

Daniel 2 ⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and did homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” ⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹ Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel remained at the king’s court.

1 Maccabees (ca. 100 B.C.) ² ⁵⁹ Hannaniah, Azariah, and Mishael believed and were saved from the flame.

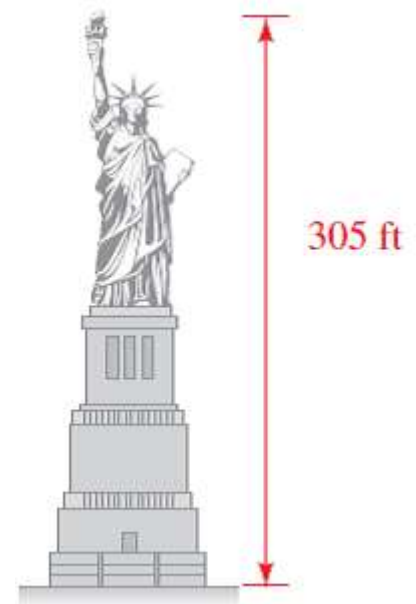
Daniel 3 ¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits (180 ft.) and its breadth six cubits (18 ft.). He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Neo-Babylonian Chronicle, Tablet 5, Reverse, Lines 21–22 • The tenth [year (595–594 B.C.): the king of Akk]ad stayed home. From the month of Kislev to the month of Tebet there [was] a rebellion in Akkad.... He put his large [army] to the sword and conquered his foe (BM 21946).

Jeremiah 51 ⁵⁹ The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign (594–593 B.C.).

LXX • Daniel 3 ¹ *In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, when he was managing cities and regions and all who lived from India to Ethiopia, he also made a golden image. Its height was sixty cubits, and its width was twelve cubits. And he set it up on the plain of the enclosure of the region of Babylonia.*

Jeremiah 32 ¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard which was in the palace of the king of Judah.



Jeremiah 52 ¹² In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ¹³ And he burned the House of the LORD, and the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. ¹⁴ And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down all the walls round about Jerusalem....

¹⁷ And the pillars of bronze that were in the House of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the House of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸ And they took away the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the dishes for incense, and all the vessels of bronze used in the Temple service; ¹⁹ also the small bowls, and the firepans, and the basins, and the pots, and the lampstands, and the dishes for incense, and the bowls for libation. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver. ²⁰ As for the two pillars, the one sea, the twelve bronze bulls which were under the sea, and the stands, which Solomon the king had made for the House of the LORD, the bronze of all these things was beyond weight.

Daniel 3 ² Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to assemble the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, were assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; ⁶ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.”

V E R S E 5	
horn	<i>qarēʾ</i> – from Heb., Aram., <i>qeren</i> , “horn”
pipe	<i>mašrôqîṭāʾ</i> – cf. Heb. <i>šaraq</i> , “to hiss, whistle”
lyre	<i>qayeterôs</i> – from Gk. κίθαρς
trigon	<i>sabēkāʾ</i> – apparently old Semitic
harp	<i>p̄santērîn</i> – from Gk. ψαλτήριον
bagpipe	<i>sûmponyâ</i> – cf. Gk. συμφωνία, or possibly, τύμπανον, “drum”

Gleason Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Rev. ed., 2007) pp. 368–369, 373 • It is alleged that the presence of at least three Greek words in Daniel 3 indicates that the work must have been composed after the conquest of the Near East by Alexander the Great. These three words (in 3:5) are *qayeterôs* (*kitharis*, Greek), *psantērîn* (*psaltērion*, in Greek), and *sûmponyâ* (*symphonia*, Greek). The last of these three does not occur in extant Greek literature until the time of Plato (ca. 370 B.C.), at least in the sense of a musical instrument. [T.C. Mitchell and R. Joyce suggest that *sûmponyâ* might actually have been borrowed from an Eastern Greek dialectical form of *tympanon* (“tambourine, drum”), since a percussion instrument would have been more appropriate at this point in the listing.] From this it has been argued that the word itself must be as late as the fourth century in Greek usage. But since we now possess less than one tenth of the significant Greek literature of the classical period, we lack sufficient data for timing the precise origin of any particular word or usage in the development of the Greek vocabulary.

