

Comparison of religiosity, life-style and taste between two Krishna-believer groups in Hungary

1) Different trends of Vaisnava Tradition in Hungary

There are three groups of Krishna believers in Hungary. Four fifth of them belongs to ISKCON, one tenth of them belongs to the Hungarian Vaisnavas following Govinda Maharaj leaving the ISKCON and one tenth to the Hungarian Brahmana Mission broken away from the Hungarian Vaisnavas. The Hungarian Vaisnavas have centres in five or six major towns, some of them live in adjacent farms around Nandafalva (Nandaville). This group with a total of 150 members (including 50 initiated bhaktas insist less on formalities, men do not shave their heads, they wear clothes customary in India and paints only at home, and eating chocolate is permitted for them. They do not sympathize with aggressive missionary work and with asking for donations. Their connection to European and especially Hungarian culture and arts is closer. They stage plays on Vedic topics but they also sing Vedic lyrics translated into Hungarian, to the melodies of Hungarian folksongs. They consider marriage and family life the most appropriate way of life, as opposed to monastic life, and all of them earn money, mostly in enterprises. They appreciate personal freedom, they are less fundamentalist, either in the issues of theology or of its practice. They publish a high-quality periodical that covers the world of transcendence and they hold lectures on the Vedic culture, on various levels. They talk about Krishna devotees belonging to ISKCON with respect and affection but they just want to follow their own path.¹

A smaller group broke away from this group under the name Hungarian Brahmana Mission (HBM) and joined the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math. Their leader (and siksa guru²) Arwindasundar (Bakos Attila) applied for reinitiation from Govinda Maharaja (the disciple of Praphupada's master). Deviating from the ISKCON in their case does not mean the alignment with the Hungarian culture, rather it means the elaboration of a more personalized version of Krishna faith. They differ from the Krishna believers belonging to the ISKCON in terms of lifestyle and to some extent the scale of values, but not the principles of faith. They don't want to restrict the human personality with exaggerated asceticism, they want to live with keeping to the golden mean. Their religious and ethical standards are laxer. For them, the four main rules are not dogmas but principles which help the improvement of the personality. They prefer family life to monastic life. While the ISKCON believers' self-image is similar to the collectivist self-image of the Indian vaisnavas in which the "I" is the member of "we", the self-image of the members of the Hungarian Brahmana Mission is more European-like, more individualistic. They consider their self-realization important. They think only the half-built ego can be deconstructed. They think it is important that everybody do and offer God what they are experts in. While almost half of the members of the ISKCON and the Hungarian Vaisnavas live in the "Vedic village", almost all of them works somewhere even those living in the ashram. Besides all this, the initiated ones (even the women) hold a priestly vocation. They don not missionize on the streets but give lectures, maintain the Mandala-véda publishing company which serves mainly the yoga-culture, but it issues other religious works as well. They have their own Bhagavad-Gita translation too. They have about 40 initiated members, who are mostly young and got familiar with the HBM at their lectures. Apart from them, hundreds of attendants are recorded. The prominent Krishna-believer members of the ISKCON criticize the religious practice of the HBM members and stress that observing the four main moral rules is essential to returning to God so it is compulsory norm for the initiated bhaktas, for this reason the vaisnava tendencies which acting in a different - deviant or heretic - way should be considered as ones who distort the vaisnava theology for making way for sensualism. But the HBM-member Krishna believers differ not only from ISKCON members

¹ More about the Vaisnavas: Kamarás-1998:303-312

² Teaching guru (Their introducing guru is Govinda Maharaja)

but form the members of the parent-organization, the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, who are more closely related to India than the members of the HBM. To sum up, the HBM represents a Europeanised, secular, individualistic version of the vaisnava religion, and within this, the Krishna faith.

2. Purposes and questions

The purpose of my research is the comparison of the religiosity, scales of values, lifestyles, habitudes and the relation to arts of two Krishna-devotee groups, the ISKCON-related Praphupada disciples and the Hungarian Brahmana Mission-related Govinda disciples. One of my other researches in which I am examining the connections of the religiosity and lifestyle of ten religious groups³, offers a good opportunity for this research⁴.

P. Bourdieu analyzed the correlation among the fields of a) social positions, b) the dispositions (the habitude, the way of doing things) c) standpoints and choices in the several spheres of the life (meal, sport, politics, art). He found that the field of standpoints and choices reflects the field social positions mediating by the fields of dispositions (Bourdieu–1979). I think the disposition (the habitude) is more or less suitable for the lifestyle, the value-system or the taste.

