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# Karma and Bhakti ways of Salvation : A Christological Perspective

DE JOHN ROMUS\*

## Introduction

One of the main features of Hinduism is the doctrine of Karma-samsara, the law of retribution and rebirth. The doctrine of samsara<sup>1</sup>, the passing on of the soul from one body to another in order to reap the fruits of its actions, is an exclusively Hindu tenet. Even the heterodox sects like Jainism and Buddhism, while denying most of the Vedic doctrines, could not free themselves from the clutches of the belief in samsara. Though this doctrine is not found in the Samhitas, it is a well-established belief in the Upanishads.<sup>2</sup> The entire pre-occupation of the sages and philosophers has been a relentless search for ways and means of salvation from the vicious circle of endless births and deaths.

Dr. Radhakrishnan claims that both for Hindus and Buddhists, "religion is salvation. It is more of a transforming experience than a notion of God... Belief and conduct, rites and ceremonies, authorities and dogma, are assigned a place subordinate to the art of conscious self-discovery and contact with the divine."<sup>3</sup> Salvation means liberation (mukti or moksa) from delusion and from the cycle of rebirth leading to realization of the Absolute.<sup>4</sup> From the early post-Vedic period onwards, three ways (marga) of salvation<sup>5</sup> have been commended for reaching the goal of life: the way of rituals and work (karma marga) through which persons purify their activity and ordain themselves towards the goal of liberation; the way of knowledge (jnana marga) which leads persons to realize their unity and oneness with the Absolute; and the way of devotion (bhakti marga) in which the persons with the help of divine assistance of their personal deity (istadevata) attain their original spiritual purity.

Our purpose here is to present salvation through Jesus Christ, the saviour of humankind, in terms familiar to the Hindu religious tradition, the margas. The three margas represent not merely the three theological currents of thought, ritualism, absolutism and theism, but also the active, contemplative and affective dispositions

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of persons and the disciplinary approaches (sadhana) suited for them to attain salvation. Certainly, these innate qualities are also found among the disciples of Christ and their ways of salvation in him differ accordingly. Among the three margas, we attempt here to outline what for a Christian karma and bhakti margas would mean in following Jesus.

### Salvation in Terms of Karma Marga

#### *Karma as sacrifice (yajna)*

Sacrifice (yajna) is one of the main pillars of the Vedic religious system and sacrificial ritual constitutes a great portion of the Vedic texts.<sup>6</sup> In the Brahmanas, the sacrificial cult, however, underwent an exceptional development and eventual exaggeration under the patronage of brahminic priesthood. Commenting on the science of sacrifice in the Brahmanas, Winternitz says, "Every single sacrificial act is treated with the greatest circumstantiality... (and) with the most searching manner in the Brahmanas."<sup>7</sup> The efficacy of sacrifices came to be regarded greater than the gods as one text says, "By means of sacrifice the gods gained the supreme authority which they now wield."<sup>8</sup> It was also believed that the gods themselves attained immortality from the Supreme Being by dint of sacrifice.<sup>9</sup>

In the Brahmanic stage of Hinduism, where ritualism defied and gods dethroned, the karma marga meant the path of performance of sacrifices and acts allied to them as well as observance of certain duties and practices which had become sanctified by tradition. In fact, the correct performance of sacrifice is considered to be the highest form of self-discipline.<sup>10</sup> Hence, work (karma) in Brahmanism, and later in the Mimamsa school of philosophy, consisted of sacrifice (yajna) by which, it was believed, the universe is sustained, gods strengthened and humans attained salvation (moksha)<sup>11</sup>

