

**Hindu-Muslim Unity through Blood
Lineage, Common Ancestry and Cultural
Traditions in Delhi-NCR, India: A
Historical Survey of Pilgrimage**

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Abstract

This paper examines Hindu-Muslim unity and cultural continuity along the Vaith-Pushpavati corridor in the Garhmukteshwar tehsil of District Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, I. Based primarily on oral testimony gathered from the villagers of Vaith, Nangla Barh, Bihuni, and Phuldi. The study documents a pattern in which present religious identities - Hindu and Muslim - sit atop a same genealogical base that both communities continue to recognize and observe in daily social life. The paper traces the two-brother founding narrative that connects Nangla Barh and Vaith through a remembered act of family division, one branch remaining Hindu, the other converting to Islam, and shows how this common ancestry is reinforced across the network through common marriage obligations, preserved gotra memory, and ritual continuity. The sacred landscape of Pushpavati, identified with the Mahabharata world of Hastinapur and recognised as India's first Ganga Gram in 2016, provides the mythological and environmental frame within which the villages understand their own antiquity. The regional tradition of two Brahmin ruler-brothers, Raja Maheshwardatt and Raja Brahmaddatt, points to an even older common ancestral root beneath the village-level narratives. The study argues that Hindu-Muslim unity in this corridor is not a recent or politically constructed phenomenon but a lived social reality rooted in blood lineage, customs, cultural traditions and a landscape of memory that has been actively transmitted across generations. The paper contributes to the growing body of oral-history research on composite village cultures in the Upper Ganga plane.

Keywords

Hindu-Muslim unity, Common ancestral identity, Tyagi caste, Oral history, Kinship landscape, Blood lineage, Customs, Cultural Traditions, Conversion narrative, Garhmukteshwar.

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1. Introduction

There exist a particular kind of unity that does not announce itself. It does not march in processions or declare itself from platforms; it does not wait for festivals to emerge, nor does it depend on the goodwill of any single generation to survive. It lives instead in the names people give their children, in the rituals they perform at birth and marriage, in the obligations they feel toward a neighbouring village, and in the quiet, almost unconscious way they speak of an ancestor as their own even across a boundary of faith. This is the unity this chapter sets out to trace—not the unity of ideology or of political arrangement, but the unity of blood, of common memory, and of a social world that has refused, across centuries and across religious change, to come apart at its deepest seams.

The villages of Vaith, Nangla Barh, Bihuni, and Phuldi; strung along the Vaith-Pushpavati corridor in the Garhmukteshwar *tehsil* of Hapur District in U.P., offer a remarkable case study in precisely this kind of unity. On the surface, they present what any map of the region would show—some villages with a Hindu majority, some with a Muslim majority, each with its own mosque or temple, its own identity, and its own daily religious life. But beneath that surface, when one sits with elders and listens carefully—to a *gotra* recalled in passing, to a wedding custom described as something the family has always done, to a story about two brothers whose paths diverged but whose blood was never divided—a different picture emerges. It is a picture of a single social world that has lived through division without being broken by it.

The thread we are following in this paper is genealogical. It begins with an act of family separation—an attack, a pregnancy, two sons born into a moment of crisis—and it traces how that one family became the root of communities that today call themselves by different religious names yet continue to honour the same ancestors, practice the same rituals, and recognize each other as kin. The question this paper asks is not whether Hindus and Muslims have lived peacefully in this region - the answer to that is visible in every shared wedding and every inter-village obligation. The deeper question is why: what are the social and historical foundations that have made this coexistence not merely peaceful but genuinely integrated, not merely tolerant but structurally bound? The answer, as the oral testimony gathered here will show, lies in the landscape itself—in a road, in a set of villages, and in a

memory that the communities of this corridor have kept alive with remarkable fidelity across generations.

2. A Landscape That Remembers

The story begins not with a single village, but with a road. From Garhmukteshwar, when one moves toward Simbhaoli, a diversion opens toward Vaith and toward Pushpavati, also known as Pushpawati Pooth. This road is not only a route of movement; it is a corridor of memory. Along it lie the villages of Vaith, Phuldi, Bihuni, and Nangla Barh, each of which carries a different part of one shared historical and social tradition.

