

## **We're all the Same; We're Each Unique**

James Lynn Smith

(16 minutes, four readers unless the narrator reads for Cloud)

1. Narrator, 2. Janet, 3. Marcie, 4. Cloud

**Narrator:** An elderly author visited a small college town for what may have been his last speaking tour. After a seminar at the college auditorium, he quietly escaped and found his way to a Starbucks across town. Two ladies who kept up with college events that were open to the public saw him go in. One called Janet suggested they go in and have coffee. They entered, ordered and picked up their coffee and looked over the tables.

**Janet:** Marcie, I think that is Steven Cloud, the author we were talking about at the book club last week. He has written something about unity of consciousness. I didn't hear it, but I seem to remember he was going to speak at the college earlier today.

**Marcie:** Oh that subject is confusing. In our discussion, some were saying we are all unique in consciousness but at the same time others were saying that underneath we are all the same. It didn't make any sense at all.

**Janet:** I agree. I think we should introduce ourselves and ask him what he thinks.

**Marcie:** Yeah, let's just walk up to Mister Famous and say "Hey, we want you to settle this dispute about ultimate purpose for us two dipsy darlings."

Janet: We are *not* dippy, whatever that is.

Marcie: But he would think so. I don't look like I'm kin to Einstein, and he probably wants to escape us commoners anyhow. He would think we're *way* out of our league.

Janet: Well I think we should sit at that table next to him and introduce ourselves.

Marcie: You introduce yourself. Leave me out of it.

Janet: Okay. Here we are. ... Darn, these tables are small.

Marcie: Uh huh, but the coffee is good.

Janet: Yes. It's good.

Marcie: Well... what are you waiting for? See. You don't want to do it.

Janet: I just got seated, for peat's sake.

Marcie: It's okay. Just as well. My feet need a rest anyhow.

Janet: Here goes....Oh Sir. Sir?

Cloud: Hmm? Are you addressing me?

Janet: Yes sir, aren't you Steven Cloud?

Cloud: Well yes. I guess I am. Do I know you?

Marcie: (Aside) See? The snub begins now.

Janet: No sir, not exactly, but I am Janet Browning and this is my friend Marcie. I read your book on consciousness back in college days. Our book club was discussing that subject last week and your name came up.

Marcie: (Aside) I think he has a very weary look. He'll probably evade us by going to sleep in his coffee cup.

Cloud: Oh, is that so? Well, it's a pleasure to meet you ladies.

Marcie: Huh?

Janet: Do you write about or discuss that subject anymore?

Cloud: Hmm. It doesn't come up as often, but the words I used are everyday language now.

Janet: You mean people are more informed about consciousness than they used to be?

Cloud: In what particular?

Janet: Well the idea that we are all unique in mind and yet we are all the same at

some level.

Cloud: (Soft chuckle) Actually, people who discuss that subject, even so-called experts, generally don't have the foggiest idea of what they are talking about.

Janet: Wha-?

Marcie: Huh?

Cloud: Do you see through my eyes? Hear with my ears, remember what I remember, sit were I sit?

Janet: Well, no. Uh...

Cloud: Then how in blue blazes can I not be unique and different from you – and you from me?

Janet: Sure. Uh. We are different. But I thought you wrote about a collective consciousness or something.

Cloud: Tell me, do you *get it* when the smartest people you know talk about this subject?

Janet: Actually I do...not.

Cloud: Well that's honest. It's as I expected.

Marcie: (Mumbling) Yeah, us bird brains have just exposed our tattered bloomers.

Cloud: (Chuckle) I was just yanking your chain, ladies. It was my little test to see if we could have an honest discussion. Someone who *pretends* to be sophisticated and knowledgeable is about as receptive to understanding as a stone wall.

Janet: Then you don't mind explaining this to me ... us?

Cloud: Most people who use the word "consciousness" are talking about attitudes, beliefs and social mores. I was referring to something much more fundamental.

Janet: Oh? What then?

Cloud: This is going to take a little time. Are you in a hurry?

Janet: No. We have an hour, don't we Marcie?

Marcie: Duh...

Cloud: Well, it won't sink in an hour, but we can touch on some basics for you to think about. Are you familiar with eastern thought at all. Some Hinduism?

