



**Makings of a Cosmopolitan Culture of 'Preet': A Case  
Study of the Punjabi Little Magazine *Preetlari***

Simrat Khurana \*

**Abstract**

In the present global era, emphasis has been shifted to the philosophy of cosmopolitanism in contrast to the earlier focus on nationalism. In early twentieth-century colonial India, while the project of nationalism was at its peak, there were thinkers like Tagore highlighting the importance of cosmopolitan philosophy. However, a parallel project of cosmopolitanism and a lesser-known one was taking place in the province of Punjab, where Gurbakhsh Singh strived to establish the cosmopolitan philosophy of 'Preet' through his little magazine *Preetlari*. The aim of the present paper is to study and analyse the issues of the earliest decade of the publication of *Preetlari*, from 1933-1943, in order to highlight the makings of the cosmopolitan culture in Punjab represented through the microcosm of Preet Nagar. The paper will do so by reading the available issues and thoughts presented in the magazine in contestations with the then-dominant religious movements and its negotiations with nationalist fervour.

**Keywords:** Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, Socio-religious reforms, *Preetlari*, Punjab, Little Magazines.

While the twentieth century had been no less than the epoch of nationalism, with various new nation-states getting born as an immediate after-effect of the process of decolonisation, the twenty-first century shifted its focus more towards the critique of nationalism and envisioned cosmopolitanism in the global age. The debate between nationalism and cosmopolitanism was, however, not unprecedented, with the traces of its origin being in the Greek Stoic

---

\* Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University.

philosophy. The formation of India as a nation and imagining a community based on linguistic and religious symbols has been the primary focus of contention in the majority of works written on Hindi Nationalism. Also, the debates between nationalism and cosmopolitanism gained light through critics retrieving a cosmopolitan philosophy out of the works of a prominent Indian thinker Rabindranath Tagore. However, it is essential to see nationalism and cosmopolitanism not in dichotomy but as coexisting. The present paper draws attention to the case of Punjab caught amidst the religious, nationalist and cosmopolitan movements and aims to highlight the conundrums which shaped Punjabi consciousness in the first half of the twentieth century. The paper will attempt this through the example of the little magazine *Preetlari* highlighting the neglected cosmopolitan 'Preet' (Love) philosophy of Gurbakhsh Singh interacting and contesting with the regional, religious and national issues. It is in these interactions and contestations that the cosmopolitan philosophy of 'Preet' framed and forged Punjabi consciousness around the issues of theology, identity and race.

### **Punjabi Print Culture, Reform Movements and Literary Magazines**

The printing press made its appearance in Punjab with the American Presbyterian mission being established in Ludhiana almost two decades before the annexation of the province into British India in 1849. The printing press soon became the medium for propagating ideas by the religious reform movements (Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, and Ahmadiyah Movement) developing in the colonial Punjab in relation to Christian missionary activities and the reforming of strict religious identities. The print medium was also adapted to publish generations-old Punjabi literature of *Qisse*, religious texts as well as new experiments in the form of journalism and modern literature in the genre of novels, drama as well as poetry. The earliest ventures into journalism and literary magazines came from religious reform movements. *Nirguniara* was started in 1894 by the Khalsa Tract Society. *Dukh Niwaran* was started in 1906 by Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid. Bhai Ditt Singh started *Ditt Singh Magazine* in 1910, and *Punjabi Bhain* started in 1907 from Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, Ferozepur. It was with the coming of *Preetam* in 1923, however, that

a diversion from reformist magazines took place. *Preetam*, started by Narang Brothers, was the first general-purpose magazine, drawing on the literal meaning of the word magazine, a storehouse. A year after the publication of *Preetam*, *Phulwari* was started by Giani Heera Singh Dard in 1924 being the first Punjabi magazine devoted primarily to literature. The decade between the publication of *Phulwari* and the coming of *Preetlari* then saw the publication of numerous little magazines. *Kirti* was started in 1926; *Mauji* in 1926 by Charan Singh Shaheed; *Phuleran* in 1926 by Heera Singh Dard; *Kavi* in 1927 by Munsha Singh; *Hans* in 1929 by Charan Singh Shaheed; *Motia* in 1930 by Narang Brothers; *Chann* in 1931 by Giani Gurditt Singh; and *Balak* in 1932 by Giani Lal Singh. The tradition of the little magazines was thus set.