It should carefully be observed that these three words are names of musical instruments and that such names have always circulated beyond national boundaries as the instruments themselves have become available to the foreign market. These three were undoubtedly of Greek origin and circulated with their Greek names in Near Eastern markets, just as foreign musical terms have made their way into our language, like the Italian *piano* and *viola*. We know that as early as the reign of Sargon (722–705 B.C.) there were, according to the Assyrian records, Greek captives who were sold into slavery from Cyprus, Ionia, Lydia, Cilicia. The Greek poet Alcaeus of Lesbos (fl. 600 B.C.) mentions that his brother Antimenidas served in the Babylonian army. It is therefore evident that Greek mercenaries, Greek slaves, and Greek musical instruments were current in the Semitic Near East long before the time of Daniel. It is also significant that in the Neo-Babylonian ration tablets published by E.F. Weidner, Ionian carpenters and shipbuilders are mentioned among the recipients of rations from Nebuchadnezzar’s commissary—along with musicians from Ashkelon and elsewhere....

Actually, the argument based upon the presence of Greek words turns out to be one of the most compelling evidences of all that Daniel could not have been composed as late as the Greek period. By 170 B.C. a Greek-speaking government had been in control of Palestine for 160 years, and Greek political or administrative terms would surely have found their way into the language of the subject populace. The books of Maccabees testify to the very extensive intrusion of Greek culture and Greek customs into the life of the Jews by the first half of the second century, particularly in the big cities.

Furthermore, it should be observed that even in the Septuagint translation of Daniel, which dates presumably from 100 B.C., or sixty-five years after Judas Maccabeus, the rendition of several of the Aramaic technical terms for state officials was mere conjecture. For example, in Dan. 3:2, *ʿaḏagāzʿrayyā*, (“counselors”) is rendered *hypatous* (“grandees”); *gʿdobrayyāʾ* (“treasurers”) by *dioikētēs* (“administrators, governors”); and *tiptayyē*, or *deṭābʿrayyā*, (“magistrates,” or “judges”) by one general phrase *tous ʿepʿ exousiōn* (“those in authority”). (Theodotion uses still other translations, such as *hēgoumenous* and *tyrrounous*, for the first two officials just mentioned). It is impossible to explain how five or six decades after Daniel was first composed (according to the Maccabean date hypothesis) the meaning of these terms could have been so completely forgotten even by the Jews in Egypt, who remained quite conversant in Aramaic as well as in Greek.

V E R S E 2		
Aramaic (RSV)	Septuagint (NETS)	Theodotion (NETS)
satraps	satraps	magistrates
prefects	generals	generals
governors	local rulers	local rulers
counselors	magistrates	governors
treasurers	administrators	despots
justices	authorities by region	authorities
magistrates	all those in the inhabited world	rulers of the regions
officials of the provinces		

Daniel 3 ⁷Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live for ever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; ¹¹ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. ¹² There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no heed to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”



August Landmesser, Hamburg, 1936

Daniel 3 ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. Then they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

Tertullian, *On Idolatry* (ca. A.D. 210) 15 • In terms of the honors due to king or emperor, we have a clear ruling to be subject in all obedience, according to the Apostle's command, to magistrates and princes and those in authority, but this obedience must be within the bounds of Christian discipline. That is, it is proper so long as we keep ourselves free of idolatry. It was for this reason that the familiar example of the three friends occurred before our time. Obedient in other respects to King Nebuchadnezzar, they most firmly refused to honor his image, and by this they proved that to extend the honor proper to a mortal beyond its due limits until it resembles the grandeur of God is idolatry.

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues* 6 (Wednesday, March 10, 387) 14 • But I say all this now, and select all the histories that contain trials and tribulations, and the wrath of kings, and their evil designs, in order that we may fear nothing, save only offending God. For then also was there a furnace burning; yet they derided it, but feared sin. They knew that if they were consumed in the fire, they should suffer nothing that was to be dreaded; but that if they were guilty of impiety, they should undergo the extremes of misery. It is the greatest punishment to commit sin, though we may remain unpunished; as on the other hand, it is the greatest honor and repose to live virtuously, although we may be punished.

Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on Daniel* (ca. A.D. 433) PG 81.1321 • Far from serving our Lord for payment, we are motivated by affection and longing, and at the same time we prefer the service of our God to everything. Hence, instead of asking for relief from the troubles unconditionally, we embrace the Lord's planning and providence; and without knowledge of what will be of benefit, we leave the helm to the pilot, no matter what he wishes, understanding clearly that he is able to free us from the threatened evils. Whether he wishes to do so, we do not know; but we leave it to him, wise governor as he is, and accept his verdict, confident that it is to our benefit. Whether he rescues us or not, therefore, we shun the worship of your statue and your gods.

Daniel 3 ¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ²⁰ And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their mantles, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. ²² Because the king's order was strict and the furnace very hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

The Prayer of Azariah ¹ And they walked about in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord. ² Then Azariah stood and offered this prayer; in the midst of the fire he opened his mouth and said:

³ "Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and worthy of praise;
and thy name is glorified for ever.

⁴ For thou art just in all that thou hast done to us,
and all thy works are true and thy ways right,
and all thy judgments are truth.

⁵ Thou hast executed true judgments in all that thou hast brought upon us
and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers,
for in truth and justice thou hast brought all this upon us because of our sins.

⁶ For we have sinfully and lawlessly departed from thee,
and have sinned in all things and have not obeyed thy commandments;

⁷ we have not observed them or done them,
as thou hast commanded us that it might go well with us.

⁸ So all that thou hast brought upon us,
and all that thou hast done to us,
thou hast done in true judgment.

⁹ Thou hast given us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful rebels,
and to an unjust king, the most wicked in all the world.

¹⁰ And now we cannot open our mouths;
shame and disgrace have befallen thy servants and worshipers.

¹¹ For thy name's sake do not give us up utterly,
and do not break thy covenant,

¹² and do not withdraw thy mercy from us,
for the sake of Abraham thy beloved
and for the sake of Isaac thy servant
and Israel thy holy one,

¹³ to whom thou didst promise
to make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven
and as the sand on the shore of the sea.

¹⁴ For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any nation,
and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins.

¹⁵ And at this time there is no prince, or prophet, or leader,
no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense,
no place to make an offering before thee or to find mercy.

¹⁶ Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted,
as though it were with burnt offerings of rams and bulls,
and with tens of thousands of fat lambs;

¹⁷ such may our sacrifice be in thy sight this day,
and may we wholly follow thee,
for there will be no shame for those who trust in thee.

¹⁸ And now with all our heart we follow thee,
we fear thee and seek thy face.

¹⁹ Do not put us to shame,
but deal with us in thy forbearance
and in thy abundant mercy.

²⁰ Deliver us in accordance with thy marvelous works,
and give glory to thy name, O Lord!

Let all who do harm to thy servants be put to shame;

²¹ let them be disgraced and deprived of all power and dominion,
and let their strength be broken.

²² Let them know that thou art the Lord, the only God,
glorious over the whole world."

Song of the Three Youths 3 ²³ Now the king's servants who threw them in did not cease feeding the furnace fires with naphtha, pitch, tow, and brush. ²⁴ And the flame streamed out above the furnace forty-nine cubits, ²⁵ and it broke through and burned those of the Chaldeans whom it caught about the furnace. ²⁶ But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions, and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace, ²⁷ and made the midst of the furnace like a moist whistling wind, so that the fire did not touch them at all or hurt or trouble them. ²⁸ Then the three, as with one mouth, praised and glorified and blessed God in the furnace, saying:

²⁹ "Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers,

and to be praised and highly exalted for ever;

³⁰ And blessed is thy glorious, holy name

and to be highly praised and highly exalted for ever;

³¹ Blessed art thou in the temple of thy holy glory

and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever.

³² Blessed art thou, who sittest upon cherubim and lookest upon the deeps,

and to be praised and highly exalted for ever.

³³ Blessed art thou upon the throne of thy kingdom

and to be extolled and highly exalted for ever.

³⁴ Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven

and to be sung and glorified for ever.

