

INDIAN ART


FROM INDUS VALLEY TO INDIA TODAY

Talk 11

The synthesis of two cultures:
Indo-Islamic art



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S Swaminathan



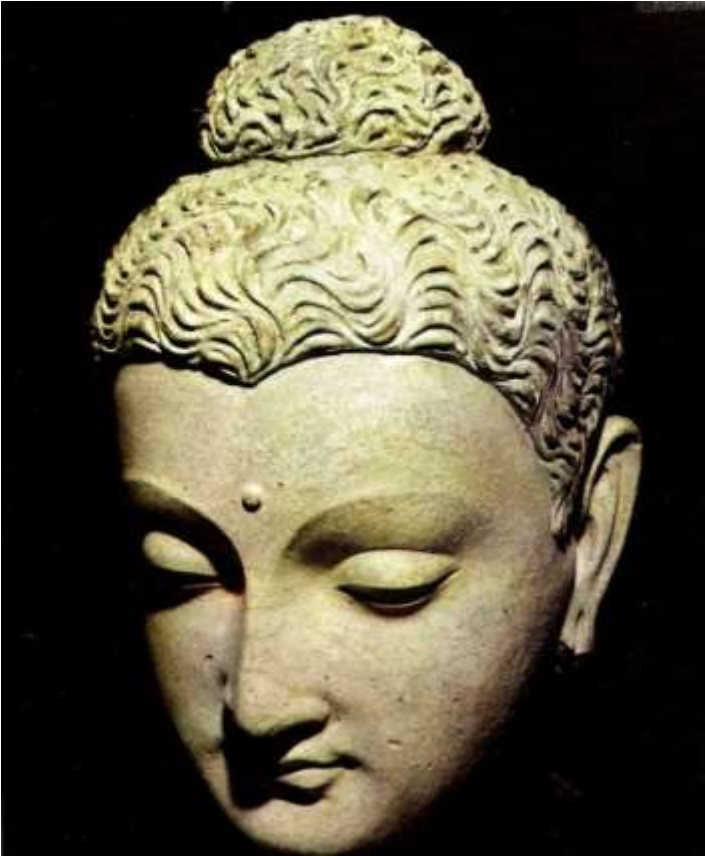
India was a great caldron
in which the traditions of the hordes that
poured across the north-western frontier were
mixed to form a culture of kaleidoscopic beauty.

The Kushans of Central Asia
Introduced new idioms
to Indian art and
gave a special touch of richness
to the indigenous traditions.



2nd century CE

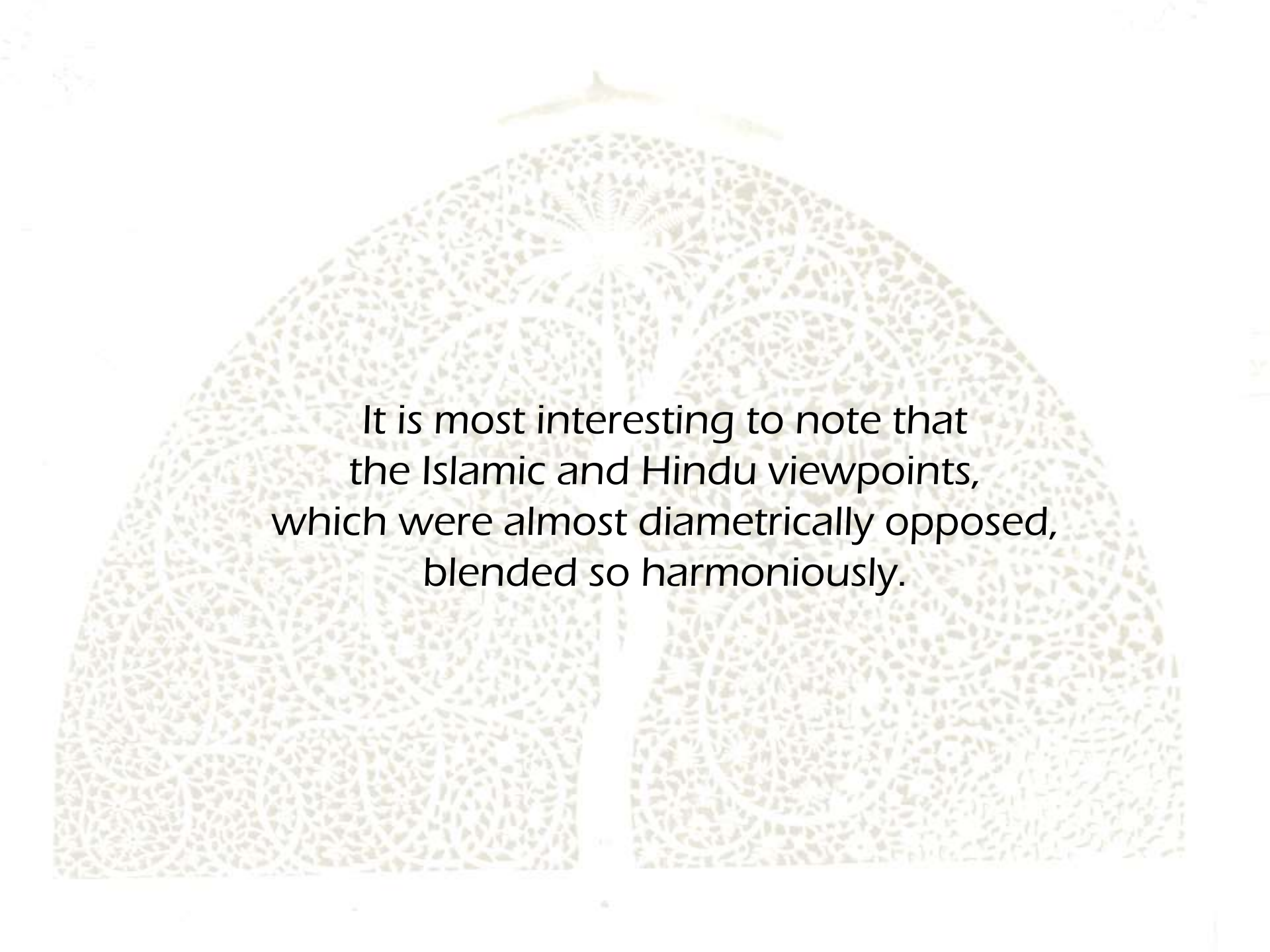
4th-5th century CE



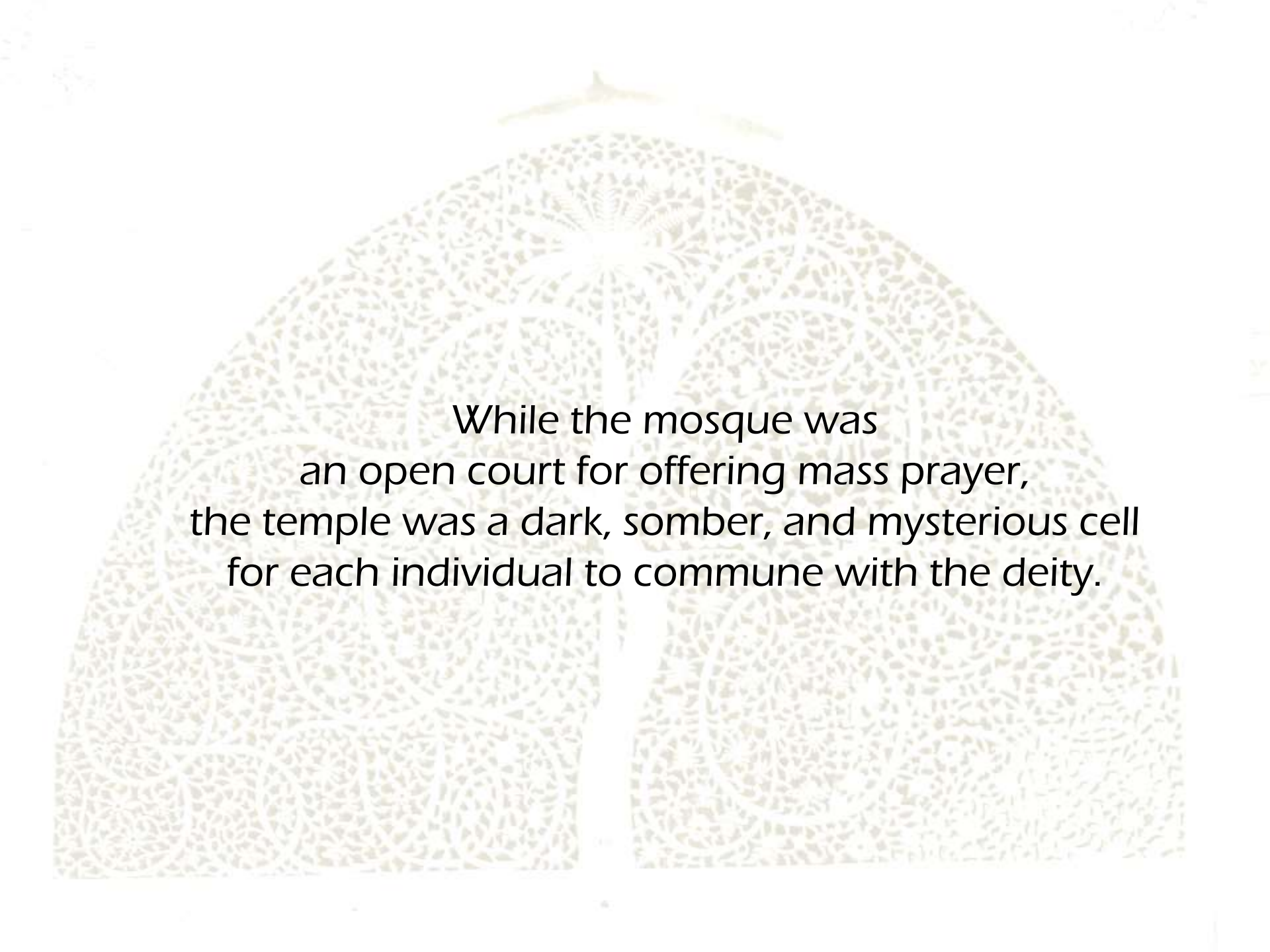
With the coming of the Greeks, a new phase of art began in the Gandhara region. Greek elements were assimilated, but the Indian themes stood out sharply.

With the arrival in India of the Muslim invaders,
Persian elements crept into Indian art and
there slowly evolved a pleasing Indo-Islamic synthesis.

