greatest archer in the entire world. They waited to see how their teacher will react now? Unable to answer Arjuna's question, Drona remained silent. The sage too was upset that his promise to Prince Arjuna was not going to be fulfilled.

The sage then said, "If I am your Guru and you have obtained knowledge from me, where is your **Guru dakshina**?" the sage demanded.

Eklavya was overjoyed. Giving Guru dakshina meant that finally Dronacharya has accepted him as his disciple. **"Gurudev, I'll be the happiest person on earth to serve you. Ask me anything and I will offer it to you as my Guru dhakshina "** he said.

"If I ask for something, hopefully you will not refuse. What if you refuse the dhakshina I want?" Dronacharya asked.

Eklavya was shocked. It was considered a grave insult and a great sin if a Guru's dakshina was refused. "No Gurudev! Don't doubt me. I am not that ungrateful. I'll never refuse anything you ask," promised the disciple.

Drona did not wait anymore. **"Eklavya, I seek to have your right-hand thumb as my Guru dhakshina "** he declared.

Silence befell on everyone. Everyone was shocked, even Arjuna. He looked at his teacher in horror and disbelief. How could their teacher make such a cruel demand? That too, from a mere boy?

And without wasting even a moment and without the slightest hesitation, Eklavya drew out his knife and cut his thumb! He didn't even think that without his thumb he could never shoot arrows again. He took the cut thumb in his palm and prayed to Dronacharya, "Gurudev, why did you waste so much time for such a small thing. Had you even asked for my head, I would have happily cut it and put it down in your holy

feet. "Here is my Guru dakshina, Gurudev. I am happy that you have made me your disciple irrespective of the fact that I am a mere hunter."

The sage was humbled. He blessed the young archer for his courage. **"Eklavya, even without your thumb, you'll be known as a great archer. I bless you that you will be remembered forever for your loyalty towards your Guru,"** Drona declared and left the forests. He was moved and grieved at his own action.

Though it appears that Dronacharya did injustice to Eklavya, actually Dronacharya is the reason why Eklavya found a place in Mahabharata. It was Dronacharya who made a mere hunter to become a standard for his disciples. After learning all these great skills, all that Eklavya could have done was to just hunt and would have wasted his skills. However, Dronacharya blessed Eklavya with immortality by asking him for his thumb. So when people think of devotion, they think of Eklavya, and not Arjuna.

That is the greatness of a Guru. Just like Dronacharya who took the blame on him and uplifted his disciple, even a SadGuru does the same. He might take away the most loved thing from us, but in turn grants greatness in life. We as a disciple might think that the Guru is selfish, but a true disciples never doubts his Guru.

The crux of the above story is that a true disciple can learn even the most difficult to attain knowledge from the Guru by means of his devotion. As Dronacharya was physically bound to teach the princes only, he couldn't have accepted Eklavya as a disciple in his hermitage. However, his soul was not bound to follow this restriction. So, he used to instruct the secrets of archery by means of that idol which Eklavya used to worship daily. What Eklavya attained in life was by means of **Guru Atma Ek Diksha**. By means of this diksha, Eklavya was able to create a bond with Dronacharya's soul and was thus able to become a true disciple.

All those who wish to make a mark in the history, it is mandatory to create a link with Guru, to create a place in your Guru's heart. All this can be possible by means of this divine diksha. Guru is the epicenter of all the **Siddhis**. What can then remain unattainable in life when there is a strong bond between the **Guru** and the **disciple**?