My questions are how we can fit the religiousness in this correspondence. *M. Weber* and others verified convincing, that the different kinds of religions and religiosities can be connected looser or tighter with both social positions and lifestyles, however a certain religion or religiousness very rarely coincidence completely with a certain social position, but – I think so – rather with a certain lifestyle, habitude, value-system, taste, which influence the particular decisions, behaviours and judgments of taste. When *P. Bourdieu* compares the sphere of the social positions with the sphere of the lifestyles, he finds in the sphere of self employed the following lifestyle elements: piano, whisky, golf, bridge, water ski, but in the sphere of skilled workers and foremen he finds beer, football, accordion, angling, snap. It's questionable whether between two Krishna-devotee groups could we find such special lifestyle elements. My questions are: What sort of differences are in lifestyle between two groups of Vaisnavas in Hungary? What is the role of social position and the religiousness in the explanation? What degree does type of religiousness influences lifestyle?

3. Religiosity

3.1. The dimensions of religiousness and the concept of God

The members of the two groups regarded the importance of the eight dimensions of religiosity as follows⁵:

<i>Dimensions of the religion</i>	<i>ISKCON-members (n = 32)</i>	<i>HBM-members (n = 34)</i>	<i>Traditional Christians⁶ (n = 159)</i>
religious faith	4.7	4.6	4.5
moral principles	4.5	3.4	3.7
community	4.4	4.1	3.3
religious knowledge	4.3	3.9	3.7
meditation	4.3	3.9	2.8
religious emotions	3.7	4.4	3.7
religious experiences	3.7	4.5	3.1

³ Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, Baptists, Pentecostals, Jehova Witnesses, Adventists, Buddhists and the two Krishna-devotee groups.

⁴ In this research, the different religious groups are represented by 20-35-year-old graduated or undergraduate students who practiced their religion on a regular basis, with 30-80-person samples.

⁵ On a scale ranging from "very important" (5) to "not important at all" (1).

⁶ Catholics, Calvinists (Reformeds) and Lutherans.

rites	3.4	3.1	2.6
average	4.1	4.0	3.4

table 1.

Both the difference and the similarity are apparent. Compared to Christians⁷, the vaisnavas regarded most of the religious dimensions more important: community, religious experiences, rites and most of all the meditation. In the case of the two vaisnava groups, three dimensions show significant difference: moral principles, religious experiences and religious emotions. Furthermore, there is a smaller but still significant difference in the importance of religious knowledge. According to this, the remarkable differences between the two vaisnava groups emerge mostly in cognitive and emotional dimensions as well as in the so called consequence dimension – as far as the importance of moral principles are concerned - which means the effects of religion on everyday life.

From the aspect of the image of God, there is a much less difference between the Christians and the monotheist vaisnavas: the young, educated and regular worshippers of both religions regard God intimate rather than powerful, living within them rather than outside, close rather than far, encouraging rather than authoritative, consoling rather than condemning, personal rather than impersonal loving companion rather than master, friend rather than king. The image of God of the HBM-member vaisnavas is somewhat more intimate than that of the ISKCON members⁸.

3.2. Preference of “holy things”

The fact that every holy thing is more important for both vaisnava groups means that their world is less secularized than the that of the traditional Christians in Hungary. But there is a – not very big but significant – difference between the two vaisnava groups⁹:

<i>„Holy things”</i>	<i>ISKCON-members (n = 32)</i>	<i>HBM-members (n = 34)</i>	<i>Traditional Christians (n = 159)</i>
holy scriptures	4.8	4.2	4.2
holy musik	4.5	4.5	3.7
holy images	4.3	4.0	2.1
holy days	4.1	4.2	4.1
holy actions	4.0	3.9	3.3
holy buildings	4.0	3.4	3.7
pilgrimage	3.5	3.5	2.1
holy clothing	3.5	2.9	2.0
average	4.1	3.8	3.2

table 2.

Regarding the judging of the holy things, the two vaisnava groups differs in the appreciation of spectaculars but the holy scriptures are not so important for the HBM members then for the ISKCON members either. According to this, the HBM vaisnavas appear more secularized again. This is also reinforced by the fact

⁷ They were also represented by 20-35-year-old graduated or undergraduate students who practiced their religion on a regular basis.

⁸ Using a 1 to 5 intimacy scale, this value is 3.4 for the Christians, 3.5 for the ISKCON members, 3.8 for HBM members.