#### *Karma as nishkama karma*

Work (karma) acquires a comprehensive theological insight in the Gita as it expounds the meaning of human action in the world, the karma-yoga. Karma usually denotes in the Gita, the duties that, in accordance to customs and traditions, were found associated at the time with particular sections or classes of the people, the varna-dharma as they were described.<sup>12</sup> Karma comprises all actions through which people enter into the process of world-building and world-ordering activity. The Gita also stresses, however, the ambivalent significance of work in human life: Work is strictly necessary. Humans are bound to work on account of their nature made up of

three gunas and, in the final analysis, on account of Brahman himself whose activity keeps the world moving.<sup>13</sup> Thus the Gita insists on the importance of human work in the world of activities. However, through work humans are bound to maya and avidya, to phenomenal state of existence. From the time of the Upanishads, it has been universally taught that the sacrificial rituals (karma) belong to the phenomenal world and, therefore, cannot lead persons to their ultimate destiny. Thus Gita levels radical critique against ritualism and self-gratification derived from sacramentalism and this critique is now equally applied against all self-gratification expected from all forms of human work.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, the dilemma inherent in human action is that, on the one hand, work is necessary to maintain the world process, and in the other hand, this work binds people to the world of action preventing them from attaining the ultimate goal of life, moksha. The Gita indicates that the solution to the karma-dilemma lies not on the cessation of work; rather, in the people's inner disengagement from the fruits of their work (nishkama karma). Sri Krishna advises that non-action with the desire of human nature still burning in the heart would lead to hypocrisy, whereas action without desire leads to salvation.<sup>15</sup> The renunciation (sanyasa) is not an escape from the world of action but a radical commitment to one's work without being bound by the desire of its fruits (sarva-karma-phala-tyagam).<sup>16</sup> The Gita further says that the works of sacrifice, almsgiving and austerity should not be abandoned but surely be done. They do have spiritual values, but even these are to be done without attachment to their fruits.<sup>17</sup>

An important consequence of following the Gita's precept of work is that one can act with complete equanimity (samatvam) of a liberated person. Desire or self-interest when allowed to have its sway over our actions, may blind us to do what is right. But even when we succeed in choosing to do what is right, undue eagerness to secure its benefits may induce us to fall away from the path of rectitude. The Gita exhorts us that we ought to engage ourselves in our work as members of a social order in the usual way, and yet banish from our hearts the desire to appropriate its benefits for self-centred goals.

The concern of the Gita is to discover the golden mean between the two ideals of life, action and contemplation (pravrtti and nivrtti) which were prevalent at that time in contra-opposed terms in Hindu orthodoxy.<sup>18</sup> The karma-yoga of Gita discards neither of the two, but by integrating action and contemplation, refines and ennobles both. The karma-yoga of the Gita "stands not for renunciation of action, but for renunciation in action."<sup>19</sup> The Gita reiterates the renunciation

and practice of work, both lead to the highest bliss, but practice of work is higher than renunciation, because through work done without attachment, the existing karma is worn off.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, humans must be like God not only in their blissful eternal rest but also in their selfless activity, because God established human society and laid down rules by which humans should live and, therefore, expects the humans to co-operate with him in promoting the welfare of the world.<sup>21</sup> If the people really understand this, they will imitate God in doing their assigned duties in life in a totally detached manner and thus participate with God. Karma marga, then, consists in the faithfulness in each one's duty, fulfilled with total detachment in obedience to the law of one's nature and state of life (sva-dharma). Through the work in obedience to the divine will, humans become free and attain moksha.

### **Christian Salvation as Karma Marga**

The Bible sees the world not in a cyclic process of an endless return of kalpas, but in a linear process of an onward march beginning with creation and completing in the end as the heavenly Jerusalem, the new creation.<sup>22</sup> As God alone who creates the world, so God alone completes the world process. Creation is essentially the work of God, or, rather, "the expression of God's goodness in action."<sup>23</sup> It is the basic law of creation that God works through creatures. The book of Genesis tells us that God bestows creative power on humans and entrusts the earth in their care (Gen. 1:28). Hence, the primary biblical insight of work is that it is the obedient fulfilment of the divine plan of creation.<sup>24</sup> Through work humans participate with the work of God and become sharers of divine design for creation.<sup>25</sup>

However, through sin, human work is vitiated from the divine purpose. Sin consists in person's self-assertion leading to self-centredness against divine plan. This has been dramatically portrayed in the story of the "fall" in Genesis 3:1-24. Led by the forces of sin, work is controlled by self-gratification, limiting it within the orbit of individualism. It fragments the creative plan of God entrusted to humankind and enslaves them in its success and failures.<sup>26</sup> Instead of enabling the humankind to participate in the goodness of God and thereby to attain the fulfilment of their existence and of the cosmos, the sin-stained work incapacitates them from sharing in that goodness of God manifested in creation.<sup>27</sup>

