

THE HYMNS OF PROCLUS

1- To Helios

*H*earken, king of noeric fire, Titan holding the golden bridle, hearken, dispenser of light, you, o lord, who hold yourself the key to the life-supporting source and channel off from above a rich stream of harmony into the material worlds.

Hearken: for you, being above the middlemost seat of aether and in possession of the very brilliant disk, the heart of the cosmos, have filled everything with your intellect-awakening providence. The planets, girded with your ever-blooming torches, through unceasing and untiring dances, always send life-producing drops down for earthlings. Under the influence of your chariot's returning courses everything that is born has sprouted up according to the ordinance of the Seasons. The din of the elements clashing with each other stopped once you appeared from your unspeakable begetter. For you the unshakeable choir of the Moirai has yielded. Back again they wind the thread of compelling destiny, when you wish it. For all around you dominate, all around you rule by force. From your chain the king of the song that obeys the divine, Phoibos, sprung forth. Singing inspired songs to the accompaniment of the kithara,

he calms the great wave of deep-roaring becoming. From your evil-averting band that imparts pleasant gifts Paieon sprouted, and he imposed his health by filling the wide cosmos with harmony wholly devoid of harm. People honour you in hymns as the famous father of Dionysus. And again some praise you in songs as Euiois Attis in the extreme depths of matter, whereas others praise you as pretty Adonis. The threat of your swift whip holds fears for the wild-tempered daemons, noxious to men, who prepare evil for our miserable souls, in order that forever, in the gulf of heavy-resounding life, they suffer once they have fallen under the yoke of the body with the result that they forget the bright-shining court of the lofty Father.

But, you the best of gods, crowned with fire, blest daemon, image of the all-creating god, uplifter of souls, hearken and always purify me of every fault; receive my tearful supplication, pull me out of baneful defilement and keep me far from the punishing deities while mollifying the swift eye of Justice that sees all. May you always through your evil-averting help give holy light rich with blessings to my soul, once you have scattered the man-destroying poisonous mist, and to my body fitness and gift-bestowing health; bring me to glory, that in accord with the traditions of my forefathers I may cultivate the gifts of the Muses with pretty locks.

Give me, if you wish so, lord, unshakeable bliss as a reward for lovely piety. You perfect all things easily, for you have the power and infinite might. And if some ill comes my way through the threads moved by the stars from the spindles of destiny that revolve in helices, ward it off yourself with your mighty radiance.

2- To Aphrodite

*W*e hymn the many-named series of Aphrogeneia and the great royal source, from which allimmortal winged Erotes have sprung up, of whomsome shoot with noeric arrows at souls, in order that, having taken the upward-leading goads of desires, these long after seeing the fiery courts of their mother. Some, because of the evil-averting wishes and providential acts of the Father, wishing to increase the infinite universe with birth, aroused in the souls a yearning for the earthly existence.

Others again always supervise the multifarious courses of the wedding songs, so as to produce an immortal race of much-suffering men from mortal stock; and all care for the works of the love-producing Kythereia

But, goddess, for you have a far-hearing ear everywhere, whether you envelop the great heaven all around, where, as they say, you are the divine soul of the everlasting cosmos, or dwell in the aether above the rims of the seven orbits while pouring unyielding powers forward into your series, listen, and may you steer the toilsome course of my life, mistress, with your most righteous arrows, while putting an end to the chilly impulse of unholy desires.

3- To the Muses

We hymn, we hymn the light that raises man aloft, on the nine daughters of great Zeus with splendid voices, who have rescued from the agony of this world, so hard to bear, the souls who were wandering in the depth of life through immaculate rites from intellect-awaking books, and have taught them to strive eagerly to follow the track leading beyond the deep gulf of forgetfulness, and to go pure to their kindred star from which they strayed away, when once they fell into the headland of birth, mad about material lots.
But, goddesses, put an end to my much-agitated desire too and throw me into ecstasy through the noeric words of the wise. That the race of men without fear for the gods may not lead me astray from the most divine and brilliant path with its splendid fruit; always draw my all-roving soul towards the holy light, away from the hubbub of the much wandering race heavy laden from your intellect-strengthening beehives, and everlasting glory from its mind-charming eloquence.