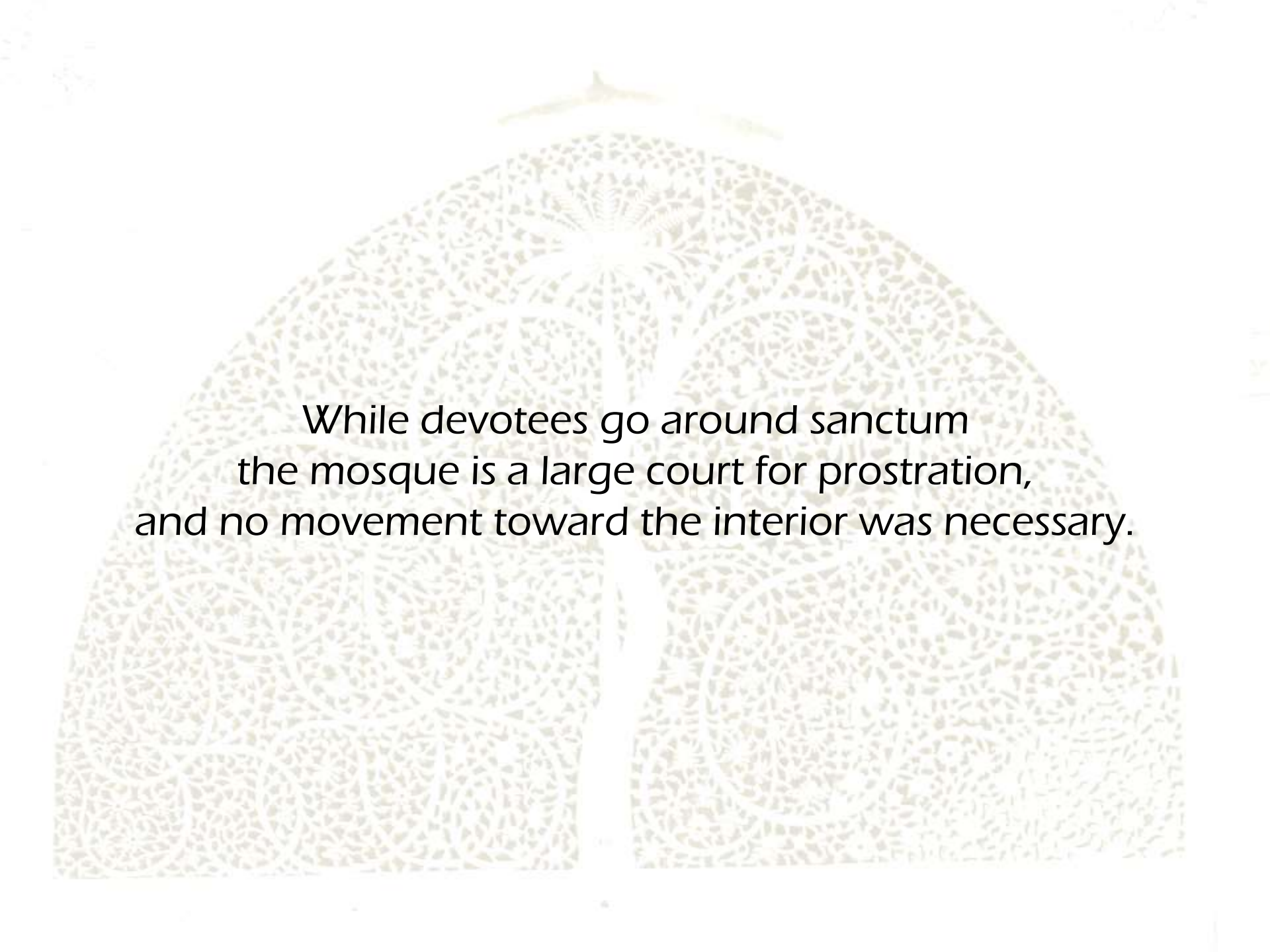
Indic & Islamic
Two differing cultures



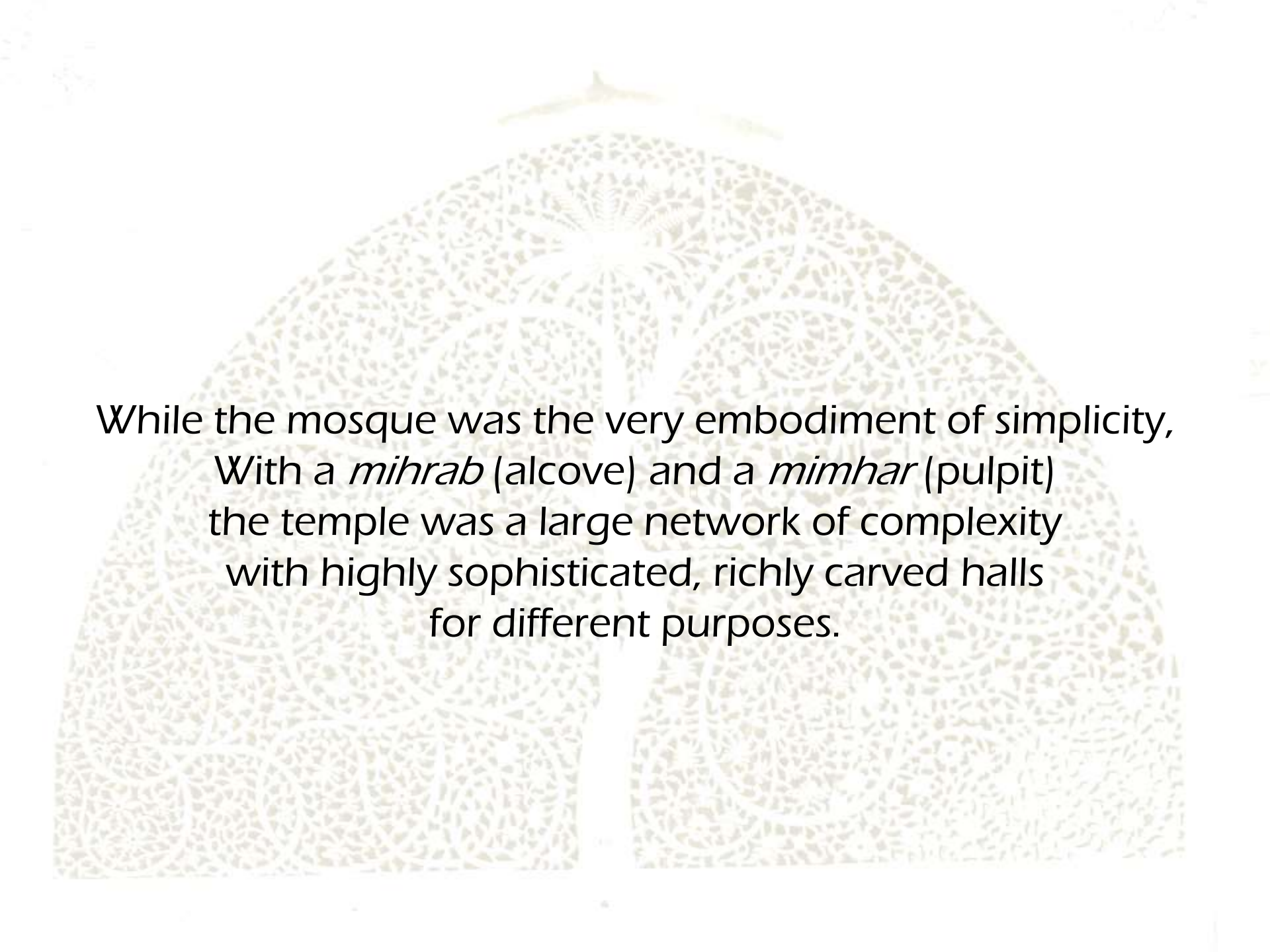
It is most interesting to note that the Islamic and Hindu viewpoints, which were almost diametrically opposed, blended so harmoniously.



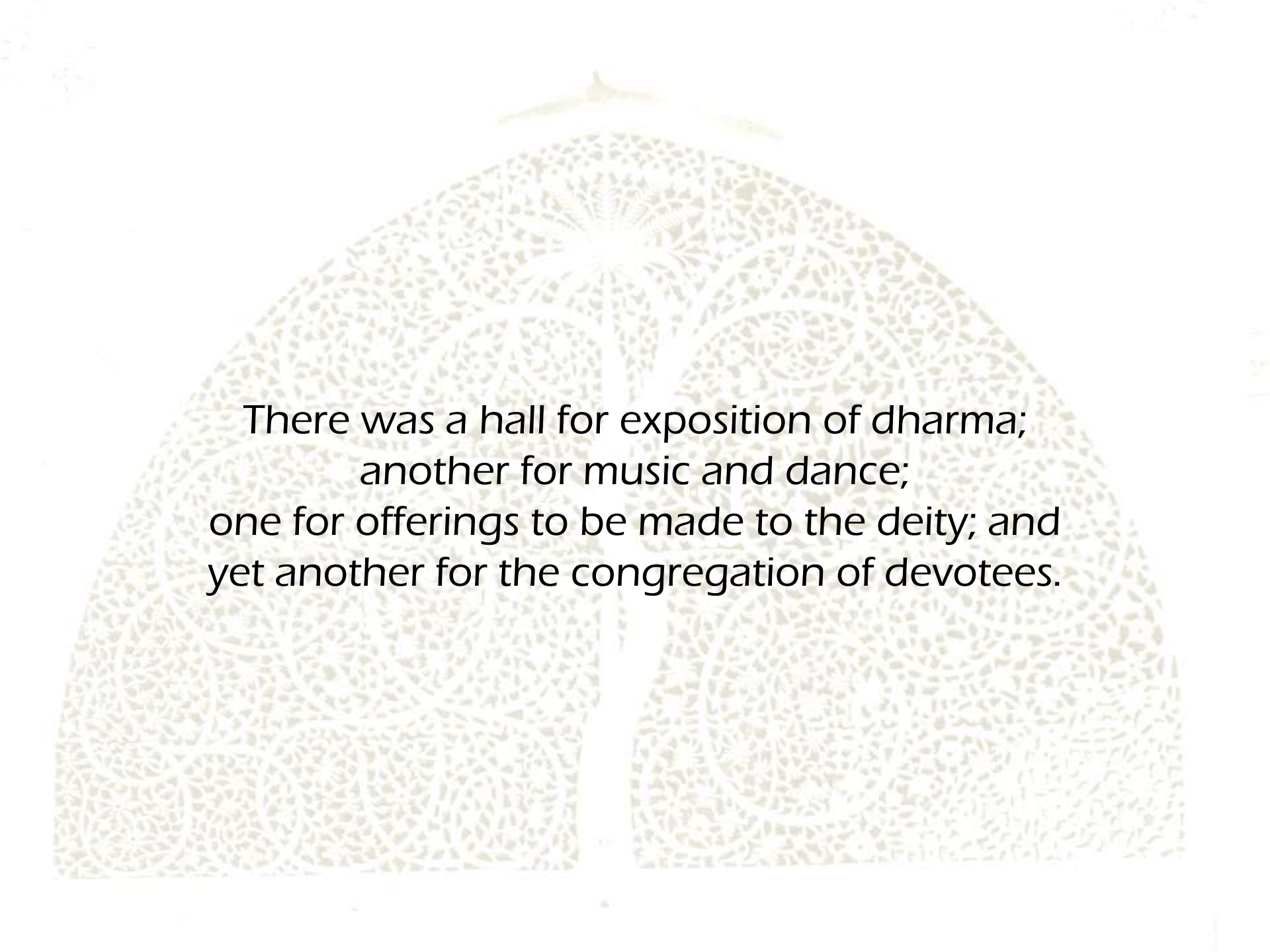
While the mosque was
an open court for offering mass prayer,
the temple was a dark, somber, and mysterious cell
for each individual to commune with the deity.