### *Jesus' work is redemptive*

Jesus' work brings salvation from the world of sin. He is similar

to us in everything but sin.<sup>28</sup> He lives our condition of human existence in absolute obedience to divine will unto death.<sup>29</sup> The path of his redemptive work consists not in living a life of self-gratification and self-centredness, but in living and giving his life for others in absolute surrender to his Father's design for human well-being. This same life of Jesus, centred on divine will, is the life of redemptive work offered for other's well-being.<sup>30</sup>

Jesus' work of redemption as summarised in the Acts of the Apostles comprises in "preaching good news of peace... doing good and healing all that were oppressed by evil forces."<sup>31</sup> This totally other-centred work of Jesus consummated in his absolute self-emptying death on the cross in fulfilment of God's concern for human well-being. However, the fruits of Jesus' work is in no way in human hands, and according to human standards, it is an absolute failure.<sup>32</sup> His destroyed work is, at the same time, the material of God's supreme self-revelation of his concern for humankind about which St. Paul commented, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). God, therefore, crowned the work of Jesus with glory and victory as it is evident from the New Testament faith in the resurrection of the crucified Christ and the way of his redemptive work recognised as the revelation of the divine wisdom for our salvation (1 Cor.1:21-25).

### *Jesus' work is the pattern of all human work*

In his life on earth, Jesus lived and worked not only as an individual, but also as the head of our race in solidarity with the entire humankind.<sup>33</sup> And now as the Risen Lord of the renewed humanity and as the first fruit of the new creation<sup>34</sup>, he continues the same work of redemption until everything is redeemed and glorified in the fulness of existence and is subject to God, the Father's will (1 Cor.15:28). Following the path of Jesus, our work is redeemed from its self-centred concerns and earth-bound enslavements as well as becomes redeeming others.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the God who works as creator, sustainer and redeemer, invites us in Christ Jesus as his co-workers to participate in the divine work. The Second Vatican Council stresses that the effective engagement in the world of work is required of us by God for the perfection of creation which has already begun in history in the covenantal love of Christ, the first born of all creation (Col. 1:16), but to be completed in Christ with our participation.<sup>36</sup>

### **Bhakti Marga in Hinduism**

The concept of Bhakti is rich with theological meaning. It connotes love, loving surrender, faith, devotional attachment and piety. Bhakti

is closely associated with puja which denotes acts of adoration, reverence and worship. Hence, bhakti marga is the path of loving devotion to God which is specially appropriate to theism whose characteristic mark is belief in a personal God or a chosen deity (Ista-devata) or attachment to one of the manifestations of the divinity, an Avatara.<sup>39</sup> There have been devotees of God (bhaktas) in all ages of Hinduism. Some of the Vedic hymns<sup>38</sup> and Upanishads<sup>40</sup> are a proof of it. However, with the beginning of the philosophical systems (darsanas), when the disciplines of ritualism, knowledge and asceticism were contending for supremacy in Hinduism, it was the merit of the Gita to have bhakti enthroned in the heart of Hindu spirituality.

The doctrine of bhakti is introduced with great solemnity in the Gita. Arjuna, who began to suspect Sri Krishna's divinity, desired a proof of it and begged for a vision of the Lord's cosmic form (Gita, xi.8). Humble adoration, repentance and prayer are the fruits produced in Arjuna after beholding the Bhagavat's cosmic presence (ibid, xii.20, 40-45). Pleased with Arjuna's humble prayer, Sri Krishna resumed his human appearance and taught him that the worship of the personal God through bhakti is more perfect than other ways (ibid, xii. 2,5). Bhakti is open to all irrespective of caste, sex or status of life: "whosoever takes refuge in me... however low-born they maybe... all will attain the supreme goal" (ibid, ix. 32). Love of God is the foundation for bhakti: "Be it a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or water that a zealous soul may offer me with love's devotion, that I do (willingly) accept, for it was love that made the offering" (ibid, 26). Bhakti transforms the bhakta. Imbued by God's love, bhakti offers faith in God, instills in the heart of bhakta compassionate love towards all and frees bhakta from fear, pain and pleasure (ibid, xii. 13-20).