4- To the Gods

Hearken, you gods holding the helm of holy wisdom, who, having kindled an upward-leading fire, draw to the immortals human souls, who leave the dark hole behind, purified by the secret initiations of hymns. Hearken, great saviours, and grant me from very divine books pure light, scattering the mist, so that I know well an immortal god from a man; that a daemon, doing cruel things, may not hold me forever submerged in the streams of forgetfulness, while I am far away from the blessed ones, that a chilling Penalty may not bind my soul with the fetters of life, which, fallen into the waves of cold becoming, does not want to wander all too long.
But, gods, leaders towards bright-shining wisdom, hearken and reveal to me, while hurrying to the upward leading track, the secret rites and initiations of the holy words.

5- To the Lycian Aphrodite

We sing a hymn to the queen of the Lycians, Kouraphrodite. Once, very full of her evil-repelling help, the leaders of our country, under divine inspiration, erected a holy statue in the city with the symbols of the noeric marriage, of the noeric wedding of the fiery Hephaistos and Aphrodite Ourania; They also called this goddess Olympian, because of whose power they often escaped the mortal-destroying poison of death, they kept their eye fixed on excellence, a firm, bright-minded race sprout up from the birth-achieving beds, theirs was in every way a calm, bountiful life. But do now accept our sacrifice of eloquence too, for I myself am also of Lycian blood.
And lift up my soul from ugliness back again to great beauty, while fleeing the deadly goad of earth-born desire.

6- To Hekate and Ianus-Zeus

Hail, Mother of Gods, many-named, with fair off-spring blest. Hail, porch-dwelling Hecate, of great strength. But you too, hail, forefather Ianus, Zeus imperishable; hail, supreme Zeus. Make the course of my life radiant, weighed down with good things, but drive the evil diseases from my limbs; attract my soul, now madly raging around the earth, once it has been purified through the intellect-awaking rites. Yea, I beg you, give your hand, and show me, as one in need, the paths revealed by the gods. I will observe the precious light, from which comes the possibility to flee the misery of dark birth. Yea, I beg you, give me your hand, and with your winds bring me to the harbour of piety, exhausted as I am. Hail, Mother of Gods, many-named, with fair off-spring blest. Hail, porch-dwelling Hecate, of great strength. But you too, hail, forefather Ianus, Zeus imperishable; hail, supreme Zeus.

7- To Athena

Hearken to me, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, sprung forth from the paternal source and from the top of your series, male-spirited, shield-bearing, of great strength, from a mighty sire, Pallas, Tritogeneia, lance-brandisher, golden-helmeted, hearken; accept this hymn, mistress, with a kind spirit, do not just leave my words at the mercy of the winds, you, who opened the gates of wisdom trodden by the gods, and overcame the tribe of the earthly Giants which fought the gods; you, who guarded the unconquerable girdle of your virginity by fleeing the desire of the amorous Hephaistos; you, who saved the heart, as yet unchopped, of lord Bacchus in the vault of heaven, when he was once divided up by the hands of the Titans, and brought it to his father, in order that, through the ineffable wishes of his begetter, a new Dionysus would grow again from Semele around the cosmos; your axe, by cutting off at the roots the heads of all-seeing Hecate's animals of passions, put asleep the process of becoming; you, who loved the revered power of the mortal-awaking virtues; you, who adorned our whole life with many kinds of skills by casting noeric craftsmanship into souls; you, who obtained the Acropolis on the high-crested hill, a symbol, mistress, of the top of your great series; you who loved the man-feeding land, mother of books, strongly resisting the holy desire of your father's brother, and granted the city to have your name and noble mind — there, under the top edge of the mountain, you made an olive- tree sprout up as manifest sign of that battle for posterity too, when an immense gulf stirred up from the sea came upon the children of Cecrops, directed by Poseidon, lashing all things with its loud-roaring streams. Hearken to me you, from whose face flashes forth holy light. Give me, as I am roaming around the earth, a blessed harbour, give my soul holy light from your sacred myths, and wisdom, and love. Breathe into my love a power so great and of such a kind that it pulls me up back again from the vaults of matter to Olympus, into the abode of your father. And if some grievous error in my life overpowers me — for I know how I am buffeted by many and various unholy actions from different sides, offences which I committed with a foolish spirit — be gracious, mild-counselling goddess, preserver of mortals do not let me become prey and spoil for the horrible Punishments lying on the ground, since I profess to belong to you. Give steady and propitious health to my limbs, and drive the herds of bitter, flesh-wasting illnesses away, yes, I beg you, my queen, and stop with your immortal hand the entire misery of black pains. Give calm winds to the voyage of my life, children, a spouse, fame, happiness, lovely joy, persuasion, conversations with friends, nimble wit, power against my enemies, a place of prominence among the people. Hearken, hearken, mistress. I come to you in deep supplication, through pressing necessity. And you, lend me a gentle ear.