Janet: Brahma is the highest God. Brahma is part of a triad with Vishnu and Shiva.

Cloud: You remember your religious history.

Janet: It was philosophy class.

Marcie: (Chuckle) Yeah, she met a really cute instructor and signed up for his class. She didn't even know how to spell philosophy, much less what it meant.

Janet: But it turned out to be great! At least I learned to question without embarrassment. Is the answer in Hinduism?

Cloud: Not especially. My reference to Hinduism is only because of a central idea it has. And that is that Brahma *is* the universe and the source of all that is. Since awareness or consciousness is a part (if not all) of the universe, everything and every creature is a part of God. Brahma is too abstract and too immense a God to be comprehended, so there are lower gods and personal incarnations like Krishna that people relate to. They are all facets of the one God.

Janet: I hear that but I don't really understand it in a gut-level way.

Marcie: I was lost at "Brahma", I thought that was a hump-back cow.

Cloud: (With good humor) Well Janet, let's see if we can get your guts to understand. Imagine a box. Let's put some measures on it, starting from the back left corner. Let's call that point the origin. Now let's move forward from the origin along the box edge and call that "Mo". Let's move from the origin along the upward edge and call that "Curley". Then let's

move from the origin along the sideways edge and call that “Larry”. So Mo is forward, Curley is up and Larry is sideways. Let’s say these directions represent these guy’s minds. If you follow Mo’s thoughts with your finger, you move it to and fro along the forward direction. Okay?

Janet: Got it. Mo thinks forward.

Cloud: More than that, Mo’s consciousness is confined to forward and back. His entire universe is there. Now as you move your finger along Mo’s mind, do you make any progress in Curley’s mind?

Janet: No. It is completely separate. There is no way moving forward or backward can make you progress upward. Mo and Curley can never see the world the same way. Their minds are unique.

Cloud: Ah. You get it. Their minds are one-dimensional but in different directions. Mo, Curley and Larry have different dimensions of awareness, X, Y and Z. They can never be the same. They are unique.

Janet: And where my *finger* is along any one direction represents a thought in one of these guys?

Cloud: You learn fast. But what is awareness? Is it a thought?

Janet: Maybe not. Would you say the *awareness*, the inner mind, is the direction or dimension *itself*? The thought has to be the *position* of my finger in that dimension. Thought is something inside awareness.

Cloud: Brava again.

Marcie: Well I always *thought* the stooges were kind of one-dimensional. X clashes with Y and sticks a finger in Z's eye.

Janet: But back to the idea of *one* consciousness for *all* these guys. How can your box example explain that?

Cloud: Is there any way you can move fingers along Mo, Curley and Larry and be at the same place?

Janet: Uh. Mmm. Oh, at the origin! The back left corner of the box. There, all the edges or directions, come to the same point.

Cloud: And what might that origin point represent in human life?

Janet: Well, I'm not sure .... Could it be ....

Cloud: A hint. What does the position of your finger represent?

Janet: A thought. The farther I am from the origin the more Mo thinks differently from Curley and Larry. The origin represents no thought? No consciousness?

Cloud: In my humble opinion, it represents a still mind. A meditative mind. When you give up all thoughts and concerns that make you unique, the



consciousness that remains is the same as that of everyone else.

Marcie: But how do you know? If you are not thinking, aren't you asleep?

Cloud: Not necessarily. Krishnamurti claimed he could become perfectly aware of no thoughts at all, just aware of the energy of *being*. Even if Mo were in a dreamless sleep, he might be aware of *being*. Remember, the *brain* will not record anything when it is in the deepest level of sleep. When Mo wakes up, his everyday mind has no recollection of the awareness of being that he experienced.

Janet: Why is it supposed to be good to meditate deeply?

Cloud: It isn't. Unless one goes into it to dissolve troublesome thoughts or for renewal and spiritual growth.

Marcie: (Aside) I am having troublesome thoughts right now. My rump feels like a growth on this hard chair.

Janet: How can this growth take place if the meditating mind or awareness goes to the origin? Even though the minds are the same there, nothing is happening.

Cloud: But maybe something is happening. Some exchange. I must remind you that all models have their logical limitations. What can transpire at the origin is another subject altogether. I am just telling you enough to get across the idea of being different and being the same. ... Is there anything

else? ... I see a question in your face.