The doctrine of the Gita and, later, the experience of many mystics of the bhakti tradition, produced systematic reflections on bhakti marga. Among them, the Bhakti-sutra of Sandilya of the tenth century remains the greatest work. Sandilya defined bhakti as the "supreme love of God" (Sandilya-sutra, i.2) and its proper object is God, either in himself or in his avatara (ibid, ii.49). Sandilya insisted that bhakti is the essential means of salvation, all other means proposed by other theological disciplines are only helps to arrive at true bhakti (ibid, i.10). Bhakti-yoga is open to all, because the grace of God is able to save the bhakta even without having high-knowledge about God (ibid, ii.78). Bhakti is expressed through cults as well as through loving contemplation. The attitude of the bhakta to God can assume various forms analogous to human relationships. The doctrine of grace for salvation and personal God

as the goal of salvation came to the foreground in Hindu theology on account of bhakti spirituality.

## Christian Salvation as Love

### *Love as revelation*

AGAPE<sup>41</sup> is the most commonly used concept in the New Testament to denote God's love for the humans and human's love for God and humans' love for one another. Divine love, whose nature is creative and redemptive is the frame of reference to understand and expose Christian vision of God, world and humankind. It is revealed in the stories of creation, election of Israel as a chosen people of God in love, in the mission, ministry, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate love for humankind.

Christianity understands that God's very act of creation is his primary act of loving. Bestowing freely the goodness of his gracious love in infinite varieties on the created realities, God's love becomes creative as well as redemptive in so far as it is value-bestowing and value-responding<sup>42</sup> to the goodness of his creation. Thus the divine love not only brings beings into existence but also sustains them in their proper manner of existence. That gracious expression of love reached its climax in the creation of man and woman. In giving the theology of creation, the author of the book of Genesis says, "In the image of God he created (them); male and female... and God saw everything he made and behold it was very good" (Gen. 1:27,31). This divine creative-redemptive love took a personal and dialogal form in conversation and the covenant he established with men and women created in his image.

God's dramatic narrative of love in action calls for similar love response from humankind to God and neighbour which is the way of salvation or the path of God-human relationship. In the context of human failure to walk in that path of love, divine love manifests as redeeming justice<sup>43</sup>, revealing itself in terms of compassion, forgiveness, promise and renewal (Is. 49:15-16), where in loving solidarity with humankind, God shares the pain and tragedies of human suffering and sinfulness (Gal. 4:4-5). The depth and range of God's love for humans and human response to God and neighbour is revealed in Jesus. In him, the eternal Word (Logos) (Jn. 1:1), the narrative of God's creative-redemptive love, becomes human and then goes to the extreme of that humanity by laying down his life to tell the story of God's parental concern for the redemption of all.<sup>44</sup> The path of love laid down by Jesus has become the eschatological revelation of God's loving solidarity with humankind and humankind's loving response to God and neighbour.<sup>45</sup> Hence, God's

revelation in Jesus Christ is life-affirming and life-giving and, therefore, saving.

*Salvation is to Live in the Love of God*

Jesus interprets salvation as the participation in the kingdom of God. This for him is identical with eternal life.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting to note how Jesus relates the various expectations of salvation with the kingdom of God. The central eschatological hope of the Hebrews was the "Day of Yahweh,"<sup>47</sup> the day appointed and brought to pass by God, the day on which God's sovereignty would be fully realized. This hope of Judaism was symbolized by the coming of the Kingdom of God, which, in fact, means the coming of God. When Jesus proclaims, "The kingdom of God is at hand,"<sup>48</sup> he is saying that God is close at hand. The kingdom of God does not mean a realm, but the realization of God's sovereignty over all creation. For Jesus, God's sovereignty consists in the power of divine love pervading over all creation. Hence, the coming of the kingdom of God means that God is close to people in love. It is expressed most emphatically in the way Jesus speaks of God as his Father calling him "abba."<sup>49</sup> The abba-experience of Jesus crystallizes in a special way Jesus' view of the coming of the kingdom of God as the coming of God's nearness in human history, a nearness in which people could feel confident of being accepted in God's paternal love.