⁹ Again, using the scale ranging from “very important” (5) to “not important at all” (1).

which says the HBM members would yield more roles for women in religious life (3.7) than the ISKCON members would (2.7).

3.3. Judgment of the world and the man

I find significant differences in the degree of the optimism and pessimism of the world-view and the notion of the human. Both religions and the lifestyles within a religion significantly can be different in the respect whether they consider the world or the human nature good or bad, abandoned by God or enriched by God. In this respect the Catholics (after them Lutherans and Calvinists) are most optimistic¹⁰, the Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses are most pessimistic. Mostly Catholics think, that the human nature is essentially good, that in the world basically are harmony and cooperation, that the human achievements and successes are the signs of the manifestation of the God. Mostly Lutherans think, that in the world may be found a lot of good reflecting the goodness and manifestation of God. Of course the sheer optimism may be not too deep, and the pessimism may be deeply experienced and expiated and responsible. In this aspect, the Catholics (4.3) are followed by the HBM vaisnavas (4.0) in terms of optimism. But the ISKCON vaisnavas (3.3) just like the Calvinists (3.48) considered the world evil and man sinner even though not to such extent as the Baptists (3.0), the Adventists (3.0) the Pentecostals (2.7) or the Jehovahists (2.6).

4. Value-system and life-style

4.1. Value-system

Investigating the value-system of the seven religious groups by means of the value-test of Sh. Schwartz using for surveying the value-systems of different cultures (Schwartz–1992) I could register rather significant differences, first of all between the two vaisnava groups:

<i>Value-clusters</i>	<i>ISKCON-members (n = 32)</i>	<i>HBM-members (n = 34)</i>	<i>Traditional Christians (n = 159)</i>
traditionalism	4.2	3.5	4.0
benevolence	3.8	4.0	4.0
security	3.2	3.6	3.9
achievement	3.1	3.4	3.6
universality	3.1	3.8	4.0
independence	3.0	3.9	3.6
pleasure	2.5	3.7	3.4
average	3.3	3.7	3.7

table 3.

Based on the previous data, it is not surprising that – apart from traditionalism – the value-system of the vaisnavas belonging to HBM is much closer to the value-system of the Christians than to the value-systems of the other vaisnava group. This is confirmed not only by the qualification of the certain value-groups but also by the openness to different values, which is indicated by the average figures too. The situation is also graded by the chart showing what importance the certain values were assigned¹¹:

<i>Values</i>	<i>ISKCON- members (n = 32)</i>	<i>HBM- members (n = 34)</i>
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¹⁰ Using the scale ranging from very optimistic (5) to very pessimistic (1).

¹¹ The extent of deviation is indicated by the colour of shading.

trustworthiness, honesty, sincerity----- becsületes	4.4	4.2
discipline, self-control	4.3	4.0
responsibility and reliability	4.3	4.0
forgiveness, no revenge	4.2	4.0
respect for parents	4.2	3.3
cleanliness, tidiness, neatness	4.2	4.0
obedience, respect, a sense of duty	4.2	3.5
intelligence	4.1	3.7
wisdom, a practical philosophy	4.1	4.4
faithful, loyal, true -- lojális	4.1	3.6
willingness to help, work for others	4.0	4.0
impartiality, openness, no prejudices	4.0	4.1
open-minded, having a wide intellectual horizon	4.0	3.9
politeness, good manners	3.9	3.6
health	3.8	3.9
affection, gentleness	3.8	4.3
effectiveness, competency	3.7	3.8
friendship, closeness in human relationships	3.7	4.1
inner harmony, a lifestyle free of anxieties	3.7	4.2
courage, resolution, espousal of ideas	3.7	4.1
humble, submissive, compliant	3.7	4.0
peace, a world free of wars and conflicts	3.6	3.9
own object of life	3.6	4.3
happiness, contentment:	3.6	4.4
logic, rationality	3.6	3.2
diligence, ambition, effort	3.6	3.0
affiliation	3.4	3.4
mutual favour	3.4	3.3
family security, taking care of our beloved	3.4	3.9
good humour, cheerfulness, lightheartedness	3.3	3.9
social order	3.3	3.0
bold, daring	3.2	3.4
social justice	3.2	3.0
independence, self-reliance, strong personality	3.1	3.9
traditionalism	3.1	2.8
talented	3.0	2.9
self-consciousness	3.0	4.0
moderate	2.9	2.8
freedom, independence, having choices	2.8	4.0
creativity, innovative thinking	2.8	3.8
lovig of nature	2.8	3.6
equality, fraternity, equal chances for all	2.7	2.8
self-respect, sel-esteem	2.6	3.9
beauty in nature and in the arts	2.6	3.9
performance, usefulness, enjoying the work done	2.5	3.7