Methodologically, treating the road itself as the unit of study—rather than treating each village in isolation—allows the oral material to retain the logic in which it was originally narrated. Village elders and genealogists rarely describe a single settlement in isolation; they describe a moving lineage, a family that travels, divides, and resettles along a known physical path. Following that same path in this chapter therefore keeps the historical narrative anchored to the geography in which local memory itself is organized. As one moves along this route, the landscape continues toward other remembered sites, including Nangli Kanaur and its *Karn ka Teela*, where archaeological and heritage references add another layer of significance to what is not merely a cluster of settlements but a wider cultural belt.

2.1 The Two Founding Brothers of the Region

Regional oral tradition remembers two Brahmin ruler-brothers as the deepest ancestral layer behind the area's villages: Raja Maheshwardatt¹, said to have held eighty-four villages, and his younger brother Raja Brahmaddatt², said to have held forty-two. Their descendants are remembered as the common root from which many present-day Hindu and Muslim Tyagi lineages, including those traced in this chapter, ultimately branch.

3. Nangla Barh: The First Branch of the Family Story

Nangla Barh is remembered as an older Tyagi settlement. This is where the two-brother story begins. In village memory it was once a fortified village with a *darwaja*³, or principal gateway. The gate is significant because it marks Nangla Barh as a protected and organized habitation. It also symbolizes the older village structure in which land, family, and honour were closely connected.

The village derives its name from a magnificent banyan tree - Barh⁴ - that once stood behind the village temple. Although the tree has long since disappeared, its memory survives in the very name of the settlement, a reminder of a landscape that lives on in local remembrance. Village elders also recall that Nangla Barh was once protected by a fortified enclosure, or *Garhi*⁵, with a surrounding wall and a principal gateway. Though these structures no longer survive, their remembrance reflects a time when the settlement was regarded as strategically significant and well defended.

Among the most remarkable traditions preserved by the villagers is the story of the Khatti, or grain storage house, of Narayan Singh Tyagi⁶. According to local accounts, this granary stored large quantities of grain that were distributed to eight surrounding villages. This tradition portrays Nangla Barh not only as an agricultural settlement but also as an important centre of food storage and regional distribution.

3.1 The Attack and the Two Brothers

According to oral history, the Tyagi landlord's wives had gone to their maternal homes when an attack took place on the village. This event is remembered as a major turning point. The family was separated, the village story entered a period of loss and transformation, and the wives—who were pregnant at the time - gave birth to two sons after a long period. Those two children became the basis of the later family branches that spread across the corridor.

The story further says that the family's records were in Urdu, and when the question arose of regaining the estate, one brother was told that conversion would be necessary.⁷ Out of the two brothers, one converted to Islam and moved away to settle elsewhere. His descendants are remembered as continuing in Vaith. The other brother remained in Nangla Barh, and his line continued there. This is the core of the village's remembered genealogy.

This is not only a story about religion. It is a story about how a family line split into two branches while remaining tied together in memory. Estate-recovery narratives involving religious conversion are a recurring motif in the oral history of landholding families across northern India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when administrative and revenue arrangements frequently intersected with questions of religious identity. As with all such family traditions, the precise administrative circumstances behind the conversion cannot be independently verified from the oral account alone; the value of the narrative lies in what it reveals about how the community itself explains the origin of its two present-day religious branches while insisting on their common blood.

3.2 The Layered Ancestry of Nangla Barh

Nangla Barh is especially significant because of its mixed population. It includes the Hindu Tyagi branch but also Muslim Tyagis, Muslim Rajputs, and Muslim families with older Brahmin-linked memory. The interview with Sahir Khan⁸ is central here: he identified his *gotra* as Maheshre Tyagi and traced his family's origin to Beerampur, showing continuity between older lineage and current identity. He also mentioned the practice of offering milk at Chamand when cattle fell ill—a ritual that crosses religious lines.

The interview with Pyar Muhammad⁹ is equally important. He identified himself as a Muslim Rajput of the Nirvan *gotra*, with family origins traced to Dasna—evidence of a second, distinct ancestral strand present within Nangla Barh alongside the Tyagi line. He also spoke of the customs of *Godbhrai*, *Chhuchak*, and

Salami, the last being structurally similar to the *tilak* ceremony among Hindus, demonstrating ritual continuity across religious identity.