#### ***Preetlari*: The ‘Eclectic’ Little Magazine**

The category of little magazines was first used in relation to modernist magazines in the West. From Ezra Pound’s use of the term ‘small magazines’ and T.S. Eliot’s preference for the term ‘literary review’, it was the term ‘little magazines’ on which the question of magazines devoted purely to literature was finally settled. Little Magazines have been defined variously by scholars constituting common features of devotion to literature, limited audience, commitment to experiment, short-life, and in opposition to commercial interests and profit-making (Brooker and Thacker 11). Churchill and Mckible have offered a working definition of little magazines as “non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or under-represented writers . . . [and are] diverse in size, agenda, and longevity” (3).

As mentioned above, several literary journals had already made their appearance in the decade before *Preetlari*, with *Phulwari* contesting for the status of the first Punjabi little magazine. But it was only in 1933, with the publication of *Preetlari* something radically shifted in the Punjabi print culture. Also, it was coincidental that modernist little magazines in the West and the earliest little magazines in Punjabi developed around the same time i.e., the early decades of the twentieth century. The Punjabi little magazines,

however, radically differed from their Western counterparts. The experimental, avant-gardist, modernist little magazines in the West had emerged following long developments in print and journalistic ventures. The phenomenon of print and journalism being recent in Punjab, however, resulted in the emergence of little magazines which were yet crude and unrefined in form. These early little magazines in Punjabi, in fact, showed more resemblances with the Western counterparts of general magazines of earlier centuries like *The Spectator*, *The Tatler*, *The Gentleman's Magazine* rather than with their contemporaries *The Egoist*, *Blast*, *Poetry*, *The Dial*, et al. It was, therefore, no surprise that often references to *The Spectator* and American magazines *The Harper's Monthly* and *The Transatlantic Review* were made in the earliest issues of *Preetlari*.

*Preetlari*, though not fulfilling the criterion of experimental and shocking writings, can still be classified as first of its kind little magazine in Punjabi which clubbed together the elements of popular magazines with literary journals. In order to further establish its status as a little magazine, it can be placed in the category of 'eclectic' little magazines out of the six categories of little magazines proposed by Hoffman. Hoffman defines 'eclectic' as "an attitude which exhibits a smiling generosity to many types of literary novelty but remains discreetly noncommittal about their eventual worth. Finally, there is the magazine which is made in the editor's own image (and often at his own expense), designed to accommodate his own writings and the writings of those select and fortunate few who agree with him sufficiently to supply an appendix and footnote to the text" (190). *Preetlari* produced straight and realistic writings. The magazine was primarily its editor's mouthpiece while also including sufficient writings from other authors that matched the editor's philosophy. *Preetlari* did not produce pure literature alone but also published general articles on varied themes of health, sex, sports, life, love, current affairs, and much more.

### **Cosmopolitan 'Preet' Philosophy and Preet Nagar**

Martha Nussbaum's essay "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" opened the debate about cosmopolitan outlook by contrasting nationalism and cosmopolitanism through Tagore's example, but the

piece was seen as utopian and provoked several responses. Cosmopolitanism, "rather than being a utopian project or, as in Nussbaum's famous essay, a moral postulate, has resonance in a wide range of cultural, social, and political currents throughout the world. Cosmopolitanism has emerged as an important theoretical approach in social sciences in recent years" (Delanty 218). With critics evoking concepts like critical cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitan outlook and banal cosmopolitanisation, the global discourse has moved towards the discussion of cosmopolitan reality in the contemporary global world (Delanty 219, Beck 19). The history of cosmopolitan thought has already been traced to the Stoics in Western thought and the philosophy of cosmopolitanism had resonance in thinkers throughout the world before everyday life became cosmopolitan in banal ways and cosmopolitanism turned into a commodity in the present globalised world (Beck 14, 25). While Nussbaum brought to light the cosmopolitan philosophy of a prominent Indian thinker Tagore, he was, however, not the only thinker along those lines in India. A similar philosophy was taking shape in Punjabi consciousness through the cosmopolitan message of 'Preet' being spread in the little magazine *Preetlari* in the early decades of the twentieth century Punjab.