Janet: Just this. Where does God fit into all this? Where is God if all these dimensions are separate except for one small point?

Cloud: You know what pantheism is? God is everything and everything is God? God is all creatures. Not just a *collection* of separate things, but actually *them*. God *is* the mind of all minds.

Janet: Ah ...Oh! All the dimensions together is the whole box.

Cloud: Right. The box god is not just a collection of forward, up and sideways. It *is* a higher dimension we call *volume*: X times Y times Z. Mo, Curley and Larry are lower dimensions of the box god. There is only one volume being, but three one-dimensional beings. Children of the volume, you might say. You can carry this simple example onward to more complex scenarios. Millions of dimensions.

Marcie: My dimensions are expanding as I drink this coffee. On the other hand, this whole line of conversation just wrings me out.

Cloud: I'm sorry. Should I call for a mop?

Marcie: Eeeyew. Now he's going to finish me off. All my brain wants to do is watch this Mo, Curly and Larry butt heads and poke eyes. ... My mind is *already* one-dimensional.

Janet: Marcie, you are not the dummy you pretend.

Marcie: I went to college to find Mister Right. You were Alpha Chi Whatsit material, and your mind could straighten out a mobius strip.

Cloud: Well Janet, how do you feel about the question now?

Janet: I feel better in having an example that makes some sense logically. But I still need some kind of personal concept to get that gut level feeling.

Cloud: Okay, there is more we can say. Did you know the box example applies to *you*. You, yourself, are a god of lesser dimensional beings? Do you know them? Can you call them by name?

Marcie: (Aside) Now this is getting weird. My friend is a goddess with kid beings. Like she has been lying around with Zeus or something.

Janet: I don't understand. I don't think I can.

Cloud: Sure you can. These children of the mind are your senses of vision, taste, hearing, tactile feeling and smell. Can you deny that these fundamental perceptions are in awareness?

Janet: Well, no. That's how I *am* aware. Everything comes in those ... perceptions.

Cloud: Can any effort to *hear* taste sweet? Can effort to *see* feel like satin?

- Janet: Not at all. Oh, I see. These are different dimensions of awareness in me. Taste can never “know” sight. Feeling can never “know” vision. They are unique *beings*, in a sense.
- Cloud: Correct. But you are the god of those dimensions. You know and feel them all because you have a higher dimensional awareness. So an even higher God, the Allness, can directly sense each person in humanity. Each awareness is unique and distinct to the All. And there is no way of *not* being a part of it.
- Marcie: I am altogether alled-out on this. ... But ... actually, it’s beginning to make a little sense. Even for me.
- Janet: And when I am perfectly quiet and at rest, all my senses may sort of relax to the same place in my mind, and become one with each other?
- Cloud: Yes. But even when they are busy with their various functions, they are still one in *you*. So now you see how we can all be different, but in the Allness, we are one.
- Janet: It makes a lot more sense to my head and my gut both now. Is this the way it really *is*, or just a model?
- Cloud: All logical understanding is just a model. We use analogies. I am not a theologian. I’ve just used reason and personal awareness over a long period to reach conclusions about a possibility. Further study told me I am

not by any means the only one to do this. My *description* may be a bit unique; that's all...Ladies, I'm going to have to leave now. It has been a pleasure talking to you.

Janet: I've enjoyed meeting you. I hope your trip back goes well.

Marcie: Yeah, thanks. You've given me a lot to think about too. (Aside) That's unfortunate because I don't handle "smart" very well. It makes my brain hurt.

Janet: Well Marcie, that was refreshing. I think I am going to journal this meeting before I forget.

Marcie: *I'd* better forget before I *journal*, or I'll be afraid to step on a bug...If it's a part of the Allness, it might meet me again in meditation...This whole idea is kind of scary.

Janet: It's both comforting and scary. It depends on where you're taking your life. ... You know. I think I am going to audit some of those continuing education classes on philosophy and spirituality that the University offers. Come on and join me. We can be the Dipsy Dames duo and dabble in dubious discourse about devas and deities.

Marcie: Oh please! Ease off on the absurd alliteration, already. .... Yeah ... count me in too, Janet.

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