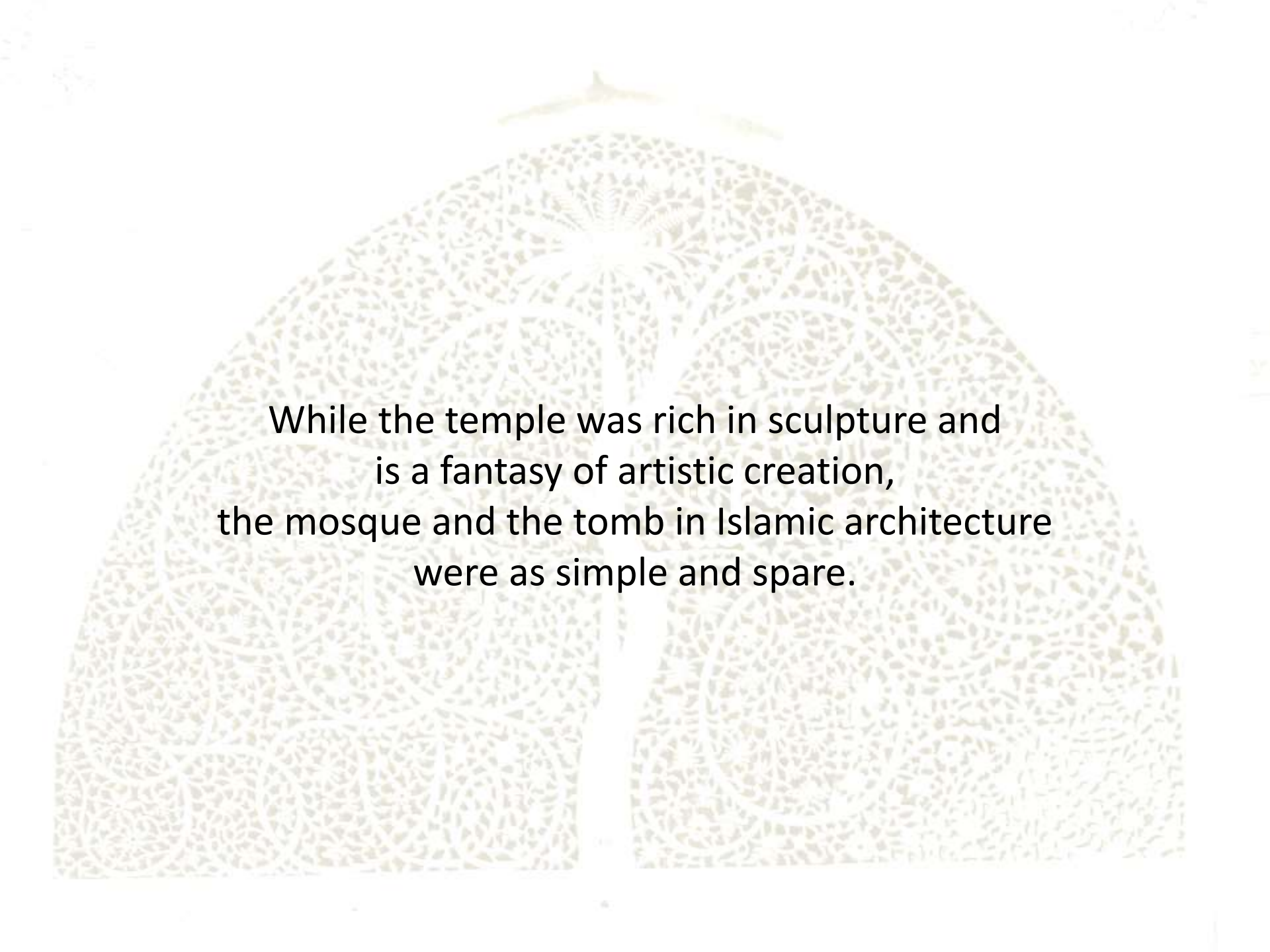
While devotees go around sanctum
the mosque is a large court for prostration,
and no movement toward the interior was necessary.



While the mosque was the very embodiment of simplicity,
With a *mihrab* (alcove) and a *mimhar* (pulpit)
the temple was a large network of complexity
with highly sophisticated, richly carved halls
for different purposes.

A decorative archway with intricate white patterns on a light background. The arch is filled with a complex, repeating geometric and floral motif. The text is centered within the arch.

There was a hall for exposition of dharma;
another for music and dance;
one for offerings to be made to the deity; and
yet another for the congregation of devotees.



While the temple was rich in sculpture and is a fantasy of artistic creation, the mosque and the tomb in Islamic architecture were as simple and spare.

Because of their religion,
the Islamic art could not represent
human or animal forms in art,
hence they concentrated on architecture,
repetitive geometrical patterns,
calligraphy and painting.





The Hindu architects adopted the principles of Islamic architecture, and the true arch, the dome, and the minaret are all Islamic forms adopted by the Indians.



The Hindu architects retained the Islamic spirit of Simplicity in these elements, but they added a fantastic richness of floral design and arabesques.

The synthesis of two civilisations
was so successful that their monuments are among
the most important Islamic structures in the world.



There are two distinct phases of Islamic architecture in India.

In the first Indian temples were razed to clear ground but the new structure utilized much of the original material.

Often whole series of old columns were used thus making the structure look rather unbalanced.



Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque in the Kutub Minar complex



In the next phase, however, the mosques and tombs were planned independently, without reference to previous structures.

These were constructed with exquisitely carved blocks, especially quarried for each project.



Other differences

*In India the temple was
the most important architectural unit.
Palaces and other secular buildings
did not receive the same careful attention.*

*In Islamic secular architecture was
given more attention for creativity
as there were no religious injunctions.*

*This was followed by Hindu royalty later.
They built palaces, mahals and forts
from the fifteenth century
elaborately and ambitiously*



The synthesis begins

In building the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in the Kutab Minar complex much of the pillared hall of the Hindu temple, which originally stood on the spot, has been utilized.



The large and noble arch, delicately carved with Islamic inscriptions and floral motifs, and the iron pillar show the Hindu element in the earliest Islamic architecture in India.



Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque in the Kutub Minar complex

The golden age

*With the advent of the Moguls a great advance
in Indo-Islamic architecture was made.
Akbar was a great builder,
founded Fatehpur Sikri (City of Victory)*





*Buland Darwaza, great arch of victory,
is probably the most imposing of its type*



*Panch Mahal, with its five stories and lovely columns and pavilions,
is a magnificent blend of architectural traditions*

A single large pillar in the centre of the Diwan-e-Khas, supported by thirty-six brackets on the capital of the column.

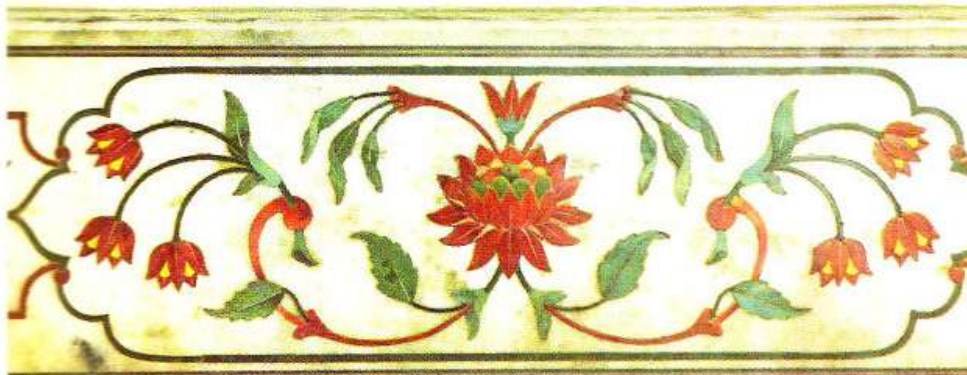


With its four minarets, large dome of stately proportions, and well laid-out garden with long water channels and fountain, the Taj Mahal is one of the great architectural wonders of the world. Its exquisite inlay work is lavishly executed with semiprecious stones.









*Its exquisite inlay work is lavishly
executed
with semiprecious stones.*



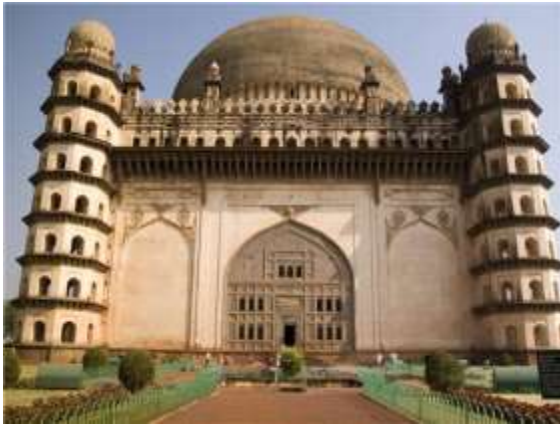
Beautiful patterns delicately carved

Regional variations



Sidi Sayyid mosque,
Ahmadabad,
with its magnificent
Marble fretted windows
carved with
patterns of
the celestial tree

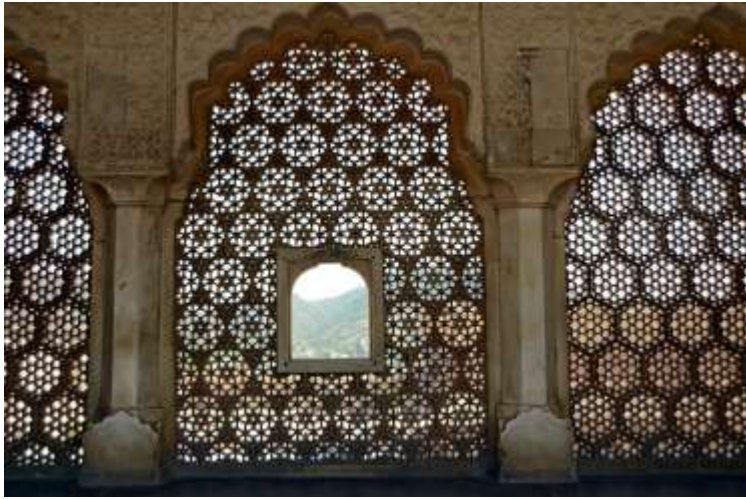




Gol Gumbaz, a unique monument, its dome among the largest in the world, with its unbelievable acoustic, the slightest whisper at one side is heard on the other are some belonging to the provincial school



The palaces of Indian princes showed a harmonious blend of Islamic and Hindu motifs.



