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## **Teachers**

Naturally people can truly learn from teachers. Not in all cases do the students learn exactly what the teacher is intending to teach, but it is possible for someone to learn something. Even Siddhartha himself has learned something from each of the teachers he has had; both with the Samanas and Buddha, he took something away from the interaction and changed his life based on what he learned. For example, after spending three years with the Samanas, Siddhartha realised that he would not reach enlightenment, the same as the eldest Samana had not reached enlightenment. He learned from this experience; not what they Samanas were trying to teach, but regarding the material the Samanas dealt with. The same happened with Buddha: he listened to Buddha's teachings, contemplated it, and learned valuable lessons about himself and his path to enlightenment. He chose not to follow Buddha's path, but he still learned a great deal from him.

The fundamental requirement of learning is interaction with the teacher. At minimum, one needs to contemplate the material the teacher is conveying; otherwise one is completely cut off and will not learn anything from any teacher. The teacher is doing nothing more than introducing one to the topic; to contemplate the material is to hopefully learn something from it; if not, one would not have learned anything no matter how they came across it.

Learning does not require one agrees with their teacher; instead it requires an understanding of the material. Simply regurgitating what one's teacher has presented is not learning at all; it is simply rote memorisation and is not a mark of intelligence. (It is also becoming less useful in the "Information Age", where facts and data are very easily accessible, and analysis and understanding play a much greater role in learning and application.)

Of course, certain people are more inclined to learn from teachers, or in an academic environment. Others may be more apt to learn in a one-on-one setting, such as from a counselor or while doing graduate work with a professor. Yet others may prefer to work and learn completely on their own, selecting their own materials and going at their own pace. However, all of these involve teachers in one degree or another. At first, the "independent learner" type that learns by reading and doing at their own pace seems to lack a teacher, but they are really just using their books or other learning materials as teachers. For example, in Siddhartha, the ferryman remarks that the river has taught him many things about life; the river is obviously not a person, but to the ferryman, it was a teacher.

Everyone learns from teachers. To not do so in one manner or another is to remove contact and contemplation; and in doing so voids the situation. Siddhartha's claims that he can not learn from teachers, and only from himself are overgeneralisations and misleading.