Gurbakhsh Singh, the man behind *Preetlari*, was stimulated by his American friend Harold Iago, who suggested him to start a journal on the East-West Question. Gurbakhsh Singh, who had started his literary career during his education in America by writing short pieces in English, thought of the idea as a good opportunity to publish his writings. While the idea fascinated him, the thoughts regarding the magazine's theme and content bothered him. He did not want his magazine to be the channel of a particular religion, nature, race or civilisation (*Manzil dis payi* 112). The philosophical idea behind the magazine, in fact, came out of an earlier poem written by him regarding a single chain of love encompassing all humanity. The poem titled "The Divine Cord" was written in English during his stay in America. The first paragraph of the poem, which was published in entirety in the first issue, also found place on the cover page, which presented a heart of beads through which ran the below-mentioned lines with a cupid sitting with his arrow symbolising 'Preet' (Love):

Oft Feel a Throb of the Universal Heart,  
Oft Hear Refrain of Love's Melody,  
Pointing to the same Divine Cord  
That Runs Through All Beads of God's Rosary

In the editorial written for the first issue of Sept. 1933, Gurbakhsh Singh expressed his wish to form a community of love encompassing all humanity. In the second issue, he described *Preetlari's* aim to help recognise the truth lying behind the masks of the sect, race, and country and to discover the actual Man. In declaring his aims, Singh was no less a visionary than Diogenes, the Cynic who had declared himself to be "a citizen of the world" (Warf 276). The title of his magazine *Preetlari* (Love-Link), clearly highlighted his 'Preet' Philosophy (Philosophy of Love). The yet unrecognized 'Preet' philosophy was a cosmopolitan philosophy aiming at shattering the narrow confines of religion, sect, race, and nation to bind universal humanity in the bond of love freeing humanity of illusions of narrow patriotism and liberating them from the ritualistic bonds of religion.

The cosmopolitan philosophy of Preet spanned through every issue of *Preetlari*, declaring the aim of uniting humanity through its editorials, thematic content and various pieces by the editor himself. In the issue of Jan. 1939, Singh, further elaborating on the aims of *Preetlari*, wrote, "I am looking at humanity from a common lens. In my opinion, all humans on the planet are like the beads in a chain. The gains made by one man are profitable for all and the loss of a single man is the defeat for all. No human or no nation can be prosperous alone. The happiness or sorrows of one will affect others" (my trans.; 69). Singh's ideas and philosophy, though often read as idealistic, needs to be re-read in the current light where cosmopolitanism is gaining momentum and cosmopolitan thinkers are being rediscovered. The 'Preet' Philosophy also had its material co-relative in the form of Preet Nagar, established nearby Amritsar in 1938. Preet Nagar was the cosmos/microcosm of universal brotherhood whose gates were open to all irrespective of caste, class, gender, religion, sect or race. It would be no exaggeration to call Preet Nagar the Shanti Niketan of Punjab. The vision of Preet Nagar was voiced in the first Preet-Milni, a gathering of writers and readers of

*Preetlari*, that was held in Lahore in 1936, followed up by the registration of a society under the name of Sansar Preet Mandal, which ultimately constituted Preet Saina (Community of Love) with its constituent members Preet-Sainiks (Soldiers/Protectors of Love). Within two years, the plan was brought to reality with land being brought from the funds gathered through the Ten-Year Membership Scheme of *Preetlari* and a township being built under the name Preet Nagar (The Town of Love).

Preet Nagar had been resided since its formation by personalities like Nanak Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh, who were later joined by various others like Balraj Sahni and Balwant Gargi. Initially, a *kothi* was shared by two families, followed by individual homes after the rampant growth in the town. In place of separate kitchens in the household, there was a community kitchen for all, where members gathered and ate food together. It was a secular space open to all where no institution of temple, gurudwara or mosque was established. It was also the first planned town in colonial Punjab which had also been progressive in allowing a space free from gender inhibitions and allowing interactions between men and women, believed by the founder to be important in the growth of an individual's personality. Preet Conference was held each year in which various sports events were conducted, and an annual play was performed by the drama club of Preet Nagar. These Preet Conferences were also the events of visits by famous personalities like Jawahar Lal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, and Nora Richards, among others. In 1940 a residency school inaugurated by Sir Abdul Kadar was also opened in Preet Nagar. It was known as Activity School and was established after taking inspiration from the best education models from across the globe. The school focused more on skill enhancement rather than rote learning and admitted students from different parts of India. Students participated in sports and annual plays. They were taught basic life skills like cooking, gardening, mechanics, knitting, and crafts in addition to knowledge of the books. The activity school laid the foundation of co-education for both boys and girls who participated in several events together. The school also resulted in the foundation of the children's magazine *Bal Sandesh* which published writings from the students.