Amber Palace of Man Singh has Islamic grace in its arches, trellis work, pierced windows and projecting balconies, but has sala and kutagara shape to the roof.



The brackets and balustrades and the floral designs show the skill of the Hindu craftsman, and the spacious and cool halls, chambers, and arcades arc elements in the Muslim monuments.



In a spirit of emulation many beautiful forts, like that in Gwalior, were constructed.





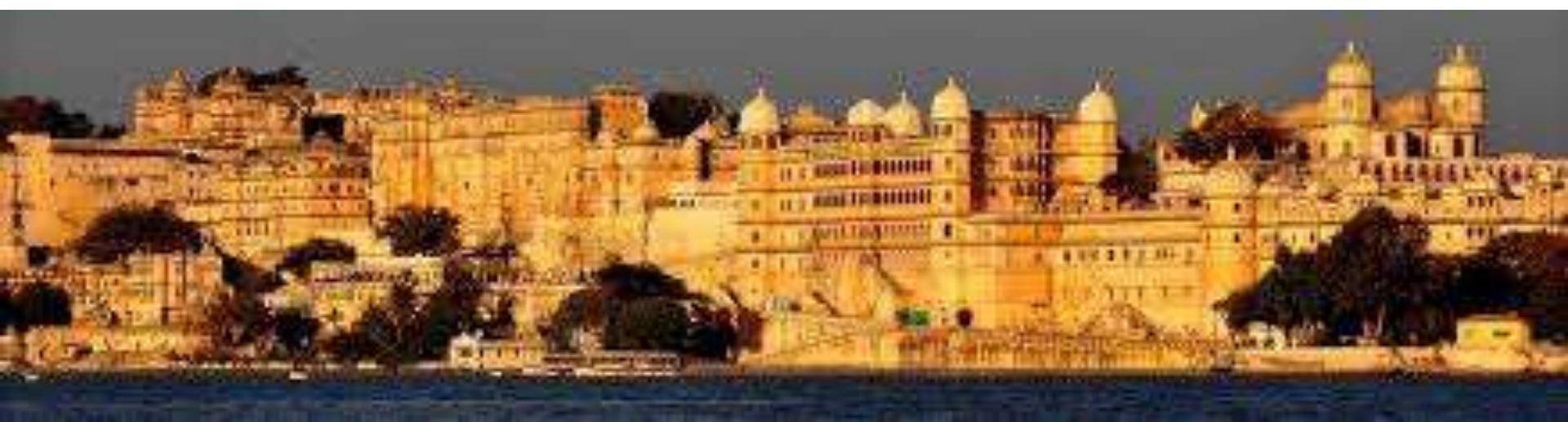
The culmination is seen in the Hawa Mahal at Jaipur.



It is gorgeous in its multi-storied magnificence, but it is only a splendid facade.



The Udaipur palace in its picturesque surroundings near a lake is another of Hindu palaces that combines the best of the two traditions.



A very important feature of this synthesis is the extraordinary, unique painting tradition popularly known as miniature paintings

Indian miniature paintings are done using
opaque water-colors on paper,
pigments being mixed with gum
which is unique to this technique.

The colours are laid in several thin layers and
carefully burnished, which gives a enamel-like look.

The pigments used are mainly minerals,
with gold and silver added for a grand effect.

Some colours are fluorescent and
flashes bright yellow under ultraviolet light.



Kalpasutra, Jaina school
Western India

A saga of miniature painting was started in the form of illustrations to the Buddhist religious texts under the Pala-s of the eastern India and to the Jaina texts in western India in the 11th century CE

Ashtasahasirika
Prajnaparamita
Pala School, Easter India



The Jain manuscripts

have colourful illustrations with gold and silver lettering and rich colour decoration, characterized by simplicity of colour, formalized figures, and austerity, figures presented in three-quarter profile with angular nose and large bulging eyes.

The calligraphy is equally interesting and important.



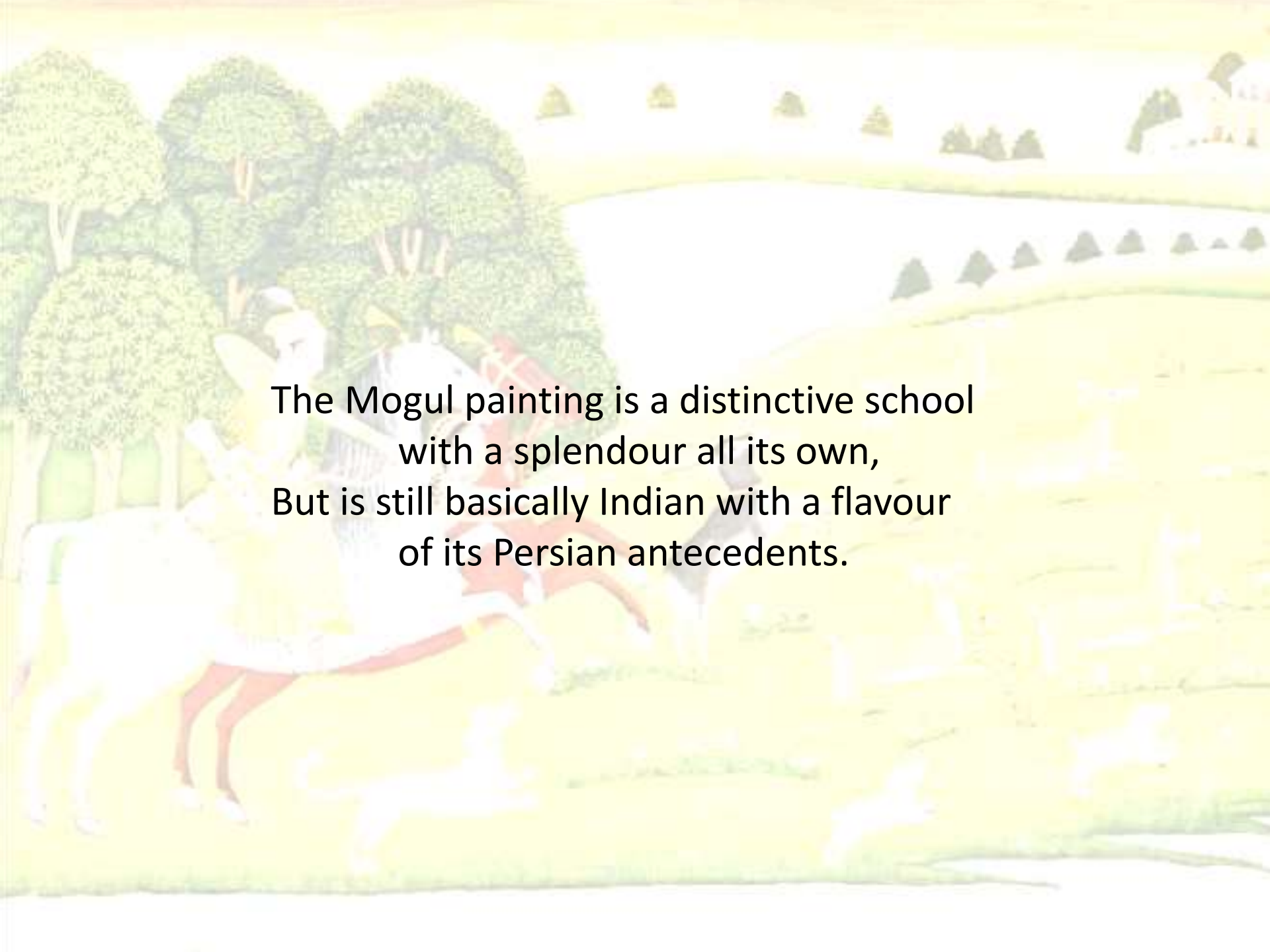
The famous Rajasthani school owes its origin to this tradition.

Before studying
the Rajasthani and other regional styles
let us follow the Moghul miniatures

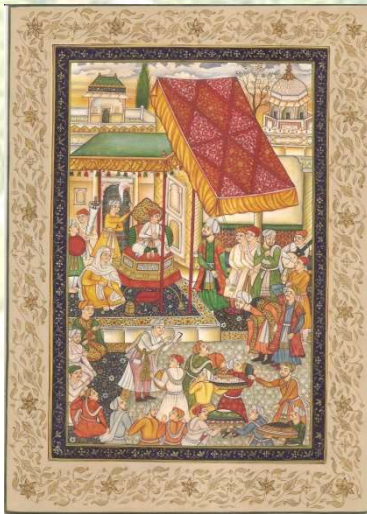
Mogul painting was based on Persian works, which in turn were greatly influenced by Mongolian art.

This blend of the central Asian, of Chinese Turkistan and of Persia flourished and flowered in India as a strange and lovely tree of paradise with a rich perfume and colourful glow derived from the indigenous Indian traditions.



The background image is a faded Mogul painting. It depicts a scene with a white horse in the foreground, a red horse behind it, and a figure in a white and yellow outfit. The background features green trees and a white building with arched windows. The overall style is characteristic of the Mogul school of painting, with a focus on detail and a rich color palette.