As a father, God knows what his children need (Mt. 6:8). His loving kindness and care has no limits (Mt.5:45). It includes even his care for the grass of the field (Mt. 6:30) and the birds of the air (Mt. 10:29). God's parental love is saving as it goes to the lost and even restores to life the dead (Lk.15:24). It is further expressed through the parables of the forgiving and redeeming love of God and in the rejoicing at having encountered the boundless and unmerited mercy of God.<sup>50</sup> This encounter involves human response. If God remits an enormous debt of ours, which we would have been never able to pay, we too must be prepared to release our fellow humans from their petty debts to us (Mt.18:23,24). God's forgiveness gives us the capacity for limitless love that forgives (Lk.17:3,4). Willingness on our part to forgive is also the condition (Mt. 6:12) under which, and the measure in which we live under God's sovereign and forgiving love.<sup>51</sup> Salvation is, therefore promised to those who practice the merciful love of God in their relationship with neighbours (Mt.5:7).

The coming of the kingdom of God is, therefore, the revelation that God is God in love and the salvation means participation in that self-communicating love of God in Christ Jesus. Love reveals itself as the meaning of life. Creation and humankind find fulfilment

only in that love. Hence, what is demanded of us is not quietism and inaction but, through repentance and faith, active participation in that love of God (Mk.1:15) which, in fact, is the life of salvation. Faith means trusting and building one's life on the power of divine love which is at work in Jesus (Mk. 10:7). Hence, salvation is making God's love the foundation of our existence. It is to live in the love of God.

### *Centrality of Love in Salvation*

Love has been projected in the Johannine Gospel, as a key christological concept to explicate the meaning of Jesus' saving mission.<sup>52</sup> This becomes evident when we see how John describes the relationship between God, the Father and Jesus, the son. It is based on the love of the Father<sup>53</sup>, who is the source of all love, which was bestowed on Jesus before the foundation of the world (Jn. 17:24). By being faithful to Father's command, Jesus abides in the Father's love (Jn. 15:10) and shows the world that he loves the Father (Jn. 14:31). Since the Father's command is to bring eternal life to all (Jn. 12:50), Jesus mission is to fulfil that divine will by showing the world that God loves it.<sup>54</sup> Hence Jesus' mission that brings eternal life to the world is essentially a mission of love. Those who believe in him are commanded to carry on this mission of love which remains as the mark of their discipleship (Jn.13:34).

For John discipleship consists, first of all, in receiving the gracious love of God to live in it in one's life; and secondly, in accepting the love commission it lays upon one to practise it in the service of others just as Jesus, in response to divine will, offered his life in the saving mission of all. This is what it means in Johannine language to "abide" in Jesus' love (Jn. 15:7,10) which is synonymous to "life of salvation" or to have "eternal life."<sup>55</sup> The wider meaning of "abiding in Jesus" is explained through the vine metaphor (Jn. 15:1-10), where Jesus is presented as the true vine and those who believe in him as the branches. Just as the branches bear no fruit unless they remain vitally united with the vine, the disciples can do nothing unless they abide in Jesus' love (Jn.15:4,5). Similarly, just as Jesus abides in the Father's love by being faithful to his saving mission of love, so also the disciples abide in Jesus' love by faithfully committing themselves to his love mandate and offering their lives in the service of others.<sup>56</sup> Love, therefore, is the way as well as the sign of sharing in the eternal life in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God's love in the new age of God's kingdom which begins here on earth.<sup>57</sup>

Jesus' mandate to love one another is called "a new commandment" (Jn.13:34) because its newness consists in the christologico-

eschatological context in which it is given. It amounts that Jesus' mission- his incarnation, death and glorification - constitutes for the disciples a decisively new situation. As the bearer of the Father's love, Jesus has replaced darkness with light and death with life.<sup>58</sup> Hence, the one who commands such love is the bringer of salvation which makes love meaningful and centres salvation on love.