*Preetlari* documented the minutest developments of Preet Nagar in its pages. From various services available to the advertisements for the sale of plots in Preet Nagar, everything was done in the pages of *Preetlari*. The list of new members was updated in each issue. Preet Nagar was advertised as an idyllic landscape free from the worries of urban life, a hamlet in nature laying down the foundations of a New India on the principles of brotherhood free from racist, sectarian, religious, and gender differences.

Preet Nagar's dissent from the conventional religious society and the lifestyle adopted by its members, as visible from the above descriptions, made it look no less than a subculture. But, the subculture of Preet Nagar was very different from the commonly held notions of subcultures derived from Western examples. Ross Haenfler defined subculture as "a relatively diffuse social network having a shared identity, distinctive meanings around certain ideas, practices, and objects, and a sense of marginalisation from or resistance to a perceived "conventional" society" (16). The most important feature of any subculture is its deviance from the mainstream. Preet Nagar's resistance to conventional norms of religion and its non-confirmative attitude towards gender equality, education, and the lifestyle of its member no doubt made it subcultural. But, there were certain other traits which restricted Preet Nagar from completely fitting into the mould of a subculture and made it different. Ken Gelder outlined the basic characteristics of any subculture, of which 'deviance' is the first one and the one characterising Preet Nagar as well. The other characteristics, however, include a subculture's "negative relation to labour and class, its association with territory rather than property, it's being outside the domestic sphere, and its ties to excess and exaggeration in terms of behaviour, style, dress, and noise," bar out Preet Nagar from the conventional definitions of the concept (Gelder 3, 4).

Preet Nagar had, in fact, developed a space within the domestic sphere where families of its members lived together and worked together. It was not a territory of idle and vagabond people; instead, it was a well-established town allowing proper property ownership to its members. Furthermore, there was no excess or exaggeration, neither in the lifestyle nor in the writings published from there



through the medium of *Preetlari*. Unlike the famous youth subcultures of mods and punks, there was never heard a swear word in Preet Nagar. The use of foul words was not allowed within its premises. Its members followed the principles of simple living. Its defiance of conventional society was portrayed through its presentation as an ideal space and not a hedonistic territory. Its aim was to set up an example of cosmopolitanism in the broader culture rather than establishing a separate subculture.

### **Preetlari's Contestations with Theology**

*Preetlari* had made its appearance amidst the milieu of religious reform movements in colonial Punjab. It had declared its contestation with the established theology of sectarian nature promoting superstitions and animosities among humanity in the very first issue. The battle of *Preetlari* had been primarily with institutionalized religions and not belief in God per se. It, in fact, challenged the established theology and framed an alternative theology which was porous, open and practical. *Preetlari's* long quarrel with institutionalised religions began with its opening issue itself. *Preetlari* suffered backlash for choosing the image of a naked cupid for its cover page over the Sikh Gurus. The magazine was vehemently criticised by religious authorities, ultimately resulting in the relocation of the editor and the magazine from the site of Smadh Akali Phullan Singh to Model Town, Lahore, within two years of its inception. The magazine was again engulfed in another controversy when Gurbakhsh Singh's article "Guru Nannak Darshan" was misinterpreted, resulting in the boycotting of *Preetlari* by Chief Khalsa Diwan and accusing its editor as an atheist by Sikh religious bodies.

