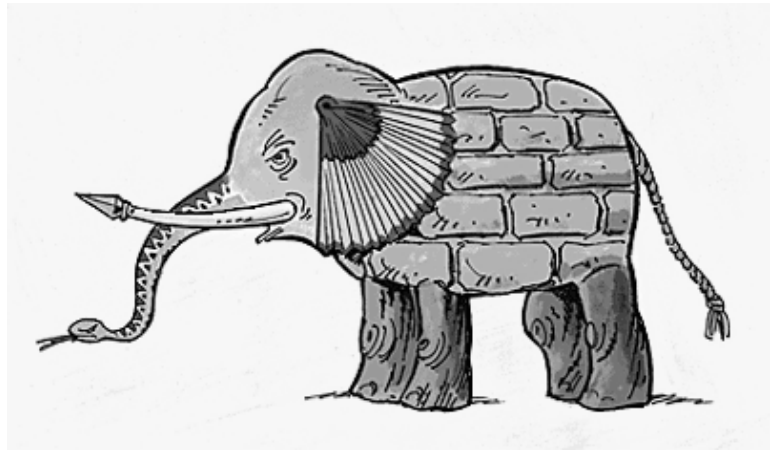


The Telly and the Elephant

Six TV crews jumped all the queues to film it for the news. Each camera shot the elephant; each sent back different views. Meanwhile the elephant herself was totally bemused.....



On Channel 1 the SIDE was shown. The man began to draw: "It's wrinkly, grey and flat and big, and vertical and tall.

You see," said he "The elephant is just a concrete WALL."

When Channel 2 came into view, TUSK pictures were quite clear, It glinted, sharp, still, long and white. "Like ivory, my dear, You see," said she, "The elephant is an exquisite SPEAR."

On Channel 3 the TRUNK swayed free; a curl, a wave, a shake. It wriggled, twisted, dance in air. "It's lively, no mistake, You see" said he, "The elephant is a long fat wriggly SNAKE."

On Channel 4, the huge LEG bore resemblance, you could see, to something sturdy, broad an tall, set in the earth, said she: "It's obvious the elephant's another kind of TREE."

On Channel 5, the EAR shown live. From an excited man: "It flaps, it's flat, it's just like that, it's thin, it flies, it can! To me", said he "The elephant's a frisky, fancy, FAN."

On Channel 6 the TAIL pix. We saw the newsman grope. It hung, it swung, quite long and strong. !It's clear to any dope – this creature called an elephant is nothing but a ROPE."

People tuned to different channels argue loud and long – though none has seen an elephant, each holds one view so strong, and each is partly in the right, but all are in the wrong.

This poem was written in 1993 for One World Week. It is a modern version of the famous Hindu story "The blind men and the elephant" (see

<http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=baldwin&book=fifty&story=blind>)

The poem / story can be used in several different ways, but it especially points to the Hindu teaching about Brahman / God, i.e. that no human mind can come close to the whole truth about ultimate reality. Thinking about the different views the camera crews cum blind men all have of the elephant is also a helpful way of looking at the many different forms in which God is worshipped in Hinduism.