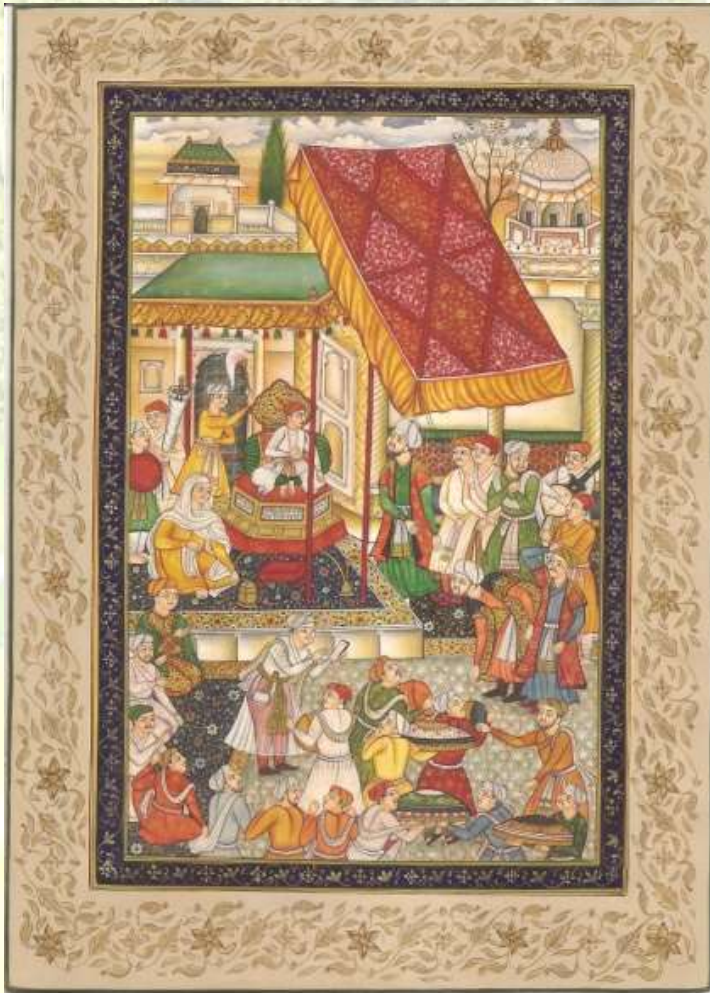
The Mogul painting is a distinctive school
with a splendour all its own,
But is still basically Indian with a flavour
of its Persian antecedents.



The Persian techniques were assimilated and enriched by Indian artists, and a rare blend of the charm of both traditions arose in a new school.

Akbar, though illiterate, knew the value of books and had a magnificent library of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit volumes.

He utilised the talents of his court to illustrate literary works like the *Akbar Nama*.





In all these paintings, the Persian mode of treating the background and landscape, the mountains, trees, animals, and birds, is evident.

Jahangir encouraged portraiture and had himself and his queen, family and noblemen depicted in paintings.

Painting flourished until it was given the burial by the puritan Aurangzeb.



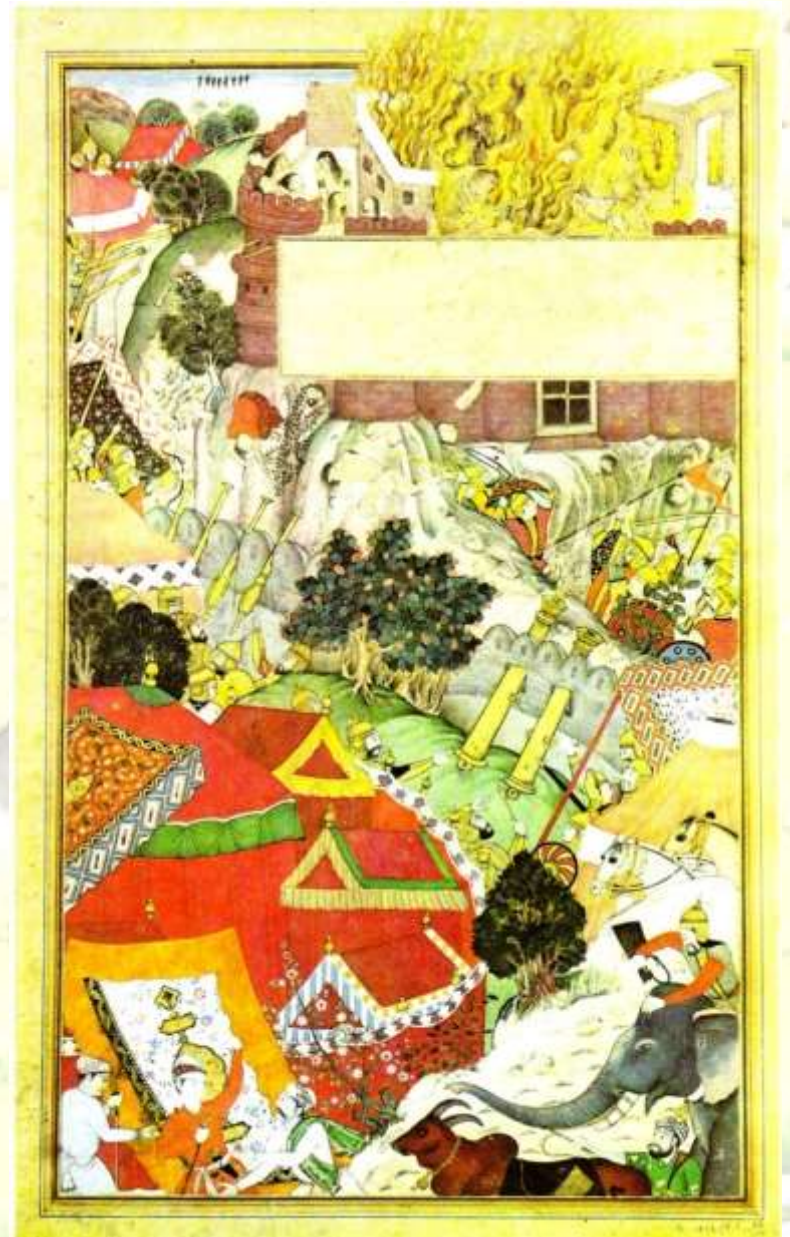


Babur Namah
The miniature is
predominantly Persian in style,
with a few Western elements.

Siege Chitor and
self-immolation of Rajput women.

The composition is still based
on Persian tradition.

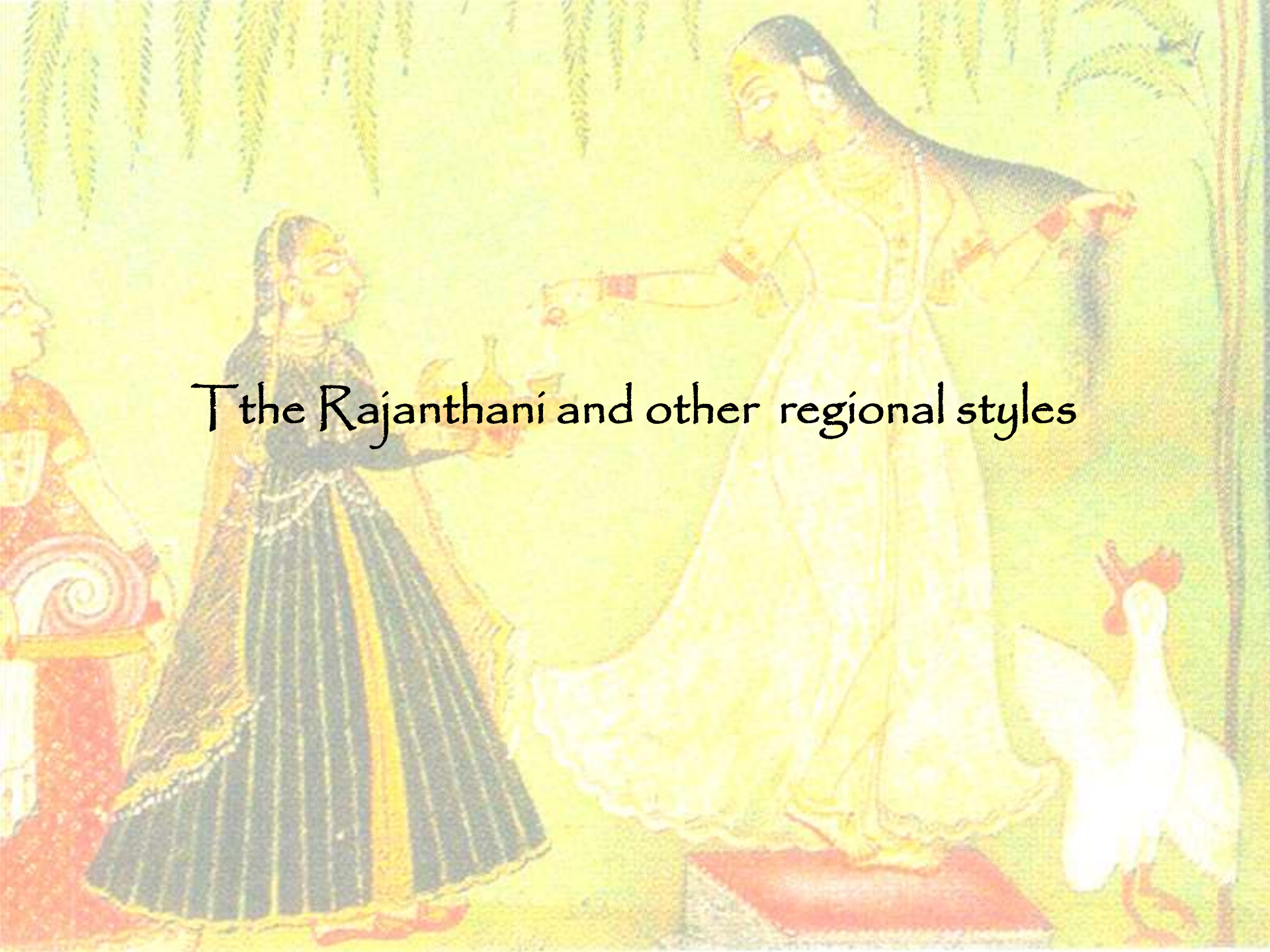
Extremely descriptive,
it uses primarily
red and related tones,
as is suitable to
the description of
the horrors of a pitiless war.