Gurbakhsh Singh declared his belief in "practical religion" rather than the "doctrinal religion" in the second issue of *Preetlari*. In the issue of Oct. 1933, he said, "Our gurudwaras, temples, and mosques are not the testimonies of religion, but our character is. We can extend some benefit by sharing our experiences aiming to improve one's character, and this is the motive of *Preetlari*" (my trans.; 66). In the Jan. 1939 issue, he further declared, "*Preetlari's* aim is to incline his brotherhood towards the religion of humanity instead of doctrinal

religion . . . My competition is not with men; Man is my love. My competition is with creeds, practices, and dogmas, which are refutable. Each word of *Preetlari* is creating a smaller or a larger hole in the dogmatic castle” (51). He refuted the differences created by religions and sects and rebuked the superstitions propagated through the medium of religion and tradition. He was trying to teach the religion of humanity to mankind obliterating all the differences through love. Singh's views were very similar to Tagore, who had also opposed organised religion, saying, “When religion, instead of emancipating mind, fetters it with narrow confinement of creeds, and conventions, then it becomes the greater barrier against a true meeting of races” (qtd. in Quayum 7).

*Preetlari* provided Singh a space for publishing similar views on religion held by other writers. He showed preference towards writings refuting strict religious codes and challenging dogmatic religion. In the issue of October 1933, he published an article titled “Asal Mazhab Ki Hai?” (What is True Religion?) written by Santokh Singh Vidyarthi condemning communal divisions on religious lines and in the issue of June 1939, a poem written by Darshan Singh ‘Awara’ titled “Jekar Jag Vich Mazhab Na Hunda” (If the World had no Religion), showing a preference for a world without religion, was published. Gurbakhsh Singh was strictly against rigid religious divisions and did not exploit his magazine to promote a single religion like other journals of the time. He was a Sikh and a believer and even the first page of *Preetlari* had the lines from Gurbani “Ik-Onkar, Shri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh” (hailing the Supreme God) printed at the top. He even published hymns from Gurbani in *Preetlari* from time to time and elucidated the teachings of the Gurus. But, he never presented Sikhism as the only true religion and this irked his contemporaries who were busy in constructing a separate and rigid identity for Sikhs in their journals under the influence of reform movements. *Preetlari* presented religious tolerance and while Singh condemned the superstitions propagated by religion, at the same time, he never missed the chance to praise the liberating ideas found in different religions. He was greatly inspired by Buddhism and also translated Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia* in Punjabi and advertised it in the pages of *Preetlari*. The influence of Buddhism also made him append the line “A Philosophical Journal of Life,

Love, and Longing” to *Preetlari* on the cover page of every issue published from 1938 onwards. He was a keen admirer of Buddha and presented him as the ultimate soldier of love in an article titled “Preet Sipahi” (Soldier of Love) published in the issue of May 1939. In that article, he placed Buddha above Guru Nanak, which displeased Sikh religious bodies further. Though he was often labelled an atheist and *Preelari* was shunned by religious authorities, at the same time, he received support from others who were influenced by his philosophy of love. In the first issue of the magazine itself, Sir Joginder Singh wrote that “in our present stage of evolution in India, no one can render a greater service than a publicist who shows the way to unity and makes visible the subtle filaments which unite humanity. To a Sikh, there can be no higher ideal to live upto than the realisation of Unity” (5). Also, in 1939, when *Preetlari* was boycotted by Sikh religious bodies, The Free Thinkers Association, Burma sent a letter to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee stating *Preetlari* as the “only philosophical journal of Punjab . . . [advocating] independent thinking” (47).

Gurbakhsh Singh, as stated in the editorial of *Preelari*, was attempting to teach “practical religion” to its readers, which was concerned more with the life to be lived than the afterlife. For this, he even designed *Pran-Pustak*, which was like a personal diary to be kept by readers recording their personal growth throughout the year, laying emphasis on the living human character and personality. In the issue of January 1940, Singh wrote, “man has started calling this world a dream, and he is lying wearied to be free of this dream. It is essential to remind him that life is a spectacular event and is meant to be experienced and enjoyed” (my trans.; 8). He stated that man has enslaved himself with the dogmas of God, religion, rituals, traditions, sin, punishment, heaven and hell and is living under a heavy burden. He further said that “God is actually not a heavy weight to be burdened by. He is, in fact, the name of the greatest freedom” (my trans.; 8). He considered institutionalised religion which had burdened man with the fear of sin and punishment, as false religion because true religion, according to him, was supposed to liberate mankind and not to hold man in bondage.

