

Q 1.

In some cases, such as Putana and Aghasura, to give but two examples that come straight to mind, their destinations after being killed are clearly stated. In other cases, such as Trinavarta or Sakatasura, to give two other examples that come straight to mind, their destinations after being killed are not clearly described. In such cases where it isn't explicitly described, at least in the 10th canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam, what should we presume in this regard?

Would we presume they achieved a personal liberation in some Vaikuntha planet, or some impersonal liberation in the Brahman, which often times happens to demons when they are killed by the Lord?

Of course, they may very well be other places or writings of the acharyas that I am not aware of that do explicitly describe the attainment of such demons.

Answer to Question 1 is addressed in Srimad Bhagavatam 2.7.34-35:

“All demonic personalities like Pralamba, Dhenuka, Baka, Keśī, Ariṣṭa, Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kuvalayāpīḍa elephant, Kāmsa, Yavana, Narakāsura and Pauṇḍraka, great marshals like Sālva, Dvidida monkey and Balvala, Dantavakra, the seven bulls, Śambara, Vidūratha and Rukmī, as also great warriors like Kāamboja, Matsya, Kuru, Sṛñjaya and Kekaya, would all fight vigorously, either with the Lord Hari directly or with Him under His names of Baladeva, Arjuna, Bhīma, etc. And the demons, thus being killed, would attain either the impersonal *brahma-jyoti* or His personal abode in the Vaikuṅṭha planets.”

In his purport to these verses, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura writes:

Some of these demons will attain sāyujya and some will attain Vaikuṅṭha. Kharah refers to Dhenuka, Dardurah refers to Baka. Ibha refers to Kuvalayāpīḍa. Kuja means Narakāsura. Kapi means Dvidida. Samiti-śālinaḥ means those who shine in battle. Pralamba, Dhenuka, Dvidida, Balvala, and Rukmi were killed by Balarāma. Bhīma and Arjuna killed the Kāambojas and others. Pradyumna killed Śambara. Mucukunda killed Yavana. The Lord did not kill them. Thus their names are also mentioned in the phrase bala-pārtha-bhīma-vyājāhvayena: they will attain liberation by the Lord who is also called Balarāma, Arjuna and Bhīma. Subdued by him, the seven bulls will attain liberation at another time (since they were animals). Among the demons Pralamba, Dhenuka and others will get sāyujya and Pauṇḍraka, Dantavakra and others will get Vaikuṅṭha. This will be understood from later statements.”

Laghu Bhagavatamṛta 3.55-57

Parāśara Muni's prose answer to Maitreya is now summarized in verse:

Hiraṇyakaśipu could not understand that the wonderful form of Lord Nṛsimha displayed by Lord Hari was actually Lord Viṣṇu. Hiraṇyakaśipu was pious. He was sure that Lord Nṛsimha was very extraordinary, but because He was overcome with passion he could not fix his mind

on Him. Because he was personally killed by the Lord, Hiraṇyakaśipu attained extraordinary and rarely achieved sense-gratification and opulence in his next birth as Rāvaṇa.

Because he could not recognize Lord Nṛsiṃha as Lord Viṣṇu, and because he was not filled with hatred for Him, Hiraṇyakaśipu was not fixed in meditation on the Lord. If without meditating on the Lord he had hated Him, he would have gone to hell, as King Veṇa had gone. Because he was killed by the Lord's own hand, he attained great good fortune.

3.60-64

Then he took birth as Śiśupāla, and again he attained great opulence. Because in that birth he chanted all the names of the goddess of fortune's husband, Lord Nārāyaṇa, he could understand that Lord Viṣṇu had killed him twice. For this reason, out of great hatred he always chanted the Lord's names and criticized Him in many ways.

Gazing at the Lord's form, he became convinced that this was Lord Viṣṇu. Always and everywhere he remembered the Lord as he always chanted His names. In this way the great flood of sins born from his hatred of the Lord became burned up. When the Lord threw His cakra at the end, its splendor destroyed his demonic nature and purified his vision. Then he saw that the splendid Supreme Brahman had a humanlike form. Then the cakra destroyed his demon's body and he merged into the Supreme Brahman.

[End]

Q2

A related question, I have also read that demons killed by Krishna Himself, such as the ones killed in Vrindavan, have a higher attainment, because they are killed by Krishna, and not an expansion such as Lord Narayana and others. I recall reading this in the Laghu Bhagavamrita. Could you shed more light on this, specifically in the context of the demons Krishna killed in Vrindavan?