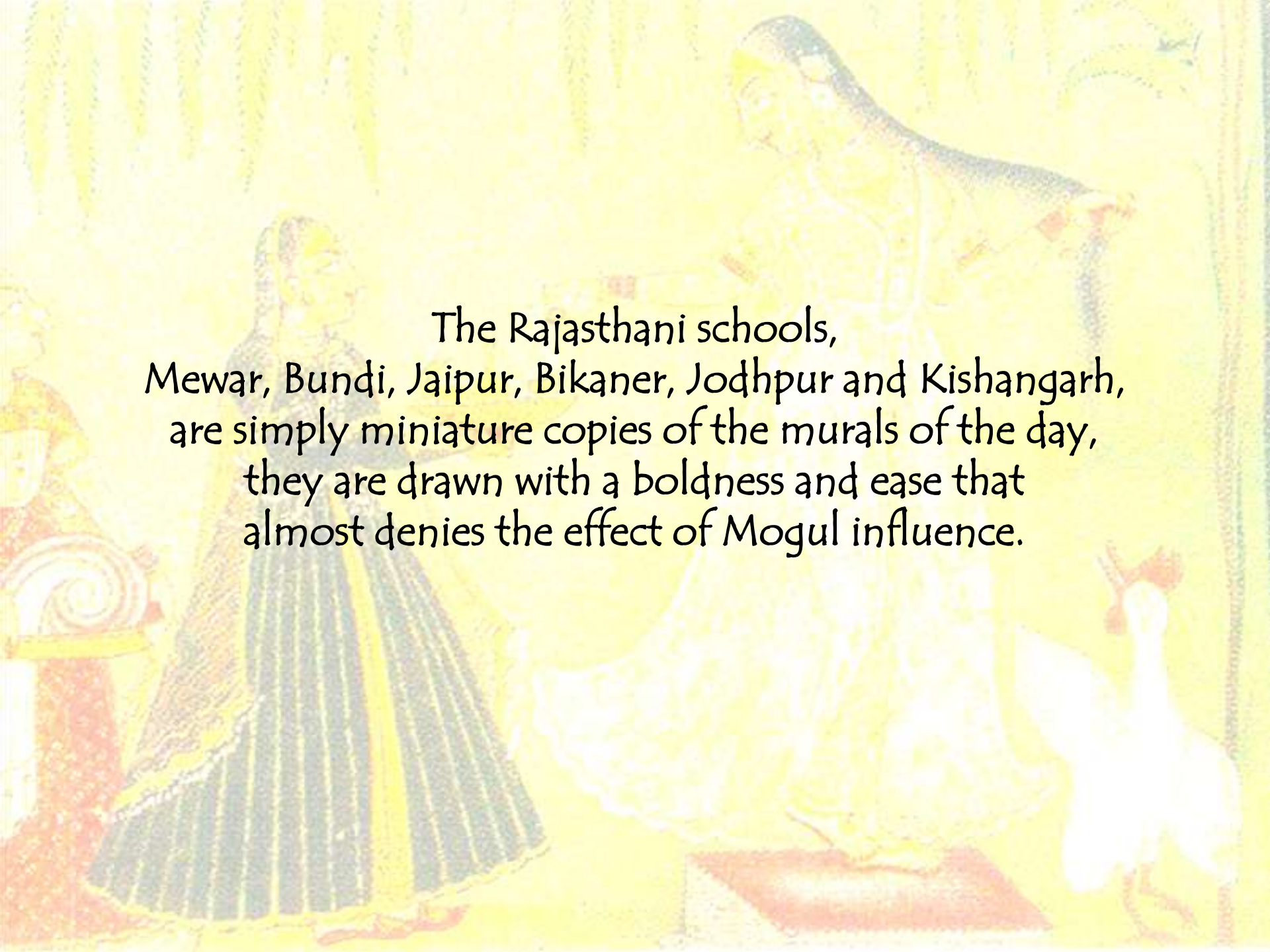


Akbar watching
the capture of an elephant.

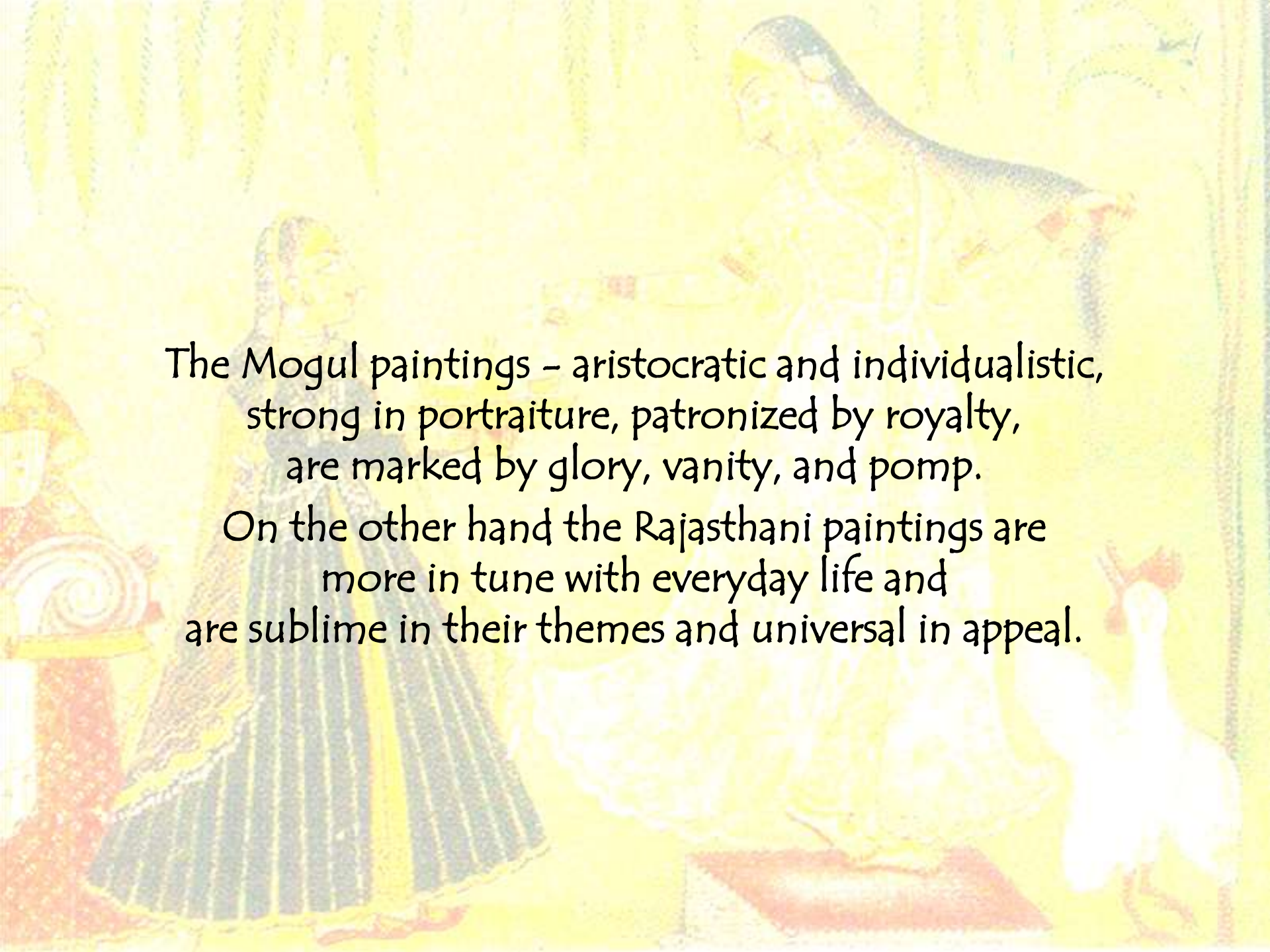
The traditional Indian element
can be seen in the treatment of
the elephants,
which dominate the scene,
and of the horse of the emperor,
who advances calmly
among his dismayed servants.

A traditional Indian painting depicting a scene with two women and a chicken. The woman on the right is wearing a white sari with a red border and is holding a small object in her hand. The woman on the left is wearing a dark sari with a yellow border and is holding a small object in her hand. A white chicken is visible in the lower right corner. The background is a light green color with vertical lines. The text "The Rajanthani and other regional styles" is overlaid on the painting.

The Rajanthani and other regional styles

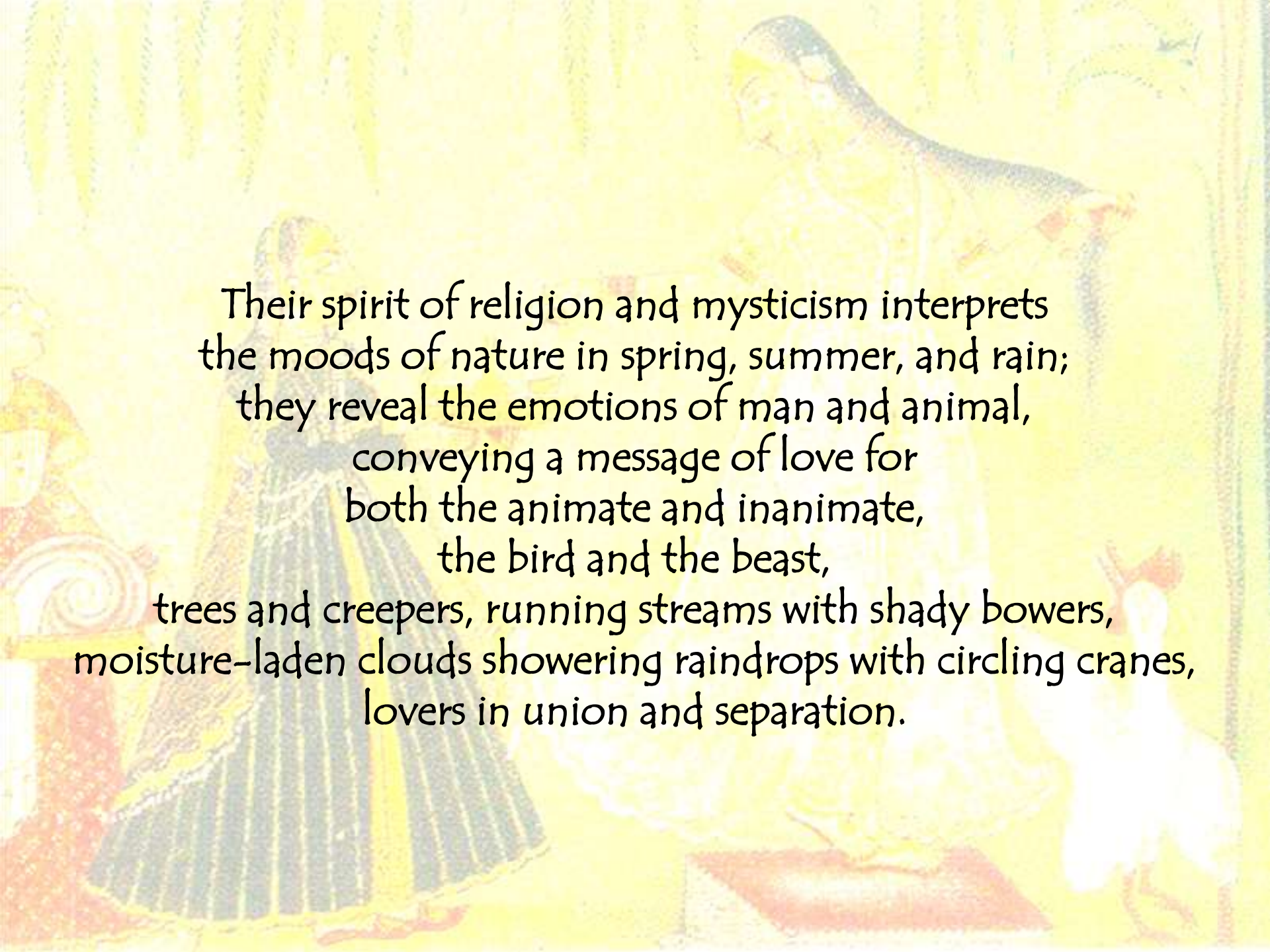


The Rajasthani schools,
Mewar, Bundi, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Kishangarh,
are simply miniature copies of the murals of the day,
they are drawn with a boldness and ease that
almost denies the effect of Mogul influence.

