

# *Proclus on Ambrosia and Nectar*



## *Abstract and train of thoughts*

### **Ambrosia and Nectar are the aliments of gods.**

#### **Ambrosia and Nectar are the twin perfections of gods, so far as they are gods.**

Other things are the perfections of intellect, nature, and bodies. 3

#### **Ambrosia is solid aliment; Nectar, liquid aliment.**

Ambrosia is the One Uncreated Principle and Law in the Universe, eternal and immutable. It pulses silently in the heart of animal man reminding him of his divine inheritance and inward beatitude. 4

Nectar is the ever-flowing Spirit of Truth irrigating self-conscious minds with pure love and affection for all that lives and feels, and needs help and kindness. 4

The charioteer, stopping the horses at the manger, places before them Ambrosia, and afterwards gives them Nectar to drink, says Plato. 4

The mere sight of Ambrosia nourishes and sustains the gods, and stands to them in place of eating. 4

#### **Ambrosia, being solid, is bound. But Nectar, being humid, is boundless.**

The one, being stable perfection, is the supplier of firm and undeviating intellection, however, of an entirely a different nature to any we can conceive of here on earth. The other is prolific and perfective of the secondary presence of gods, and of a vigour which provides All with an infinite and steadfast supply. 5

#### **Suggested reading for students.**

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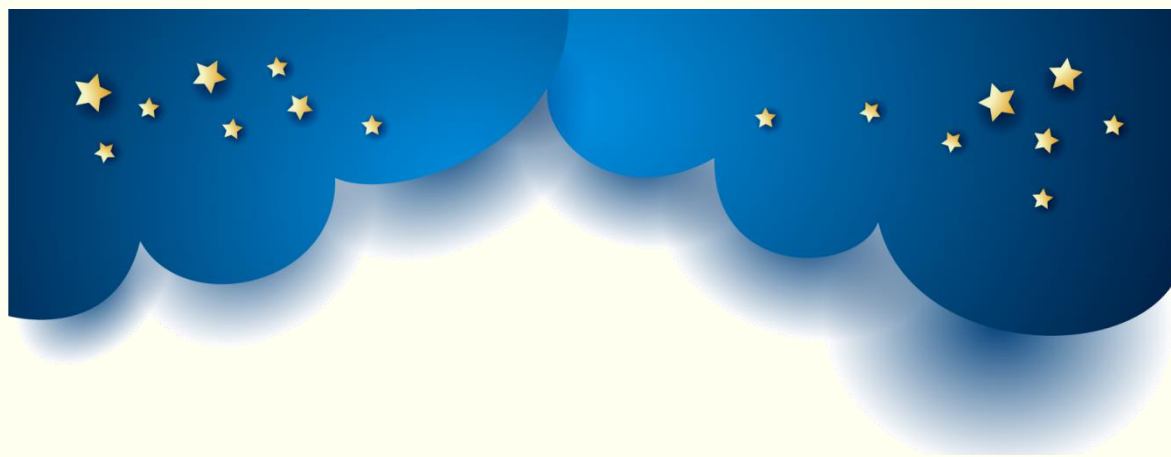
## Ambrosia and Nectar are the aliments of gods.

**Ambrosia and Nectar are the twin perfections of gods, so far as they are gods.**

**Other things are the perfections of intellect, nature, and bodies.**

Thomas Taylor. (*tr. & Annot.*). *Proclus' Theology of Plato*. (Vol. VIII of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 1995; [Bk. IV, ch. xv, on "What the plain of Truth, and what the meadow are. What the unical form of intelligible nutriment is. What the twofold nutriment of the Gods in which is distributed from this intelligible food," pp. 259-61.]

**A**FTER THESE THINGS THEREFORE, we may survey another triad pre-existing in this place, which also Socrates celebrates, *viz.* the plain of truth,<sup>1</sup> the meadow, and the nutriment of the Gods. The plain of truth therefore, is intellectually expanded to intelligible light, and is splendid with the illuminations that proceed from thence. For as *The One* emits by illumination intelligible light, so the intelligible imparts to secondary natures a participation productive of essence. But the meadow is the prolific power of life, and of all-various reasons, is the comprehension of the first efficient causes of life, and is the cause of the variety, and generation of forms. For the meadows also which are here are productive of all-various forms and reasons, and bear water which is the symbol of vivification. And the nourishing cause of the Gods, is a certain intelligible union, comprehending in itself the whole perfection of the Gods, and filling the Gods with acme and power, in order that they may bestow a providential attention to secondary natures, and may possess an immutable intellectual perception of such natures as are first. Above however, the Gods participate of these uniformly; but in a divided manner in their progressions.



<sup>1</sup> [*i.e.*, the Kingdom of Light and Truth, where the pure soul can be see and feel the beauty of Inner Wisdom. — ED. PHIL.]

## Ambrosia is solid aliment; Nectar, liquid aliment.

**Ambrosia is the One Uncreated Principle and Law in the Universe, eternal and immutable. It pulses silently in the heart of animal man reminding him of his divine inheritance and inward beatitude.**

**Nectar is the ever-flowing Spirit of Truth irrigating self-conscious minds with pure love and affection for all that lives and feels, and needs help and kindness.**

**The charioteer, stopping the horses at the manger, places before them Ambrosia, and afterwards gives them Nectar to drink, says Plato.**

The charioteer is the Higher Ego<sup>1</sup> (Krishna-Christos), the chariot is the body, the passengers are evanescent personalities from the far distant past, and the horses are the animal passions of man that have to be reined. — ED. PHIL.