widely respected	2.4	2.6
successful	2.4	2.9
prestige, authority, repute	2.3	2.0
national security, protection against outside attacks	2.3	3.4
love as physical and psychological intimacy	2.3	4.0
interesting life, variety, experiences, activity	2.2	3.8
wealth, prosperity, affluence	2.0	3.2
influential, mover	1.7	1.8
social and political power	1.7	1.9
recognition in society	1.7	2.5
pleasurable life, leisure time	1.7	2.8

table 4.

It is clearly visible that the largest deviations are related to the pleasures of life and individual independence (pleasurable life and interesting life, wealth, love as physical and physiological intimacy, self-respect, freedom, self-consciousness).

Obviously, there is a remarkable difference in sexuality, since the initiated ISKCON members consider the strict directive on sexual abstinence compulsory, while the HBM members regard modest sexuality as a means-value which serves their spiritual-mental self-realization. From the aspect of the role of sexuality in a religious person's life, – marking the importance of sexuality on a five-grade scale – the 25-30-year-old, educated and religion-practicing HBM members (3.0) come after the Buddhist belonging to the same category (3.5), Catholics (3.5), Lutherans (3.4), Calvinists (3.2) and Baptists (3.1) but before the Adventists (2.8), Jehovahists (2.3) and ISKCON members (1.8).

From all these figures we can deduct the ISKCON members' fairly traditionalist and the HBM members' more Europeanized and more individualist value-system and way of living.

4.2. Free-time activities

Surveying of the variety and intensity of free-time activities¹² and their quality¹³ we can experience only little differences between Christians and vaisnavas: the Christians are it more active a little bit in free-time activities and they receive more values a little bit than the other.

<i>free-time activities</i>	<i>ISKCON-members (n = 32)</i>	<i>HBM-members (n = 34)</i>	<i>Christians (n = 235)</i>
the variety and intensity of the activities	2.6	2.6	3.2
the quality of the activities	3.0	2.9	3.5
reading	3.6	3.6	4.1
music	3.4	3.1	3.6
artistic creativity	3.1	3.2	2.9
internet	3.1	3.0	3.2
novels	2.9	3.5	3.7
poems	2.9	3.0	3.2
charity	2.8	2.2	2.5
hobby	2.4	2.5	3.2

¹² The number of activities and their frequency.

¹³ The value of the activity, f.e. the value of the readings, films, plays etc.

TV and video	2.4	2.3	3.5
sport	2.1	3.3	2.7
theatre	1.8	2.0	2.5
fine arts	1.7	2.3	2.8
visit of pleasure grounds	1.2	2.0	3.6
political and public life activity	1.1	1.1	1.6

table 5.

The free-time activity scheme of the two vaisnava groups differs significantly only in few activities (novels, charity, fine arts, visit of pleasure grounds, sport), but these differences constitute the characteristic features of their ways of living. The activity-scheme of the HBM members is definitely more secularized.

We have to keep in view that the meaning of “reading” can be rather different: for the vaisnava-believers first of all reading of holy books (for the ISKCON-members rather than the HBM-members). The entertainment for the ISKCON devotees first of all are sacral dance and singing as well as being together with the Krishna-believers, for HBM devotees is visiting of pleasure grounds too. The artistic activity for the ISKCON devotees are at the same time religious activity, for the HBM devotees are secular activities too.

5. Art

5.1. Attitude toward art

According to data of my former survey the attitude of most Krishna devotees towards (non-Vedic) sciences was negative, the proportion of negative and positive opinions in relation to the European arts is much more balanced, and the scatter of opinions is greater as well. However, the tendency is perfectly clear in this field, too: as one progresses in Krishna belief, the importance of the European arts is fading, and the reservations become stronger. With the married devotees living in the world, the arts have a somewhat stronger position. While the proportion of negative answers among Krishna monks is 90%, there was no Christian monk who gave such an answer.