The interviews with Asrar Khan¹⁰ and Abrar Khan¹¹ add a third layer. They preserved the memory of an ancestor named Sohrab Khan, who came from Ahar and is remembered as having held influence over twelve villages and as having resisted the British. These brothers also recalled an association with Nagar Brahmin ancestry—a third distinct strand, alongside Tyagi and Rajput, present within Nangla Barh's composite lineage. Taken together, all the testimonies show that Nangla Barh's population is not a single converted lineage but a composite of at least three distinct ancestral strands, all currently practicing Islam while retaining their separate pre-conversion *gotra* identities.

4. Vaith: The Second Branch of the Brotherhood

The other brother is said to have settled in Vaith. Vaith is described in interviews as a village with a very long tradition and strong historical memory. The villagers say that Vaith once had a Pandava fort and that the village was surrounded by ponds on all sides—a recognizable defensive and agrarian layout in the *Ganga-Yamuna doab*, where water bodies doubled as both natural barriers and irrigation resources.

Vaith is also remembered as a Bawan Hazari village¹², a title meaning village of fifty-two thousand, symbolizing its extraordinary size, prosperity, and regional importance in earlier times. Even today the village is recognized for its remarkably large population, including one of the most significant communities of converted Muslim Tyagis in the region, whose ancestral traditions continue to shape the village's cultural identity.

The oral accounts also mention that statues and other traces were later found in the village, which the residents take as physical confirmation of its ancient roots. One particularly intriguing tradition concerns an ancient mound¹³, or *Tila*, that once stood within the village. According to local belief, the mound marked the site of an earlier settlement, or Khera, which was later abandoned. Today the place is occupied by a graveyard¹⁴, but village elders continue to remember it as the heart of the old habitation. The combination of fort memory, encircling ponds, a buried settlement mound, and a six-foot stone idol reportedly unearthed during digging - later presented to the people of Nangla Barh—makes Vaith an unusually rich site of layered memory.

4.1 The *Gotra* Evidence from Vaith

The interviews from Vaith provide the chapter's strongest evidentiary base for the continuity of Hindu lineage inside present Muslim identity. Several residents -independently identified their *gotra* as Maheshre Tyagi without being prompted by the results of earlier interviews. This cross-informant convergence on the same *gotra* identification, obtained without the informants consulting one another, is treated in oral-history methodology as one of the stronger forms of corroboration available in the absence of written record.

Amanullah Khan and Sher Ali Mustazaf Khan¹⁵ also identified their lineage as Maheshre Tyagi, and both placed particular emphasis on the cordial relations between Vaith, Nangla Barh, and Bihuni.

4.2 Vaith as a Site of Hindu-Muslim Unity

The importance of Vaith increases when one considers all the interview material together. The village is a site where present Muslim identity still preserves older Tyagi memory. This does not diminish the village's Muslim identity; rather, it shows that the present identity has grown over an older social base. On one level, Vaith is a sacred-historical site connected to the Pandavas. On another level, it is a village of family continuity and conversion memory. These two levels together make Vaith the central node of the broader narrative.

This layering—an epic-sacred identity overlaid by a family-genealogical identity, both in turn overlaid by a present religious identity—is what makes Vaith methodologically significant for this study. It shows that a single village can simultaneously hold several distinct registers of memory without any one of them cancelling out the others. A person can be, and in Vaith routinely is, both a practising Muslim and a bearer of a remembered Tyagi *gotra*.

5. Bihuni: The Sister Village in the Family Circle

The story now turns to Bihuni, which must always come after Vaith in the narrative sequence. In oral tradition, Bihuni is remembered as the sister-linked village¹⁶ in the family network. Nangla Barh and Vaith are the villages of the two brothers; Bihuni is the village of their sister¹⁷. This makes Bihuni a necessary part of the family geography, completing the sibling circle.