The centrality of love in regard to salvation is further elaborated in the Johannine Letters where it has been reiterated that God's love is the foundation of human existence.<sup>59</sup> This is revealed to us in Jesus, in his life-giving death, glorious resurrection and in the sending of the Holy Spirit who represents God's own abiding love among people as well as the Spirit enables them to abide in God.<sup>60</sup> To be in God's love involves, on the part of the believers, to practise the commandment of love which is identical "to love one another."<sup>61</sup> Salvation, therefore, consists in the appropriation and actualization of God's love in the life of the believers and sharing it with others in loving service.<sup>62</sup> In this manner, God's love becomes, John says, "perfected among us" (1 Jn.4:12). This means that the love revealed to us in Christ Jesus, bears fruit and reaches its intended goal when the believers commit themselves in loving service to others.<sup>63</sup> This is summed up in the Johannine Letters in one commandment "to love the brother" (1Jn.2:7-11). John says, "he who says that he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness still, (but) he who loves his brother abides in the light" (1 Jn. 2:9,10).

### Appraisal

The Hindu and the Christian understand WORK (KARMA) as humankind's active participation in the work of God. Both are aware that human work as involvement in the world is an integral aspect of human existence; at the sametime, both acknowledge that it is under the spell of sin or blindness, and, therefore, work in itself does not lead people to their destiny. In their perception, the Hindu and the Christian emphasize that people must radically disengage themselves from self-centred motives and self-gratification and perform their works in obedience to divine design for creation. However, the soteriological interpretation of work is conditioned by their respective world-visions. The Gita insists on the eternal recurrent kalpas of the physical world and the soul's attachment to it on account of its physical embodiment. Hence, for the Hindu, the soteriological objective of the karma marga is that by doing one's duty with responsibility and not attaching oneself to its fruits, one attains the release of the soul from its recurrent embodiment and transcends the sphere of this unending physical world (Gita, iii. 1,3).

The Christian believes that work must be integrated into God's kingdom which is concretely present in the sphere of history. It is this world of ours that must be saved. Hence, the Christian sees through work the total redemption of humankind and of cosmos consummating into the final participation in the glory of the Risen Lord.<sup>64</sup> Thus, for the Christian, the finality of humankind does not consist in the ultimate separation from the body and the world, but rather involves a process of purification and integration of everything in God.<sup>65</sup> This is expressed in the belief in the resurrection of the body and the renovation of heaven and earth (Rev.21-22). Through work, the Christian believes to share in Christ's saving work in bringing about the ultimate destiny of the world into completion according to divine plan. This, however, is not done by humans alone, but in full abandonment of all our works and its fruits on the cross "lest any man must boast" (Eph. 2:8).

The Bhakti Marga of Hinduism has much that is wonderfully good to offer to the spiritual and moral heritage of the humankind. The Christian reader of the Gita will be deeply moved by the bhakta's loving devotion and absolute surrender to God. The bhakti spirituality of love and service (prema and seva) to God and neighbour is a great enrichment to the spiritual legacy of Hinduism itself as well as a positive contribution to the religious heritage of the world. Bhakti has its origin and fulfilment in God (Gita, ix.25; xviii.56) and it is the way and the goal of salvation. As the way bhakti enables the soul to detach itself from its earthly trappings; and as the goal, transcending the transient world of Karma, kama and dharma, the bhakta graced by God, enters into the personal realm of the divine love. The bhakta wants to love and serve a God whom he can see and touch, a God who is near to bhakta. Probably, the bhakta longs for an incarnate God, a God who would become human to love the humans with a redeeming love.

The Christian believes that "God is love" (1Jn. 4:8); and sees that love is the way through which God reveals his gracious presence and action in the world. God's love is the source and finality of all creation. Human's love for God and neighbour is the human response in faith to that gracious offer of divine love which constitutes the life of salvation. The soteriological meaning of this path of love is revealed in Jesus Christ, the incarnate love of God who, by laying down his life for the redemption of all, has become the eschatological revelation of God's love for the humans and, at the sametime, human's love for God and neighbour.

