

# The Blind Men and the Elephant

Natalie Merchant

Six men of Hindustan  
To learning much inclined  
went to see the Elephant  
Though all of them were blind  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind  
Satisfy his mind, satisfy his mind  
Six men of Hindustan  
To learning much inclined

Well the First approached the Elephant  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side  
At once began to bawl  
"God bless me!  
But this Elephant is very like a wall!"

And 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!"

All of them were blind  
All of them were blind  
Six men of Hindustan  
To learning much inclined

The Third approached the animal  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands  
Thus boldly up his spake  
"I see," quoth he  
"The Elephant is very like a snake!"

Then the Fourth reached out an eager hand  
and felt about the knee  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant is very like a tree!"

And the Fifth who chanced to touch the ear  
Said: "Even the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most  
Deny the fact who can  
This marvel of an Elephant is very like a fan!"

And the Sixth no sooner had begun  
about the beast to grope  
Seizing on the swinging tail  
that fell within his scope  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant is very like a rope!"

All of them were blind  
All of them were blind  
Six men of Hindustan  
To learning much inclined

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And so these men of Hindustan  
Disputed loud and long  
Each in his opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong  
Each was partly in the right  
but all were in the wrong

So often 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!