According to oral traditions, Bihuni was founded by Kallu Singh¹⁸, who originally came from Gopalgarh in Haryana. He was married to a girl from Vaith and then settled in Bihuni. In this version, the land of Aabidpur Kadi¹⁹ was given as dowry, and Maharaj ki Kuti²⁰ is still remembered on that land.

5.1 The Three-Village Bond

The interviews reveal that weddings among the three villages were never considered complete until representatives from all related villages were present. If a marriage happened in Vaith, people from Nangla Barh and Bihuni had to come before the bride could be sent off. If a marriage happened in Nangla Barh or Bihuni, the people of Vaith were expected to attend. This custom shows that the villages were treated as one social unit despite their differences in religious affiliation; blood lineage was always prioritized.²¹

This rule functions, in effect, as an unwritten social contract binding three separate settlements into a single ritual kin-group. Its persistence across generations, without any formal or legal enforcement mechanism, is itself evidence of how deeply the underlying genealogical claim is believed and acted upon by the communities concerned. The marriage rule did not depend on written law; it depended on common memory and shared obligation. That is why the bond between these villages is remembered simultaneously as brotherhood and sisterhood.

6. Phuldi: The Final Branch of Continuity

Only after Nangla Barh, Vaith, and Bihoni does the story reach Phuldi. Phuldi is important because it shows how the family story continued into another settlement branch and how the kinship network opens outward rather than closing in on itself. According to one oral account, the son of the Nangla Barh line stayed in Vaith at the house of a Muslim uncle and later settled in Phuldi. Another version says that Phuldi was founded by the maternal cousin of the two brothers. Both versions remain part of living village memory.

The interviews with Nadeem Khan²² and Furqan Pradhan²³ add another layer. They say that Phuldi has a connection with Athseni, and that two old Tyagis came from Athseni and built a *garhi* there. This gives Phuldi a wider historical link beyond the immediate brother-sister story, connecting it to a larger pattern of Tyagi migration and settlement whose full extent this study can only partially map within the scope of the present villages.

7. Customs That Cross Religious Boundaries

The interviews²⁴ from Vaith, Nangla Barh, and Phuldi show that traditional customs have survived despite religious change. Marriage rituals such as *bhat*, *manda*, and *ghurchadhi* are still followed among the Muslim Tyagi families. Childbirth ceremonies—*Chhathi* and *Chhuchak*—continue in traditional form. Chaukhat puja, the ritual worship of the threshold or doorframe, remains part of village life in both Hindu and Muslim households of Tyagi descent.

One particularly important oral account notes that if an animal became ill, even families following Islam would go to Chamand and offer milk so that the animal could recover. This practice connects household life, village belief, and ritual healing across the religious boundary. Such customs show that the present village is still tied to its older social world. Ritual continuity of this kind—where life-cycle and agrarian customs persist after a formal change of religious affiliation—is well documented in composite village cultures across the subcontinent, and it typically survives longest in precisely these domains: marriage, childbirth, house-building, and animal husbandry, because these are the areas most embedded in daily household practice rather than in formal religious doctrine.

Table-1: Comparative Customs Across the Villages

Custom	Documented In	Description
<i>Bhat/Manda/Ghurchadhi</i> (marriage rites)	Vaith, Nangla Barh, phuldi	Pre-wedding rituals involving turmeric and oil application, erecting the wedding canopy, and the maternal uncle side's ceremonial gift-giving.
<i>Chaukhat Puja</i>	Vaith, Nangla Barh	Ritual worship of the threshold or doorframe, continued in both Hindu and Muslim households of Tyagi descent.

Chamand milk offering	Nangla Barh	When an animal falls ill, households go to Chamand and offer milk in the belief that it aids recovery.
Three-village wedding attendance rule	Vaith, Nangla Barh, Bihuni	A wedding in any one of the three villages is not considered complete without representatives from the other two attending.
<i>Gotra</i> memory retained after conversion	Vaith, Nangla Barh, Phuldi, Bihuni	Muslim families continue to identify a specific ancestral Hindu <i>gotra</i> (Maheshre Tyagi, Nirvan) generations after conversion.