<i>How far is important the arts for you?</i>	<i>Krishna-believer monks (%) (n=31)</i>	<i>Christian monks (%) (n=34)</i>
they are unnecessary	29	—
they are good only in God's service	19	—
only the Vedic art is valuable	3	—
they are wonderful	7	45
they are interesting	—	42
they do them	—	18
they take us closer to God	—	5
they don't like the contemporary art	—	6

table 6.

Examining the intensity¹⁴ of the relation to arts, we cannot find any major differences either between the vaisnavas and the Christians or between the two vaisnava groups: the HBM members (2.9) come after the Catholics (3.2), the Calvinists (3.0) and the Lutherans (3.0) but the ISKCON members (2.7) come after

¹⁴ We examined how often they encounter works of art and how often does artistic activities. This was placed on a five-grade scale ranging from “very often” (5) to “very rarely” (1).

Baptists and Adventists (2.8), at the same level with Jehovahists (2.7) and after Pentecostals (2.6). However there are substantial differences in the views of the relation of arts and religion. This was examined in two ways. We asked to what extent they agree to the idea which claims that we can learn a lot about God from the arts or whether they think the opposite: arts substantially belong to secular things. In this aspect, from all the interviewed religious groups the it was the HBM members that proved most opened (4.0) coming before Buddhists (3.7), Lutherans (3.4) and Catholics (3.3) while the ISKCON members were the most closed (2.2). Then we asked to what extent are programs like *Big Brother* and certain talk shows, action movies, cabaret shows, Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Fellini's *Mamma Roma*, *Harry Potter* and one work from two postmodern Hungarian writers each (P. Eszterházy and P. Nádas), which are considered frivol by conservative readers¹⁵. In this aspect, the HBM members were somewhat more modest (3.2) than the Christians (3.3), but the ISKCON members (1.4) were even more remote than the Jehovahist (1.4).

5.2. Familiarity with artistic works and the level of artistic taste

While there were not any differences between the two vaisnava groups in the aspect of familiarity with literary works and the level of literary taste, interesting differences were observed in reading and preference of certain works¹⁶:

	ISKCON-members (n = 32) % of readers index of liking	HBM-members (n = 34) % of readers index of liking	Traditional Christians (n = 159) % of readers index of liking
M. Antonioni: Blowing up	25 % 2.0	24 % –	31 % 3.1
I. Bergmann: Whispers and screams	21 % –	16 % –	17 % 2.5
M. Bulgakov: The Master and Margarita	61 % 3.5	60 % 3.8	53 % 2.7
F. Fellini: On the highway	32 % 3.1	48 % 3.1	41 % 3.3
W. Golding: Lord of flies	46 % 2.9	60 % 2.7	43 % 3.0
L. Hrabal: Brewery-capriccio	36 % 2.8	40 % 3.1	40 % 3.5
Ottlik: School on the border	36 % 2.9	40 % 3.7	47 % 3.2
P-P. Pasolin: Matthew-gospel	7 % –	36 % 3.3	9 % 3.5
J. Pilinszky Poems	50 % 3.4	60 % 3.4	70 % 3.4
W. Wenders: The sky above Berlin	43 % 3.0	44 % 3.4	28 % 3.4

table 7.

While the literacy and the taste of the two vaisnava groups do not show major differences, the familiarity and appreciation of unconventionally composed literary works and films differs more significantly, in most cases in favor for the HBM members. They resemble the traditional Hungarian Christians in this aspect too.

5.3. Interpretation of Örkény's one minute story *Trill*

I have applied in my sociological and social psychological empirical researches to test the level of literary taste as well as to measure attitudes the following "one minute novelette"¹⁷

Trill

Rips the paper out of the typewriter. Takes new sheets. Inserts carbons. Types.

Rips the paper out of the typewriter. Takes new sheets. Inserts carbons. Types.

¹⁵ The attitude approving or disapproving (open-close) religiously disputable products of both mass culture and high arts was also measured on a five-grade scale.

¹⁶ In case of unit numbers below 10, index of liking is not given.

¹⁷ Named by the Hungarian author *István Örkény*.

Rips the paper out of the typewriter. Takes new sheets. Inserts carbons. Types.

Rips the paper out of the typewriter. Has been with the company for twenty years. Eats a sandwich every day. Lives alone.

Her name is Mrs. Wolf. Note it well: Mrs. Wolf. Mrs. Wolf. Mrs. Wolf.