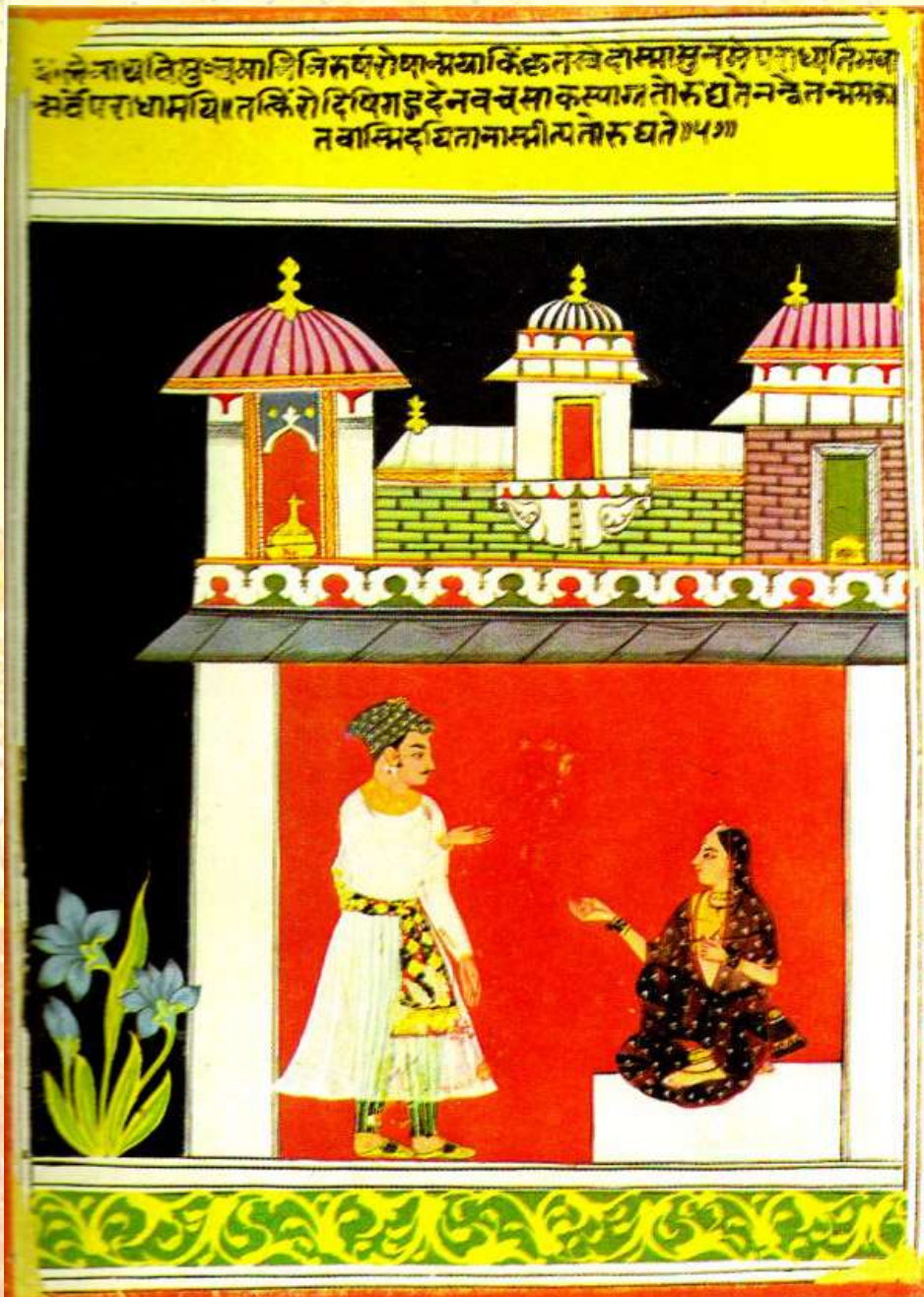


The Mogul paintings – aristocratic and individualistic, strong in portraiture, patronized by royalty, are marked by glory, vanity, and pomp.

On the other hand the Rajasthani paintings are more in tune with everyday life and are sublime in their themes and universal in appeal.



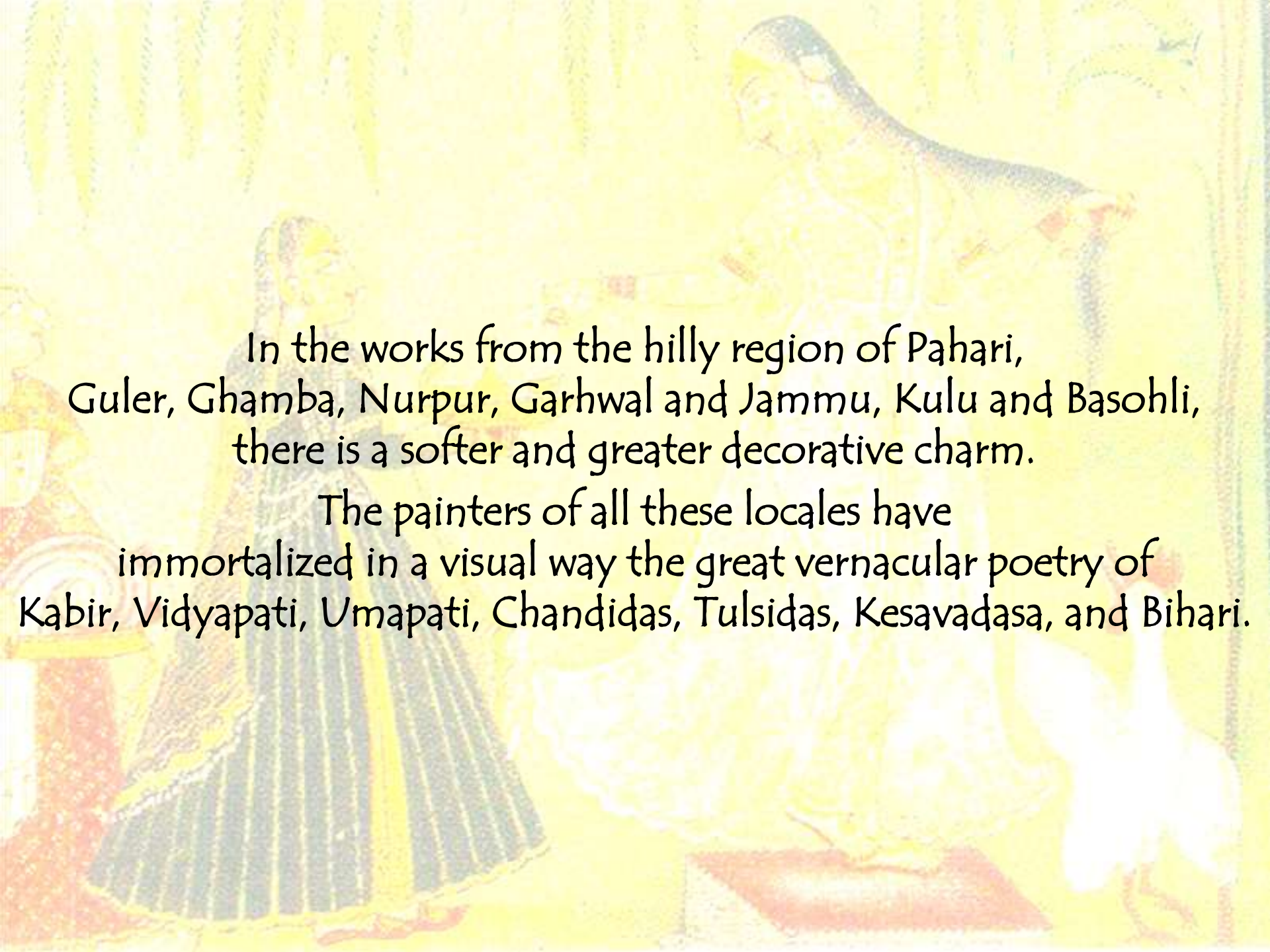
Their spirit of religion and mysticism interprets
the moods of nature in spring, summer, and rain;
they reveal the emotions of man and animal,
conveying a message of love for
both the animate and inanimate,
the bird and the beast,
trees and creepers, running streams with shady bowers,
moisture-laden clouds showering raindrops with circling cranes,
lovers in union and separation.



The simplification and stylization of the subject are particularly obvious in the flatness of the modeling.

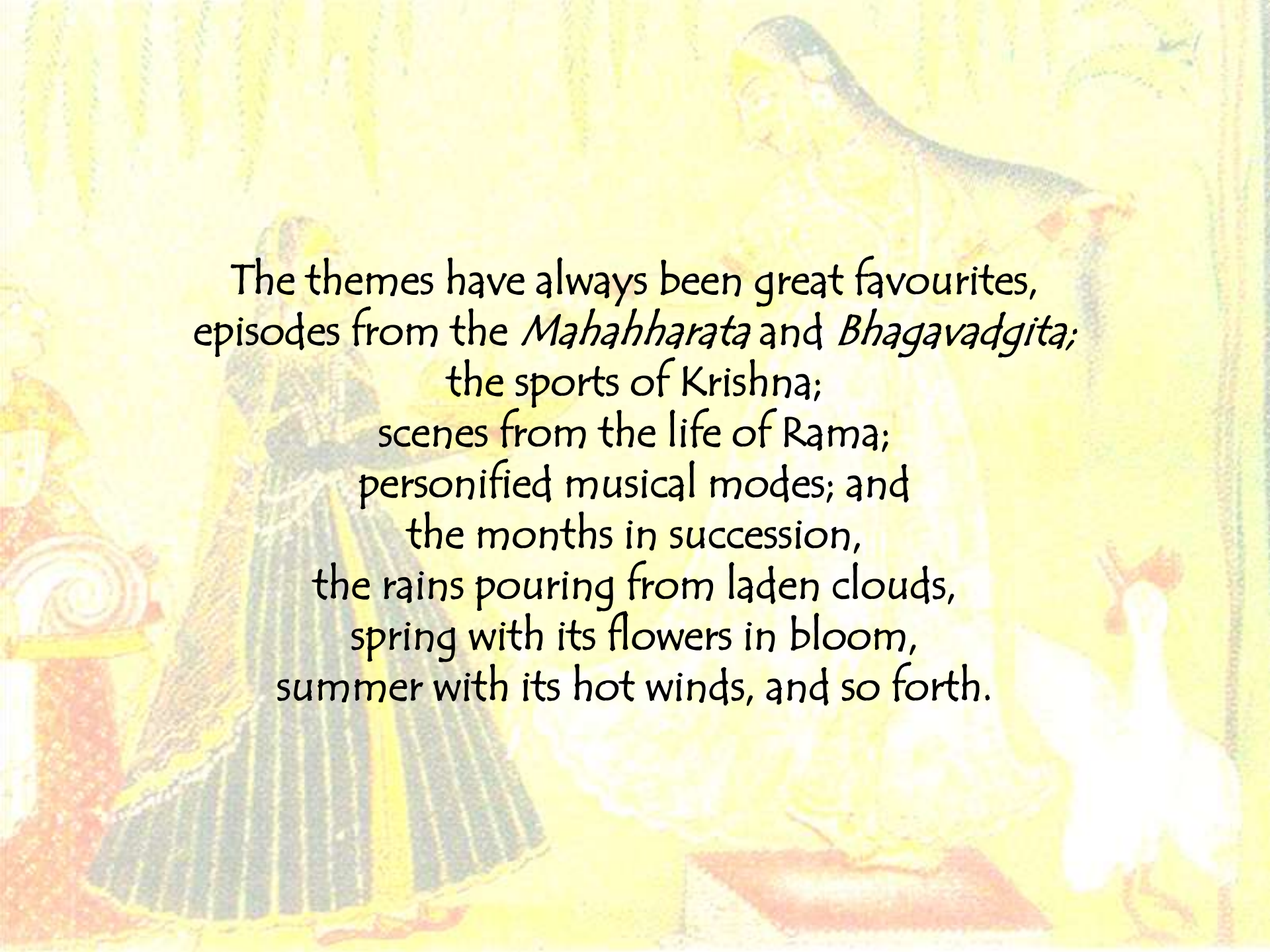
The interrupted concert
An example of trying to use
perspective without giving up
its own sense of composition.