8. Nangli Kanaur: Another Village on the Sacred Route

Nangli Kanaur is a village of great religious, historical, and cultural importance on the Pushpawati Pooth road. According to local belief, this place is linked with Sheetla Mata and the story of King Vikramaditya. It is said that the goddess stayed here for some time before moving to Jakheda and then to Gurgaon, where she became established as Sheetla Mata²⁵. Even today, a temple dedicated to the goddess exists in the village, and a fair is held every year in October-November, for five consecutive Mondays, drawing devotees from nearby villages and regions.

The village is also locally associated with *Karn ka Teela*, a site of both mythological and archaeological significance. Around six or seven years ago, archaeological remains including coins and other artefacts were found in a field, and the site was subsequently recognized by the Archaeological Survey of India. This gave Nangli Kanaur an important place in the historical map of the region that complements its sacred associations.

One special feature of this village is its concrete practice of Hindu-Muslim unity. The offerings made at the Sheetla Mata temple are traditionally given to Muslim families. This practice—rooted in long-standing custom rather than recent goodwill—shows a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and communal harmony that parallels the kinship-based unity documented in the other villages of the corridor. Thus Nangli Kanaur is not only a sacred village but also a living symbol of religious faith, historical heritage, and social unity.

9. Informant Testimonies in Detail

The testimonies below present each informant's account individually alongside a brief note on its significance for the chapter's argument. They are organized by village.

9.1 Village: Vaith

Tariq Tyagi²⁶ identified his *gotra* as Maheshre Tyagi during the village interviews, tracing his family's ancestral identity directly to the old Tyagi lineage said to have originally settled in Vaith. His testimony is the single clearest first-person confirmation that Tyagi *gotra* memory survives inside present Muslim identity in the village.

Mubarak Ali, remembered locally as a teacher, also identified as Maheshre Tyagi. He extended his account beyond lineage into national history: his father Abdul Rahim is remembered by the family as having taken part in the freedom struggle against British rule, linking the village's lineage memory to the wider national movement.²⁷

Athar, son of Chhote Khan²⁸, independently confirmed the same Mahsere Tyagi *gotra* tradition already recorded from Tariq Tyagi and Mubarak Ali, without any prompting from the earlier interviews. His testimony provides the third independent convergence on the same *gotra* in Vaith, considerably strengthening this strand of evidence.

Amanullah Khan²⁹ identified his *gotra* as Maheshre Tyagi and placed particular emphasis on the cordial relations between Vaith, Nangla Barh, and Bihoni—providing not only lineage evidence but social-relational evidence for the network's continued operation.

Sher Ali Khan³⁰ likewise identified as Maheshre Tyagi and mentioned the six-foot stone idol said to have been unearthed at Vaith's ancient mound and later presented to Nangla Barh—a remarkable detail that ties the physical landscape of Vaith to the social bond with its brother-village.

9.2 Village: Nangla Barh

Sahir Khan identified his *gotra* as Maheshre Tyagi and traced his family's origin to Beerampur. He mentioned the offering of milk at Chamand for cattle recovery—a ritual whose continued practice by a Muslim family is significant evidence of older social memory persisting across religious change.

Pyar Muhammad identified himself as a Muslim Rajput of the Nirvan *gotra*, with family origins traced to Dasna. He mentioned the customs of *Godbhrai*, *Chhuchak*, and *Salami*—the last structurally similar to the *tilak ceremony* among Hindus—demonstrating that lineage memory in Nangla Barh spans more than one pre-conversion community.

Asrar Khan and Abrar Khan trace their association with Nagar Brahmin ancestry together preserved the memory of their ancestor Sohrab Khan, who came from Ahar and is remembered as having held influence over twelve villages and as having resisted the British. These brothers along with Shri Bhagirath Kumar, Beersen Kashyap³¹, Rajan Tyagi, Mukul Tyagi, Rajeshwar Tyagi³², Gaurav Tyagi³³, Kishan Lal Tyagi³⁴ also recalled and mentioned Narayan Singh Tyagi's Khatti that fed eight surrounding villages - adding a third distinct ancestral strand to Nangla Barh's composite picture, alongside an extraordinary memory of regional influence and anti-colonial resistance.