One the related question read: "Why do you think Mrs. Wolf's name is to be noted?" According to Arnold Hauser the reception of artistic work is re-creation that is also moral trial. We can answer this question that a) we have no reason to remember her name, because she is insignificant, b) we have to remember, because, b1) her life and fate is pitiful, b2) deterrent example, b3) she is guilty because of her spoiled life, b4) she do her work correctly, b5) she is human, individual, unique, irreplaceable value.

I think we can suppose these answers represents different dispositions, value-systems, moral judgments.

As opposed to outsiders, the typical answers of Krishna devotees' negative judgment of Mrs. Wolf's situation or that of her person are quite frequent. Many Krishna-believer consider her life purposeless and hold her responsible for her failure. Only a minority is sorry for her, and only a few consider her or her job valuable. It is striking that the initiated are much more strict and judgmental, while her positive features are seen mostly by the uninitiated and by the married devotees.

There is a sharp contrast in the reception behaviour [reaction] of Krishna and Christian monks. Only 8% of the Christian monks were unable to answer; compare this to the 19% of Krishna devotees. While 51% of Krishna monks feel that Mrs. Wolf's name is not to be noted, only 4% of Christian monks are of this opinion. Typical answers of Krishna-believer monks are: „only Krishna Conscience can help in the two groups were as follows“, „Mrs. Wolf warning example for everybody“, „Mrs. Wolf guilty of her fate“, „Mrs. Wolf is a machine, a robot“, „Mrs. Wolf is a machine, a robot“. Typical explanations of Christina monks are: „Mrs. Wolf needs help“, „Mrs. Wolf unique human person“, „her work is valuable“, „Mrs. Wolf is us“, „Mrs. Wolf victim of an inhuman society“. Rather different ways of thinking, different values and dispositions manifest themselves here, but in this instance it is a factor that Christian monks know this specific language of belles-lettres much more than their Krishna counterparts. Among HBM-member first of all is smaller the percentage of non-responders. Their typical answers are on the one hand similar to the explanations of the ISCKON-members: „monotonous life“, „non- consciousness“, „unhappiness“, „sacrifice of the illusion“. On the other hand they are similar to the explanations of Christians: „senseless life“, „resignation“, „valuable personality“, „unhappiness“, „drought of the soul“.

6. Conclusion

When Max Weber made a distinction between asceticism rejecting the world and asceticism adjusting to the world, he stated that the salvation methodology of India is a typical example of mystical contemplation running away from the world, while Calvinism is an example of asceticism that is willing to stay and act in the world. While in the West mystical religiousness turns into ascetic virtue, and even contemplation cannot prevent the predominance of activity, Oriental contemplative mysticism is not an instrument of God but a receptacle of God, and thus avoids activity. (Weber, 1992) From the two forms of Krishna Consciousness we can consider Hungarian Brahmana Mission rather than ISKCON as a form of asceticism which in some way adjusts to the world but at the same time rejects it, is located somewhere on the borderline of Oriental contemplation and western asceticism (which works to change the world as God's instrument), and can be characterized by the features of both.

F. J. Daner saw it correctly as early as 1976 that Krishna Consciousness (which accepts and embraces marginal people) also helps their reintegration (as a subculture) within society. He is right in calling the Krishna movement the counter-culture of counter-culture. (Daner, 1976) It is an open question: in which direction it will move in the future. A fundamental question is: what measure of compromise will develop between Vaisnavas and the western narrative; that is, how much will Krishna devotees listen to Gandhi's warning that "to swim in the waters of tradition is good, but to drown in them is suicide." For

preserving the and capability of kliving of a religion the scriptures must be reinterpreted no matter what dangers this might pose, since it is a greater danger not to reinterpret and not to adapt them to different historical and cultural contexts. I think in the reinterpretation HBM is more flexible and creative. Th. Robbins looks at ISKCON as an interesting mix of relativism and absolutism and believes that we should not entertain great hopes of a quick and successful cultural adaptation, since western moral principles are simply considered "mayas" (illusions) by Krishna devotees, and excentricity is permitted, although it seals them off from the surrounding culture. (Robbins, 1997) To establish an "intimate" relationship with European and Hungarian culture HBM semms to be more successful. Could we consider HBM as competitive alternative, moreover as the future of ISKCON in Hungary? To answer this question is rather difficult. D. F. Gordon, after noting the signs of easing the absoluteness and the signs of cultural adaptation asks, with a surprising turn, what would remain of the Krishna religion if its tolerance to our culture grew up, and cites Chesterton who considered tolerance the virtue of those who do not believe in anything. (Gordon, 1988)

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