### ***Preetlari's Engagement with Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism***

The philosophy of cosmopolitanism is being revisited in the contemporary age resulting in unearthing the cosmopolitan thinkers. The only Indian thinker remembered for his cosmopolitan and universal philosophy criticising narrow nationalism is Tagore. However, there are stark parallels between Tagore and Gurbakhsh Singh when it comes to the critique of institutionalised religion and narrow patriotism and nationalism. Singh was often rebutted by the generation following him as propagating moralistic and idealistic philosophy. However, there is a need to recognise him as a cosmopolitan thinker shaping the Punjabi consciousness in the colonial Punjab. While nationalism and cosmopolitanism have often been studied as dichotomous terms, recent scholarship “seeks to resolve the tensions between nationalism and universal liberal ideas, viewing the two ideologies as complements rather than substitutes” (Warf 281). The engagement and reconciliation between the two ideologies were also visible in the pages of *Preetlari*. Though criticising narrow patriotism, *Preetlari* nonetheless promoted the Indian independence movement. It, in fact, attempted to show through the example of Preet Nagar that the foundation of the independent nation had to be laid on the principle of brotherhood free from all discriminating factors. The reports of the recent progress in independent struggle, the developments within the Congress Party, and other national issues were often reported in *Preetlari*. Though Gurbakhsh Singh often stated his stance to be non-political, *Preetlari* nevertheless published articles on the themes of Indian Nationalism by other authors. In an article titled “Bharat Mata da Mandir” published in May 1939, Inder Chakravarty described the temple of Bharat Mata established in Banaras and requested readers to go and witness the view themselves. *Preetlari* advocated the freedom of individuals from the narrow confines in order to achieve freedom of the nation in the true sense. *Preetlari*, through its articles, also advocated for the freedom of women in the independent nation. In an article titled “Hindustani Istri” written by Amrita Pritam for the issue of Feb. 1940, female education was advocated for the development of the Indian nation. Also, Preet Nagar had established a society where men and women not only co-habited together but also interacted freely, where male and female children attended the first

of its-kind co-ed Activity school, participated in activities and sports as well as performed plays together. The model for an independent nation highlighted in the pages of *Preetlari* was based on humanitarian principles free from the limitations of religion, class, caste and gender.

In another one-act play titled “Desh Pyaar” written by Inder Chakravarty and published in the annual edition of 1940, Muslims were portrayed in solidarity with the Hindus and Sikhs, advocating for a common nation for all in opposition to the movement for a separate Muslim nation that was gaining prominence at the time. However, on the inauguration of the Activity School, when Sir Abdul Kadar was invited, Singh received criticism for inviting the political persona actively involved in the workings of a separate Islamic Nation. He, however, responded that Sir Abdul was invited rather as a Nationalist Muslim because he wanted to engage with those sections of the Muslim population who had complaints with Hindus and the major Nationalist party. Also, the apolitical stance of *Preetlari* and Preet-Sainiks was expressed in the same article.

*Preetlari*’s pages were full of articles about political and national developments yet remain non-political in its commitment; though seeming strange, however, must be seen in the light of where it worked for reconciliation between nationalism and cosmopolitan outlook. Also, the larger vision of *Preetlari* always aimed to go beyond the national boundaries and to establish ‘*Pooran Bhaichara*’ or Universal Brotherhood (“*Pooran bhaichara*” 1). Therefore, even when *Preetlari* published articles in praise of Gandhi, Khadi, and the Indian National Congress, it at the same time declared its non-political commitment to any of the national movements. Though *Preetlari* promoted the use of Swadeshi through the advertisements of Swadeshi clothes made by Jahaz Marka Company in various issues and highlighted the importance of Swadeshi goods for the economic benefit of Indian Nation in an article titled “*Khadar di Mahatata*” published in Oct. 1939, it never participated formally in nationalist movements promoting narrow patriotism and even the members of Preet-Community were barred from formal participation in any movement stating “Preet-Saina is an institution of Preet and not a political one” (my trans.; “*Ek Nationalist di akh vichon*” 7). In the

editorial of May-June 1940, the editor wrote that “My views are neither nationalist nor socialist and not even religious. I am not possessed by high patriotism which enables oneself to die for his nation. I neither hate Britishers nor do I love national flags or get moved by national songs. I am not a Congressman nor a strong advocator of Congress’ actions. I am neither a lover of Khadi nor an advocator for Swadeshi” (my trans.; 2). He advocated simple living with lesser number of clothes preferably Khadi produced within India but was completely against wasting and burning one’s clothes that were not Swadeshi. His idealism was of a cosmopolitan and not a nationalist. He declared the motto of his community as-“Loyalty and service to mankind is the first human duty” (7). His religion was humanity and not nationalism.