9.3 Village: Phuldi

Nadeem Khan³⁵ and Furqan Pradhan and Tassavur Ali³⁶ traced Phuldi's founding to a connection with Atsaini, where two old Tyagis are remembered as having built a *garhi* before the family's presence extended into Phuldi. Their

testimony opens the kinship network beyond the immediate four villages, connecting Phuldi to a wider circuit of Tyagi migration and *garhi*-founding that this study can only partially trace.

10. Composite Memory and the Idea of Common Ancestry

The village-level evidence assembled in this paper read together with the regional tradition of two Brahmin brothers—Maheshwardatt and Brahmadatt—points toward a single underlying pattern rather than four unconnected local stories. In each case, a religious boundary that appears absolute in the present—Hindu Nangla Barh households and Muslim Vaith households, for instance—turns out on closer interview to sit atop a genealogical claim that both sides continue to recognize and act upon, whether through a common *gotra* name, a similar wedding obligation, or a common founding ancestor.

This does not mean that religious identity is unimportant to the communities themselves; nothing in the interviews suggests that the Muslim families of Vaith, Nangla Barh, or Phuldi regard their present faith as provisional or incomplete. Rather, it means that religious identity and lineage identity operate as two separate registers of belonging that the communities hold simultaneously, without requiring one to override the other. A person can be, and in these villages routinely is, both a practising Muslim and a bearer of a remembered Tyagi or Rajput *gotra*. Far from producing conflict, this double belonging appears to be experienced as ordinary and unremarkable—which is itself a significant social observation.

It is worth being cautious about over-generalizing from four villages to the wider district, let alone the wider region. What this chapter can responsibly claim is narrower: that within this particular corridor, the oral evidence for continuity of lineage across religious change is unusually dense, cross-confirmed by multiple independent informants, and reinforced by concrete social practice—the three-village wedding rule, the shared customs documented in—rather than resting on sentiment alone.

The broader significance of this density lies in what it suggests about how composite culture is actually maintained in practice at the village level in the Upper Ganga Plain—not primarily through formal interfaith institutions or public discourse, but through the much older and more durable channels of marriage obligation, *gotra* memory, and shared ritual practice that this chapter has traced village by village.

11. Closing Reflection: One Landscape, Many Lineages

The story of Pushpavati, Nangla Barh, Vaith, Bihoni, Phuldi, and Nangli Kanaur is really the story of a shared cultural world. The route itself carries sacred memory. The villages carry family memory. The interviews carry living social memory. And the customs carry continuity across generations. This is why the region cannot be understood through religion alone.

The historical truth that emerges from the interviews is that Hindu and Muslim communities in these villages have long lived within one another's social universe.

They share ancestry, rituals, village obligations, and memories of origin. That is the deepest meaning of the story told in this chapter.

Set against the wider ancestral tradition of Raja Maheshwardatt and Raja Brahmadatt, this local history becomes part of a much larger regional pattern of lineage division, migration, and resettlement—a pattern in which religious change appears repeatedly as a later chapter layered on top of an older, still remembered genealogical unity. The landscape described in these pages is best understood as a living palimpsest—successive layers of religious and social identity have been written over the villages across the centuries, yet none of the earlier layers has been fully erased. Each layer remains visible to a careful listener, in a *gotra* name, a ritual detail, or a remembered ancestor.

Hindu-Muslim unity in these villages is not only a matter of peaceful co-existence. It is a matter of common ancestry, shared customs, and a memory of origin that has been lived for generations in the form of marriage rules, rituals, *gotra* preservation, and village belonging. This is the living heart of the Vaith-Pushpavati corridor.



Interview with Sher Ali Khan and Mustazaf Khan at Vaith



Interview with Mukul Tyagi at Nangla Barh

12. Conclusion

What this chapter has traced along the Vaith-Pushpavati corridor is not simply a local curiosity or an exception to some larger rule. It is, rather, a window into the

way composite culture actually works at its most enduring—not through declarations of brotherhood, not through the goodwill of enlightened leaders, but through the slow, patient, largely unspoken work of shared memory. The villages of Nangla Barh, Vaith, Bihoni, and Phuldi did not set out to preserve Hindu-Muslim unity as a project. They simply went on living—marrying, mourning, celebrating, and remembering—and in doing so they preserved, almost by instinct, the social fabric that centuries of change had not managed to unravel.

