

Samsara and Nirvana

Is your life totally peaceful with no cravings, no annoyances or no stress? Or is your life full of wants or desires, demands and stress? Most individuals I know have some sort of stress in their life. I don't believe that I know anyone here who understands completely about everything in their life or the world. Not being totally peaceful and having suffering in one's life is considered *dukkha*. Nirvana is a state of mind or one's life that doesn't have any *dukkha* in it and are able to have a clear understanding about life. Only a few people are able to reach nirvana and maintain nirvana for their entire lives. Samsara is the state of mind or lifestyle that most people have. It is the constant life cycle of having small understandings but still having *dukkha*. Samsara contains *dukkha* and nirvana does not. That shows that samsara and nirvana are not the same thing, they are two different things. It is also necessary to experience samsara before one is able to experience nirvana. This again shows that they are two different things and separate. They do however have links between each other. There are a few ways that samsara and nirvana could be considered similar but there are more reasons why they are not.

Samsara and nirvana are linked together but are not the same thing, they are different. The first point that shows that they are different is that in order to experience nirvana one needs to experience samsara. In order to completely understand true nirvana it is needed to have experienced some *dukkha* in one's life. If it is needed to experience samsara before experiencing nirvana then that is proof that they are not the same thing. It wouldn't be necessary to have samsara if nirvana was the same thing. Nirvana and samsara are different parts of one's life. Everyone is able and capable of experiencing samsara but not everyone will reach nirvana. When one reaches nirvana there is no *dukkha* or suffering, they do not experience cravings or

thirst for anything anymore, they understand. In samsara there is *dukkha* and cravings. If nirvana doesn't have any *dukkha* and samsara does have *dukkha* then it is also obvious that they are unlike. Something cannot both have and not have something at the same time, it doesn't make sense. Therefore, samsara and nirvana are not the same thing. No one is able to be born into a life of nirvana and maintain it forever. Babies have *dukkha* in their life all the time because there is a lot of crying. Samsara is then the first step that one would have to go through to reach nirvana. If one is not able to maintain nirvana then they fall back into the continuous cycle of samsara. That again shows that they are two different things but have a link between each other.

There is one objection that could challenge that samsara and nirvana are the same thing. That is the symbolization of a lotus or water lily. A lotus floats peacefully on the top of water blooming beautifully. The flower of the lotus is a symbolization of nirvana. It is peaceful and carefree. The lotus is attached to roots that are underwater and supplying the flower. These roots are ugly and have stress on them because they are responsible to keep the flower living. The roots are a symbolization of samsara. The roots and flower makes up one thing, combined they are a lotus. The roots of the lotus are considered a lotus and the flower of the lotus are considered a lotus also. Therefore, they are the same, both a lotus. If the roots and flower were considered the same thing then samsara and nirvana would be considered the same also.

The symbolization of samsara and nirvana through a lotus is a very good one. It shows the responsibilities that each one has. It also shows that the roots are needed for the flower or in other words, samsara is needed for nirvana. The roots provide the flower with what is needed for it to exist. Samsara provides *dukkha* in one's life which is needed for nirvana to exist. The roots have a life with *dukkha* in it and the flower has no *dukkha* in its life. How can one thing have

both *dukkha* and not have *dukkha* in it at the same time, it's impossible. Also it shows that they are two different parts of the lotus. They are like two different parts of one's life. They aren't the same part so they aren't the same thing. They are linked together in life because they rely on each other and the lotus is a good example of showing that. The two parts of the lotus are clearly identifiable along with samsara and nirvana. Therefore, they are not the same thing, they are different.

As stated in this paper, samsara and nirvana are not the same thing. They each have their own responsibilities and purposes. Without samsara nirvana would never exist for anyone. Samsara also has *dukkha* in it and nirvana does not have any *dukkha*. Samsara and nirvana are different states of mind or parts of one's life. There are connections that link the two together but they are still their own separate thing. The connection is symbolized in a lotus. There are two parts of a lotus that makes it one thing. The roots are one part or samsara and the flower is the other part or nirvana. Together they make up one's life. Samsara and nirvana are not the same, they are different.