³⁵ "Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

³⁶ Bless the Lord, you heavens,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

³⁷ Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

³⁸ Bless the Lord, all waters above the heaven,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

³⁹ Bless the Lord, all powers,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁰ Bless the Lord, sun and moon,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴¹ Bless the Lord, stars of heaven,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴² Bless the Lord, all rain and dew,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴³ Bless the Lord, all winds,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁴ Bless the Lord, fire and heat,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁵ Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁶ Bless the Lord, dews and snows,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁷ Bless the Lord, nights and days,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁸ Bless the Lord, light and darkness,

sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.

⁴⁹ Bless the Lord, ice and cold,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁰ Bless the Lord, frosts and snows,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵¹ Bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵² Let the earth bless the Lord;
 let it sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵³ Bless the Lord, mountains and hills,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁴ Bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁵ Bless the Lord, you springs,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁶ Bless the Lord, seas and rivers,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁷ Bless the Lord, you whales and all creatures that move in the waters,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁸ Bless the Lord, all birds of the air,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁵⁹ Bless the Lord, all beasts and cattle,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶⁰ Bless the Lord, you sons of men,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶¹ Bless the Lord, O Israel,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶² Bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶³ Bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶⁴ Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶⁵ Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.
⁶⁶ Bless the Lord, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael,
 sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever;
 for he has rescued us from Hades and saved us from the hand of death,
 and delivered us from the midst of the burning fiery furnace;
 from the midst of the fire he has delivered us.
⁶⁷ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
 for his mercy endures for ever.
⁶⁸ Bless him, all who worship the Lord, the God of gods,
 sing praise to him and give thanks to him,
 for his mercy endures for ever."

Theodoret, *Comm. Dan.* PG 81.1340 • Now, they were far from wasting their time in listing all these things: they are first of all enkindled with love for the Lord, and remind themselves of his ineffable kindnesses, and of creation, which occurred at the beginning for the sake of mankind.

Daniel 3 ²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." ²⁵ He answered, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (ca. A.D. 185) 4.20.11 • It is manifest [in Scripture] that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18). But his Word, as he willed it and for the benefit of those who saw, did show the Father's brightness and explained his will.... He appeared to those who saw him not in one figure or in one character but according to the reasons and purposes that he wanted to achieve, as we see written in Daniel. He was seen with those who were around Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael as present with them in the furnace of fire, in the burning, and preserving them from [the effects of] fire: "And the appearance of the fourth," it is said, "was like the Son of God" (3:25).

St. Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel* (ca. A.D. 205) 33.2–3, 5 • Tell me, Nebuchadnezzar, when did you see the Son of God, that you should confess that this is the Son of God? And who stirred your heart, that you should utter such a phrase? And with what eyes were you able to look into this light? And why was this manifest to you alone and to none of the satraps around you? Thus it is written, "The heart of a king is in the hand of God" (Prov 21:1); and the very hand of God is here, whereby the Word pricked his heart, so that he might recognize him in the furnace and glorify him. And this idea of ours is not without good ground.... The Scripture showed beforehand that the gentiles would recognize him incarnate, whom, while not incarnate, Nebuchadnezzar saw and recognized of old in the furnace and acknowledged to be the Son of God.

St. Jerome, *Comm. Dan.* 3.92 • As for the fourth man, which he asserts to be like the son of God,... I do not know how an ungodly king could have merited a vision of the Son of God. For that reason,... we are to think of angels here, who after all are very frequently called "gods" as well as "sons of God." So much for the story itself. But as for its typological significance, this angel of the Son of God foreshadows our Lord Jesus Christ, who descended into the furnace of hell, in which the souls of both sinners and of the righteous are imprisoned, in order that he might, without suffering any scorching by fire or injury to his person, deliver those who were held imprisoned by chains of death.

Daniel 3 ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their mantles were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at nought the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom* (A.D. 235) 33 • It was not just of old that Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold was set up, nor only then that he threatened Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael to throw them into the burning fiery furnace unless they worshiped it. Even now Nebuchadnezzar says the same thing to us, the true Hebrews in exile from our homeland. But as for us, let us imitate those holy men so that we may experience the heavenly dew that quenches every fire that arises in us and cools our governing mind.