The story of the two brothers is, in this sense, more than a founding narrative. It is a parable about how communities understand themselves across the long arc of time. One brother stayed; one brother left. One remained Hindu; one became Muslim. And yet the separation that looked like division was, at a deeper level, merely the opening of two branches from a single root—and that root, fed by *gotra* memory, by wedding obligation, by the milk offered at Chamand and the threshold worshipped at the doorframe, has never dried. That root is what this study has tried to document, and it is a root that the communities themselves, with far more grace and consistency than any outside observer could claim, have tended across the centuries.

There is a lesson here that extends well beyond the boundaries of the Garhmukteshwar *Tehsil*. At a time when religious identity is too often made to carry the entire weight of a community's self-understanding—when the question asked first of any village, any family, any individual is which side of a faith boundary they stand on—the villages of this corridor offer a quietly different answer. They say, through their customs and their kinship and their remembered ancestors, that the boundary of faith is real but it is not the deepest boundary there is. Deeper still is the boundary of blood, of common origin, of the obligation one generation carries to the next. And it is on that deeper ground, this study suggests, that the most durable forms of human unity have always been built.

The road from Garhmukteshwar to Pushpavati is, in the end, not merely a road between places. It is a road between eras—between the Mahabharata world of Hastinapur and the present, between the Brahmin brothers Maheshwardatt and Brahmaddatt and their descendants who today call themselves by the names of two different faiths, between a past of common origin and a present of composite belonging. To walk that road with open ears, as this paper has tried to do, is to understand that the story of Hindu-Muslim unity in this part of India is not a story that needs to be invented or imposed. It is the story that exists already there, in the memory of the people, waiting to be heard.

Notes and References

1. *Interview*, Date—05.07.2026, Mr. Sahir Khan (75 years) s/o Mr. Rehmat Khan s/o Mr. Sadar Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur.
2. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, 15.07.2026, 26.07.2026, Mr. Amanullah Khan (61 years; Assistant General Manager Cane, Simbhaoli Sugar Mill) s/o Mr. Hazi Osaf Ali, s/o Mr. Ali Hasan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Residence—Village Vaith, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur, Present Residence—Simbhaoli.

3. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, Shri Rajan Tyagi (59 years) s/o Shri Om Prakash, s/o Shri Chandra Singh, s/o Shri Mohar Singh, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—kashyap, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 10 other Villagers.
4. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, Mr. Mukul Tyagi (42 years), s/o Shri Krishna Kumar Tyagi, s/o Shri Devi Sahay Tyagi, s/o Ch. Kooode Singh, s/o Ch. Chhajju Singh, *Gotra*—Tushar, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 12 other Villagers.
5. *Interview*, Date—08.07.2026, Shri Bhagirath Kumar (Age-75), Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers.
6. *Interview*, Date—10.07.2026, Mr. Abrar Khan (60 years) s/o Mr Abbas Khan, s/o Mr. Shamsher Khan, Caste—Brahmin, *Gotra*—Nagar, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 8 other Villagers.
7. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, Shri Rajan Tyagi (59 years) s/o Shri Om Prakash, s/o Shri Chandra Singh, s/o Shri Mohar Singh, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Kashyap, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 10 other Villagers.
8. *Interview*, Date—05.07.2026, Mr. Sahir Khan (75 years) s/o Mr. Rehmat Khan s/o Mr. Sadar Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 10 other Villagers.
9. *Interview*, Date—06.07.2026, Mr. Pyar Mohammed (58 years) s/o Mr. Tasleem Hussain, s/o Mr. Yabar Hussain, Caste—Rajput, *Gotra*—Nirvana, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers.
10. *Interview*, Date—08.07.2026, Mr. Israr Khan (70 years) s/o Mr. Mir Daad, s/o Mr. Sher Khan, Caste—Brahmin, *Gotra*—Nagar, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 4 other Villagers.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Interview*, Date—18.07.2026, Mr. Mubarak Ali (55 years) s/o Mr. Ishtiaq Ali, s/o Mr. Abdul Raheem (Indian Army during freedom struggle), Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Village—Vaith, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers
14. *Interview*, Date—30.07.2026, Mr Saifullah Khan (32 years) s/o Raja Hussain, s/o Khursaid Ali, s/o Zabar Khan, Resident of Village—Vaith, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 4 other Villagers.
15. *Interview*, Date—26.07.2026, Mr. Mustazaf Khan (65 years; Assistant General Manager Cane, Dhampur Sugar mill) s/o Mr. Hazi Osaf Ali, s/o Mr. Ali Hasan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Residence—Village—Vaith, Post —Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur, Present Residence—Simbhaoli and 15 other Villagers.
16. *Interview*, Date—15.07.2026, Prof. Mahaveer Singh Tyagi (100 year), Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Jamdagini Vats, Residence—Village Bihuni, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 9 other Villagers.
17. *Interview*, Date—11.07.2026, 15.07.2026, Mr. Pinku Tyagi, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Shandilya, Residence—Village Bihuni, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur.
18. *Interview*, Date—15.07.2026, Dr. Bhudev Singh s/o Prof. Mahaveer Singh Tyagi, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Jamdagini Vats, Residence—Village Bihuni, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 10 other Villagers.
19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Interview*, Date—21.07.2026, Mr. Nadeem Khan (40 years) s/o Mr.Aaqil Khan s/o Naseer Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Village—Phuldi, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 3 other Villagers.
23. *Interview*, Date—26.07.2026, Mr. Furkan Tyagi (45 years) s/o Mr.Tohseeb, s/o Mr. Abdul Rasheed, s/o Mr. Lateef, Residence—Village Phuldi, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, Mr.Mukul Tyagi (42 years), s/o Shri Krishna Kumar Tyagi, s/o Shri Devi Sahay Tyagi, s/o Ch. Kooode Singh, s/o Ch.Chhajju Singh, *Gotra*—Tushar, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 20 other Villagers.
26. *Interview*, Date—22.07.2026, Mr.Tarikh Tyagi (43years) son of Mr. Anzar Hussain grandson of Late.Manzoor Hasan, s/o Aihmam Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre,Village—Vaith, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 4 other Villagers.
27. *Ibid .*
28. *Interview*, Date—18.07.2026, Mr. Athar Khan (49 years) s/o Mr.Chhuttan Khan s/o Mr. Azzi Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Village—Vaith, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 13 other Villagers.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Interview*, Date—11.07.2026, Mr Beersen Kashyap (54 years), Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur.
32. *Interview*, Date—30.07.2026, Mr. Rajeshwar Tyagi (79 years), *Gotra*—Kashyap, Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 20 other Villagers.
33. *Interview*, Date—12.07.2026, Mr. Gaurav Tyagi (38 years), s/o Shri Bijendra Kumar Tyagi, s/o Shri Devi Sahay Tyagi, s/o Chaudhary Kooode Singh, s/o Ch. Chhajju Singh, *Gotra*—Tushar, Residence—Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers.
34. *Interview*, Date—30.07.2026, Mr.Kishan Lal Tyagi (80 years), *Gotra*,-Kaushik , Village Nangla Barh, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur.
35. *Interview*, Date—21.07.2026, Mr. Nadeem Khan (40 years) s/o Mr.Aaqil Khan s/o Naseer Khan, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Village—Phuldi, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur and 5 other Villagers.
36. *Interview*, Date—25.07.2026, Mr. Tassavur Ali (48years) s/o Mr. Mushtaq Ali, Caste—Tyagi, *Gotra*—Mahesre, Village Phuldi, Post—Garhmukteshwar, District—Hapur.

It is quite necessary to declare that Muslim Tyagis have generally told their *Gotra* as—“Maheshrey”. Though it is their identification telling of their great Hindu ancestor’s name. The word Maheshre or Maheshrey or Mahesre means the blood lineage stock belongs to Maheshwar Bhatt, the elder brother of Brahmdukt Bhatt. In general the local population irrespective the Tyagi or non Tyagi identify all the Muslim Tyagis with this noun. The Tyagi Muslims along the Vaith- Garhmukteshwar—Meerut road are addressed as Maheshre. ★