Gurbakhsh Singh was highly in favour of adopting the best values from all the nations and building a society on cosmopolitan grounds. Preetlari often published articles on the best practices from different cultures in various countries. Also, the foundation of Activity School was laid after taking inspiration from the best education models all across the globe. In the Jan. 1939 issue, he wrote “Preetlari da Moanorath” stating

The human world can be divided into units for our better understanding. These units can be formed on the basis of nation-states. But, the manner in which different provinces within a nation coexist; similarly, all the nations should be seen as constituent units of a single world. All the nations are co-existent and co-dependent and progress of one should be considered progress of all. (my trans.; 69)

Gurbakhsh Singh's worldview thus can be viewed as one in which nations did not exist in opposition but in the light of the proposition made by Nussbaum in cosmopolitan theory where the existence is to be understood in terms of concentric circles in which the larger whole circle of humanity surrounds smaller circles like those of nations (9).

### **Conclusion: Trialectic Convergence of Theology, Nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism in the Composite Culture of Punjab**

*Preetlari* participated in the trialectics of theology, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism through the philosophy of 'Preet' promoted in its page. The engagements with the religious and nationalistic questions of time managing its cosmopolitan stance highlighted the convergence between theological, national and cosmopolitan debates in the shaping of Punjabi consciousness in the early twentieth century. It is, therefore, fallacious to try to understand the shaping of Punjabi consciousness through the isolated axis of either religion or nationalism. Though the two axes often being the predominant points from which Punjabi consciousness has been studied in major scholarly works, there was a third axis developing on the lines of cosmopolitanism contesting as well as negotiating with the other two. However, the cosmopolitan outlook which was emerging primarily from the 'Preet' philosophy was not something unprecedented. The composite culture of Punjab had always been cosmopolitan in its outlook, with major religious communities co-inhabiting based on a shared diverse culture before the construction of rigidities by religious-reform movements. The cosmopolitan philosophy of 'Preet' advocated by Gurbakhsh Singh in *Preetlari*, therefore, can be viewed in continuation with the line of thought of *ishq-ibadat* of Baba Farid, Guru Nanak, Bulle Shah, Waris Shah, and others in the larger composite culture of Punjab.

### **Works Cited**

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2006.
- Beck, Ulrich. *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Polity Press, 2006.
- Brooker, Peter, and Andrew Thacker, general editors. *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*. Vol.I, Oxford UP, 2009.
- Churchill, Suzanne W., and Adam McKible. "Little Magazines and Modernism: An Introduction." *American Periodicals*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2005, pp. 1-5. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20771167>.

- Davis Emmett. *Press and Politics in British Western Punjab 1836-1947*. Academic Publications, 1983.
- Delanty, Gerard. "The Cosmopolitan Imagination." *Boundaries: Transience and Intercultural Dynamics*, no. 82/83, Sept. 2008. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40586351>.
- Gelder, Ken. *Subcultures: Cultural Histories and Social Practice*. Routledge, 2007.
- Haenfler, Ross. *Subcultures: The Basics*. Routledge, 2014.
- Hoffman, Frederick J., et al. *The Little Magazine: A History and A Bibliography*. Princeton UP, 1946.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *For Love of Country?* Beacon Press, 2002.
- Quyam, Mohammad A., editor. *Tagore, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Perceptions, Contestations, and Contemporary Relevance*. Routledge, 2020.
- Singh, Gurbakhsh. "Ek Nationalist di akh vichon." *Preetlari*, vol. 7, no. 2, May-June 1940, p.2, 7.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Manzil Diss Pai*. Navyug Publishers, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pooran Bhaichara." *Preetlari*, vol. 6, no. 2, Feb. 1939, p.1.
- Sluga Glenda, and Julia Horne. "Cosmopolitanism: Its Past and Practices." *Journal of World History*, vol. 21, no. 3, Sept. 2010, pp. 369-73. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40985021>.
- Warf, Barney. "Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Geographic Imaginations." *Geographic Review*, vol. 102, no. 3, July 2012, pp. 271-92. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41709187>.