**The mere sight of Ambrosia nourishes and sustains the gods, and stands to them in place of eating.<sup>2</sup>**

With respect to the nutriment likewise, one kind is called by Plato ambrosia, but the other nectar. “For the charioteer,” says he, “stopping the horses at the manger, places before them ambrosia, and afterwards gives them nectar to drink.” The charioteer therefore, being nourished with intelligibles, unically participates of the perfection which is imparted through illumination by the Gods. But the horses participate of this divisibly; first indeed of ambrosia, and afterwards of nectar. For it is necessary that from ambrosia, they should stably and undeviatingly abide in more excellent natures; but that through nectar they should immutably provide for secondary natures. For they say that ambrosia is solid, but nectar liquid nutriment; which Plato also indicates when he says that the charioteer places before the horses ambrosia and afterwards gives them nectar to drink. Hence the nutriment of nectar manifests the unrestrained and indissoluble nature of providence, and its proceeding to all things in an unpolluted manner. But the nutriment of ambrosia manifests stability, and a firm settlement in more excellent natures. From both these however, it is evident that the Gods both abide and proceed to all things, and that neither their undeviating nature, and which is without conversion to subordinate beings, is unprolific, nor their prolific power and progression is unstable; but abiding they proceed, and being established in the divinities prior to themselves, they provide for secondary natures without being contaminated. Nectar and ambrosia therefore, are the perfections of

<sup>1</sup> [Consult “Higher Self and Higher Ego,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Note to Students:

The *Ūrdhvasrota*,\* the Gods, so called because the bare sight of aliment stands to them, in place of eating; “for there is satisfaction from the mere beholding of ambrosia,” says the commentator of the *Vishnu-Purāna*.

— *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THOUGHTS ON THE ELEMENTALS) XII p. 187 *fn.* Full text under the title “Blavatsky on Elementals and Elementaries,” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.

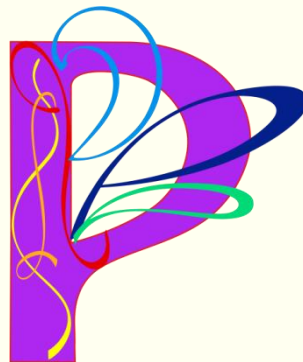
\*These are the semi-divine creatures of the Third Creation, when monastic Unconsciousness assumes latency in the Mineral Kingdom. For an in-depth analysis, consult “The Seven Creations,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Third Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

the Gods, so far as they are Gods; but other things are the perfections of intellect, nature, and bodies. Hence Plato having assumed these in souls, calls the souls [which are nourished with these] Gods. For so far as they also participate of the Gods, so far they are filled with nectar and ambrosia.

## **Ambrosia, being solid, is bound. But Nectar, being humid, is boundless.**

**The one, being stable perfection, is the supplier of firm and undeviating intellection,<sup>1</sup> however, of an entirely a different nature to any we can conceive of here on earth. The other is prolific and perfective of the secondary presence of gods, and of a vigour which provides All with an infinite and steadfast supply.**

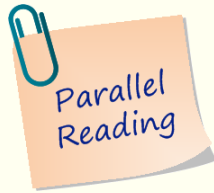
These however in their progressions have a bipartite division; the one indeed, being the supplier to the Gods of stable and firm perfection; but the other, of undeviating providence, of liberated administration, and of an unenvying and abundant communication of good, according to the two principles of the whole of things, which preside over a distribution of this kind. For it must be admitted that ambrosia is indeed analogous to bound, but nectar to infinity. Hence the one is as it were humid and not bounded from itself; but the other is as it were solid, and has a boundary from itself. Nectar therefore is prolific, and is perfective of the secondary presence of the Gods, and is the cause of power, of a vigour which provides for the whole of things; and of infinite and never failing supply. But ambrosia is stable perfection, is similar to bound, is the cause to the Gods of an establishment in themselves, and is the supplier of firm and undeviating intellection. Prior to both these however, is the one fountain of perfection, and seat to all the Gods, which Plato calls nutriment, and the banquet, and delicious food, as unically perfecting indeed the divided multitude of the Gods, but converting all things to itself through divine intelligence. For *δαίς* [the banquet] indeed manifests the divided distribution of divine nutriment; but *θούρη* [delicious food] the united conversion of the whole of things to it. For it is the intellectual perception of the Gods, so far as they are Gods. But nutriment connectedly contains both these powers, being the plenitude of intelligible goods, and the uniform perfection of divine self-sufficiency.



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<sup>1</sup> [i.e., Buddhi or Spiritual Intelligence. — ED. PHIL.]

## Suggested reading for students.

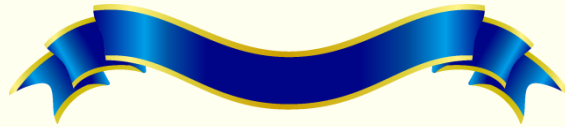


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