From the christological point of view, this means that soteriology is correlated to the eschatological ethics of love. In the New Testament, this perception of salvation is manifest not only in the

great love command of the Johannine Gospel, but whenever the New Testament writers highlight the centrality of Jesus' love command, they correlate the love of God with the love of neighbour.<sup>68</sup> Hence, for the Christian, loving devotion (bhakti) as the path of salvation means believers, participation in the saving love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. And because Christ's redemptive love is for all, the believer's loving devotion to Christ, vitally unites them with God and with their fellow humans and leads them to continue the saving mission of Christ for all in loving action. Thus, bhakti marga in Christianity is that transforming power of love which brings about God's new creation in Christ Jesus and, therefore is salvific.

As karma and bhakti margas of Hinduism are not contra-opposed ways of salvation, so also in Christianity salvation through work and love are the two ways of responding to God's offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. In union with Christ, fulfilling their task on earth, the disciples of Christ let go their plan and projects of building the realm of their own on their own effort alone and commit themselves for the cause of God's reign. Offering themselves to let in God's love and compassion in their lives, they are liberated from fear and self-centred concerns and enjoy the freedom of the children of God; and acquire the inner freedom to opt for the welfare of their fellow humans.

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13. *Gita*, iii.5,6,16.

14. *Gita*, ix.20-21.
15. *Gita*, iii.6., iv.14.
16. "To give up works dictated by desire, wise men allow (this) to be renunciation; surrender of all the fruits that (accure) to works discerning men call self-surrender" - *Gita*, xviii.2.
17. Cf. *Gita*, vi., xvii.11., xviii.5,11.
18. Hiriyanna, *op.cit.*, p.114 f.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
20. Cf. *Gita*, v. 2. 12.
21. Cf. *Gita*, iii. 25., iv.13.
22. See for the biblical notion of time, Jenni, E. "Time" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4. (Ed.), G.A. Buttrick, Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, pp. 643-48.
23. Wright, E., "God and the World" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol.I, (Ed.), N.B. Harmon, Abingdon Press, New York, 1952, p. 364<sup>a</sup>.
24. *The Documents of Vatican II*, Gaudium et Spes, 34.
25. *Ibid.*, 35.
26. For the biblical concept of sin, Gunther, W., "Sin" in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, vol. 3, (Ed.), C. Brown, The Paternoster Press, Exeter, Devon/Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978, pp. 573-85.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 580-81.
28. The sinlessness of Jesus as presented by the New Testament writers: Mk. 9:7, Jn.8:34-36, 2 Cor. 5:21, Heb. 4:15, 1Pet. 2:2, etc.
29. Phil. 2:5-8, Heb. 2:14-16.
30. Schillebeeckx, E., *Jesus in Our Western Culture*, SCM Press, London, 1987, pp. 269-70.
31. Acts 10:36-38.
32. Schillebeeckx, E., *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
33. Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:15-17, Heb. 4:15.
34. Rom. 8:11, 23, 1Cor.15:20, 23, 2Cor. 5:17, Eph. 1:12-14.
35. *The Documents of the Vatican II*, Gaudium et Spes, 33-39.
36. *Ibid.*, Gaudium et Spes, 67-68. Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981, 26-27: In this Encyclical the Pope emphasizes the "self-realization" or the subjective dimension of work. The Pope says that the work has intrinsic significance beyond anything it produces: "by means of work man participates in the activity of God" and imitates "Christ, the Man of work.... Man in a way collaborates with the son of God for the redemptive of humanity."
37. Fallon, P., "Doctrinal Background of The Bhakti Spirituality" in *Religious Hinduism* (Ed.), R.V. De Smet, St. Paul's Publication, Allahabad, 1964, pp.246-54.
38. Walker, B. vol.II, *op. cit.*, pp. 138.39.
39. *Rigveda*, VII. Lxxxix. 1-5.
40. *Upanishad*, ii.20, 23.
41. For detail see Gunther, W., & Link, H.G., "Love" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, (Ed.), C.Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 538-51; Furnish, V.P., *The Love Command in the New Testament*, SCM Press, London, 1973, pp. 219-231.
42. McDonagh, E., "Synthetic Theology of Love" in *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Eds.), J.A. Komonchak, et al., Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1989, pp. 604-606.
43. In the Bible the "justice of God" means the "merciful act of God in love" to save his people of the covenant. It is always an act of saving love on the part of God: Cf. Ps. 36:5ff., 89:14ff; Ez.39:21-25; Hos.2:16-19.
44. Jn.3:16., 12:16,23; 1Jn 3:1,16; Phil. 2:5-8; Cf.Mt. 11:28-29., 20:28; Jn. 1:1 ff; 2Cor. 8:9, Heb. 5:8-9.