Answer:

2a. Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha Anuccheda 29

“O lord who have appeared with your expansions to protect dharma! I brought the brāhmaṇa’s sons here because I wanted to see the two of you. As soon as you finish killing the demons who burden the earth, quickly make them come to me.” SB 10.89.59

‘Repeatedly (*bhuyah*) killing all the demons who are a burden to the earth, you should quickly make them come to me (*me anti*). Having them come here, liberate them.’ It is well known that those killed by Kṛṣṇa are liberated. Those who are liberated enter the light of

Mahāviṣṇu. Hari-varṁśa says *brahma-tejomayaṁ divyaṁ mahad yad dṛṣṭavān asi:* that great, spiritual light of Brahman which you see is my eternal light.

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Though Padma Purāṇa says that Nṛsimha, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have the six qualities of Bhagavān in full, it does not mean that they are equal. It indicates that among all avatāras they are the best. Generally, these three are considered the best of all. Among them however, according to the order, they are successively superior. Thus Kṛṣṇa is supreme.

Maitreya asked why Hiraṇyākṣipu was not liberated, whereas when he became Śiśupāla he was liberated. Parāśara explained the greater power of Kṛṣṇa in comparison with Nṛsimha. Moreover, demons cannot attain liberation unless they meet Kṛṣṇa. Other forms of the Lord do not give demons liberation. That is indicated by the word *eva* repeated twice in the Gītā:

*tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān |*

*kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu ||*

I cast those hateful, cruel, and lowest of humans, constantly doing evil, into repeated birth and death, in the wombs of demons.

*āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani |*

*mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānty adhamām gatim ||*

Taking birth as demons birth after birth, these fools, not attaining me, go to the lowest position, O son of Kuntī. BG 16.19-20

In some scriptures it may be said that those who hate the Lord attain liberation by the power of thinking of him. But it is never said that all of the haters of the Lord are given liberation by the *avatāras* or their source (Viṣṇu). Thus Parāśara says that Kṛṣṇa alone has additional powers for giving liberation to them. Previously noting that the cause of liberation is meeting the Lord endowed with great power directly, and remembering the liberation of Pūtanā and others by Kṛṣṇa, while worrying that Kālanemi and others did not get liberation (on being killed by other forms of the Lord), Parāśara says that this is the most astonishing nature of Bhagavān known as Kṛṣṇa. In prose he says at the end:

“This Kṛṣṇa, glorified and remembered, bestows the rarest results to both *devatās* and demon, even by their connection through hatred. What to speak of giving results to those who are completely devoted.” Viṣṇu Purāṇa 4.15.17

According to Bhāgavatam, the two brothers had three births and should attain liberation from Kṛṣṇa alone. Nārada indicates this:

*vaireṇa yaṁ nṛpatayaḥ śiśupāla-pauṇḍra-  
śālvādayo gati-vilāsa-vilokanādyaiḥ*

*dhyāyanta ākr̥ta-dhiyaḥ śayanāsanādau  
tat-sāmyam āpur anurakta-dhiyāṁ punaḥ kim*

“Inimical kings like Śiśupāla, Pauṇḍraka and Śālva, while they were lying down, sitting or engaging in other activities, enviously meditated upon the bodily movements of the Lord, his sporting pastimes, and his loving glances. Being thus always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, they achieved positions in the spiritual world. What then can be said of the benedictions offered to those who constantly fix their minds on Lord Kṛṣṇa in a favorable, loving mood?” SB 11.5.48

They all attain liberation by the great power of Kṛṣṇa since he is able to attract the mind of a person who thinks of him somehow or other. Other forms of the Lord do not have this nature. Thus they do not liberate the demons. Veṅa, though a hater of Viṣṇu, did not attain liberation since he was not absorbed in the Lord. Therefore, it is said *tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet*: by some means one should concentrate the mind on Kṛṣṇa. (SB 7.1.31)

Thus it should be concluded that Kṛṣṇa has the most amazing *śakti* among all the forms of the Lord. By refuting contrary statements by making the statements favorable in meaning, the position of Kṛṣṇa as Svayam Bhagavān is made stronger. In Vedānta-sūtra as well, one sees that a statement in scripture is established by refuting various contrary statements. One should have faith that this is the same principle applied here.

## 2b. Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha Anuccheda 35

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa grants liberation even to the enemies killed by Him, He is unique among all the forms of the Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by the following statement spoken by the Personified Vedas and repeated by Nārada Muni in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.87.23):

"By practicing the mystic yoga system and controlling their breath, the great sages conquered the mind and senses. Thus engaging in mystic yoga, they saw the Supersoul within their hearts and ultimately entered into the impersonal Brahman. However, even the enemies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead attain that position simply by thinking of the Supreme Lord."