



# Is there a case for God?

## Part 3

### KAI WHITING

*Ancient Stoics talked a lot about God or gods. But who is this Stoic God? Does the Stoic God even remotely resemble what we mean by God (in today's major religions)? In this miniseries, Kai Whiting explores these questions.*

Chuck Chakrapani, Editor.

In Part 1, I put forward the case that accepting the existence of the Stoic God was a profoundly rational position that did not contradict contemporary scientific discoveries. In Part 2, I discussed how the Stoic God can help you connect more deeply with Nature. Here, in the third part, I would like to share how I choose to connect with the Stoic God.

Every morning my alarm goes off before sunset. I get up, rinse my hands, splash water over my arms, then my face, hair, and feet. I then pat myself down and proceed to a prayer mat where I remember who God is and what “He” has done for me. It’s a practice of gratitude and involves physical movements of standing, bending over and prostrating with my forehead on the floor. For anyone who has ever done it, they will instantly recognise it as the Islamic practice of Salat, or ritual prayer. At this point, you might be wondering what this practice has to do with Stoicism. I will not spend time here identifying the convergences and divergences between Islam and Stoic philosophy, but I do think that a reverence emerges when

you literally get called to prayer. Those calls aren’t random, nor based on how you feel. Instead, they are in tune with the rhythm of the day and the seasons because the times you are called to each prayer varies according to the sun’s position in the sky.

Tying your day, at least in part, to Nature’s patterns, does make you realise how out of sync you can get when you are not grounded in reality. This is particularly true if the COVID pandemic has restricted your interactions to online meetings. The act of stepping away from such meetings and placing my head on the floor is both grounding and humbling. It provides a literal connection with Earth and reminds me how small I am (the part of a limb of a much bigger animal).

Praying to God, not because you are frightened of hell or desperate to taste heaven is a very liberating experience. Gone is the need to prove a point or plead a case. Prayer ceases to be about you and more about the whole. Tranquillity abounds. A sense of harmony is instilled.

Does my use of an Islamic practice to delve deeper into a Stoic truth mean that it is suitable for everyone or that I advocate it on mass? No. For some people it will feel too “foreign” or too “gimmicky”. But for those who are open to it, is it worth trying it out for a day? I would say yes. In the same way

journaling is also worth trying out. Personally, it didn’t work for me, but I still suggest it to others. The prayers work for me because by moving my body while focusing my mind on God, I feel that I can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Marcus Aurelius’ advice regarding the “view from above”.

If you already know that the prayers themselves are not the way forward for you, but that you like the idea of reflecting on Nature throughout the day, you can still respond to the “calls to prayer” by setting up a routine of walking round your garden, watering your indoor plants, and putting bird seed on your veranda. In the end, the message I want to share with you is the importance of taking moments out of your day - moments you wouldn’t have otherwise chosen - to express gratitude and love for a world you did not create, nor deserve, but one which you freely enjoy and can make your own. In Part 4, I will delve more deeply into how my belief in the Stoic God has affected my day-to-day decisions and how it might affect your own.



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