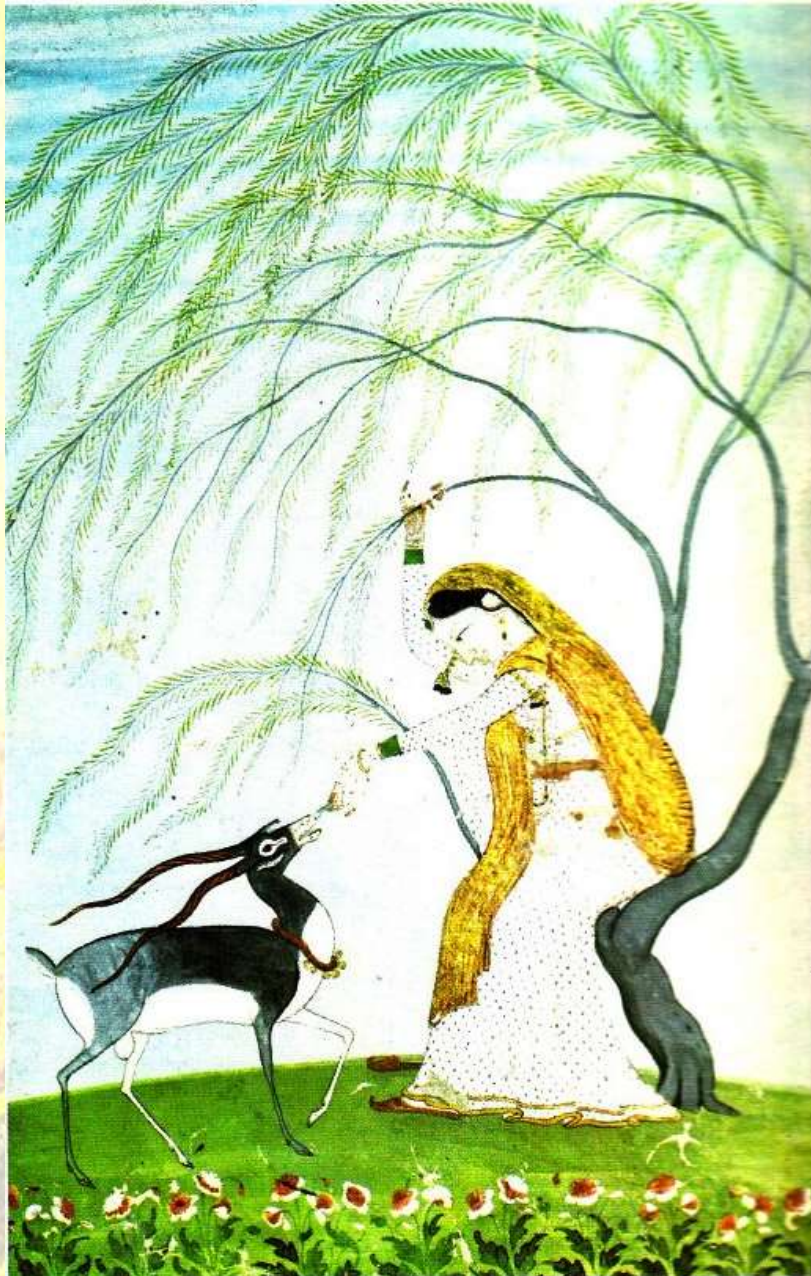


In the works from the hilly region of Pahari, Guler, Ghamba, Nurpur, Garhwal and Jammu, Kulu and Basohli, there is a softer and greater decorative charm.

The painters of all these locales have immortalized in a visual way the great vernacular poetry of Kabir, Vidyapati, Umapati, Chandidas, Tulsidas, Kesavadasa, and Bihari.

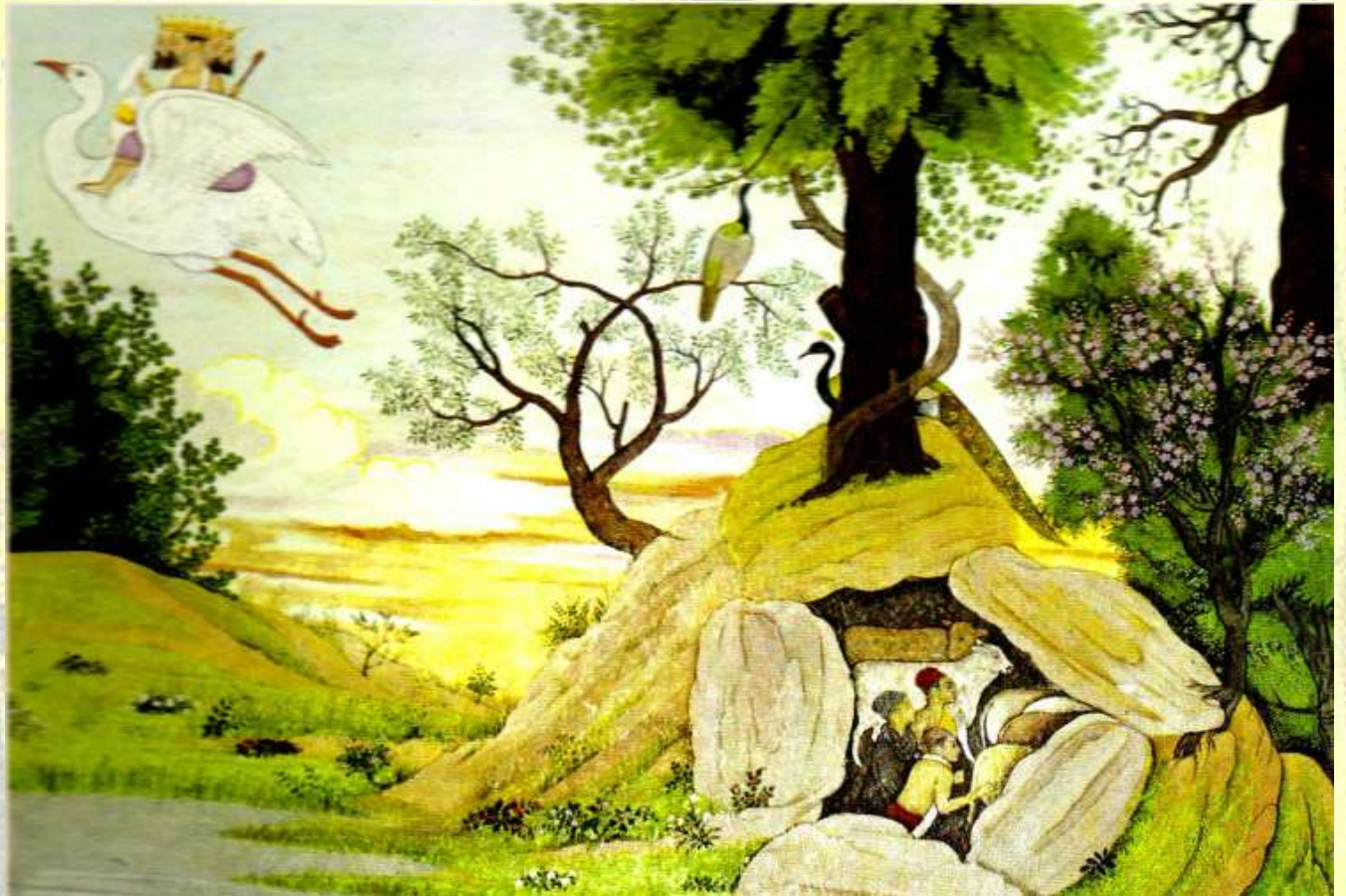
The background of the slide is a traditional Indian painting. It features a woman in a dark sari with a yellow border, standing on the left. To her right, a white chicken with a red comb is visible. The background is a warm yellow color with vertical lines and some faint, stylized figures. The text is centered over the painting.

The themes have always been great favourites,
episodes from the *Mahābharata* and *Bhagavadgita*;
the sports of Krishna;
scenes from the life of Rama;
personified musical modes; and
the months in succession,
the rains pouring from laden clouds,
spring with its flowers in bloom,
summer with its hot winds, and so forth.



Ragmala painting,
Ragini Todi (Pahari).

A young girl
who tames a wild animal,
which comes running
toward her.



Brahma is flying away on Hamsa:
from the Bhagavata Purana
An attempt made to construct a landscape
which is unreal but at the same time
composed of naturalistic elements.



Radha discovers the infidelity of Krishna by hiding among the bushes in a wood.

This was the last outburst of Indian creativity.

With British rule and the introduction of foreign fashions, techniques, and schemes the whole of India seems to have forgotten her glorious past.

E.B. Havell must be credited with laying the foundations for its renaissance, and the Bengal School came into existence.

This was the scene in the north, where a synthesis
Was the need and it had happened.
But the South was far more quiet and
there was major clash of cultures.

While there was conspicuous absence of large temples,
and certainly no sculpture of any significance in the north,
the south continued its march without hindrance,
producing very large complexes of temples.

நன்றி