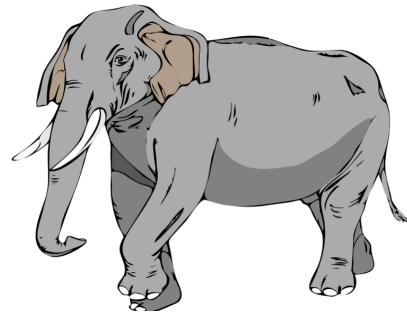


## The Blind Men and the Elephant

John Godfrey Saxe



There were six men of Hindustan,  
to learning much inclined,  
Who went to see an elephant,  
though all of them were blind,  
That each by observation  
might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant,  
and happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
at once began to bawl,  
"This mystery of an elephant  
is very like a wall."

The second, feeling of the tusk,  
cried, "Ho, what have we here,  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear,  
This wonder of an elephant  
is very like a spear."

The third approached the elephant,  
and happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
thus boldly up and spake,  
"I see," quoth he,  
"the elephant is very like a snake."

The fourth reached out an eager hand,  
and felt above the knee,  
"What this most wondrous beast  
is like is very plain" said he,  
" 'Tis clear enough the elephant  
is very like a tree."

The fifth who chanced to touch the ear  
said, "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
deny the fact who can;  
This marvel of an elephant  
is very like a fan."

The sixth no sooner had begun  
about the beast to grope,  
Than seizing on the swinging tail  
that fell within his scope;  
"I see," said he, "the elephant  
is very like a rope."

So six blind men of Hindustan  
disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
exceeding stiff and strong;  
Though each was partly in the right,  
they all were in the wrong!

*Now what's interesting is that there's actually a final verse which is sometimes left out, perhaps because it takes away from the wonderful broad applicability of the poem. But in fairness to Saxe, here it is:*

Moral:

So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!