45. The parable of the Good Samaritan, Lk. 10:29-37; the parable of the Prodigal Son, Lk. 15:11ff; the parable of the Good Shepherd Jn. 10:1ff; Jesus' acted-out parable of the Foot-washing, Jn. 13:12-17; and the love Command of Jesus, Jn. 15:12 ff.
46. For detail see Perrin, N., *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, SCM Press, London, 1963; Perrin, N., *Jesus and the language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in the New Testament Interpretation*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1976; Schnackenburg, R., *God's Rule and Kingdom*, Herder & Herder, New York, 1963; "Basileia" in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 564-93.
47. The "Day of Yahweh" meant to the people of the Old Testament, the day of God's intervention to save his people, where God faithfully manifests his covenantal love and mercy. But, by the end of the 6th century B.C., not only God's saving acts but also his terrible punishments were included with the 'Day of Yahweh'. For it came to be understood that God could not treat equally virtue and evil: Cf. Is.3:12-22, 10:24-27; Ez 5:1ff, 7:1ff.
48. Mk.1:15, Mt. 4:17, Its variant: Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20.
49. Jermias, J., *The Prayers of Jesus*, SCM Press, London, 1967, pp. 11-65.
50. The parables of the two debtors, Lk. 7:41-43; the hard-hearted servant, Mt. 18:23-35; the lost son, Lk. 15:11-32, Joy in finding what was lost, Lk. 15:4-10, 22-24, 31-32.
51. Mk. 4:24, Mt. 7:2, Lk. 6:38.
52. St. Jerome passed on to the Christian tradition that St. John in his latter years reduced the whole message of Jesus to the simple command, "My little children, love one another" (cited in R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1970, p. 607).
53. Jn. 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9; 17:23,26.
54. Jn. 3:16; 12:47; 13:1b.
55. Jn. 3:16-21; 4:42; 5:24.
56. Jn. 13:14; 15:10; Cf.14:15, 21, 23-24.
57. Jermias, J., *New Testament Theology*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971, pp. 212-13.
58. Goguel, *The Primitive Church*, p. 465 (cited in Bultmann, R., *The Gospel of John: A commentary*, Trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray et al., Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1971, pp.526-27).
59. 1 Jn.3:1; 4:7,8, 10, 16.
60. 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13.
61. 1 Jn. 2:7-11; 3:10-18, 23, 4:7, 11-12, 20-21; 5:2.
62. 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12, 17-18.
63. Spicq, C., *Agape dans le Nouveau Testament : Analyse des textes*, 1958-59, vol. III, p. 136 (cited in Furnish, V.P., *The Love Command in the New Testament*, *op. cit.*, p.156).
64. Rom. 8:19-23, Eph. 1:10, Col. 1:16.
65. 2 Pet. 3:7-13, 1 Cor. 15:28.
66. Love Commandment in the Synoptic Gospels: Mt. 22:34-40, Mk. 12:28-34, Lk. 10:25-37. On loving one's enemy : Mt.5:43-48, Lk. 6:27-36. Love must manifest itself in the acts of righteousness, i.e., doing good to others: Mt. 19:16-30, Mk. 10:17-31, Lk.18:18-30. Love command involves committing oneself to acts of mercy wherever required. It is also the criterion on which one is judged: Mt. 25:31-46.