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itself because then you're saying effect is equal to cause. You are saying nonexistence becomes existence, but that's not possible because it's a contradiction. So, if the point of beginning can't be within the realm of a finite universe, it can't have attributes of the universe. That means it cannot have dimension, it cannot be material, it cannot have change and it cannot be finite. This is the conceptual infinity.

We know something happened because we are here today. The universe couldn't have caused it itself so it must have been caused by this infinity. Infinity is an independent entity because if it's dependent on something it can't be infinity. If it's independent, it must be intelligent.

I am trying to understand infinity to the best of my ability. I'm not saying, “This is what infinity is,” because the moment I say this, I box it. It's not infinity anymore. So instead, I say this is what I understand to the best of my ability. By logical deduction, there is no way that infinity wouldn't exist. I call this infinity God.

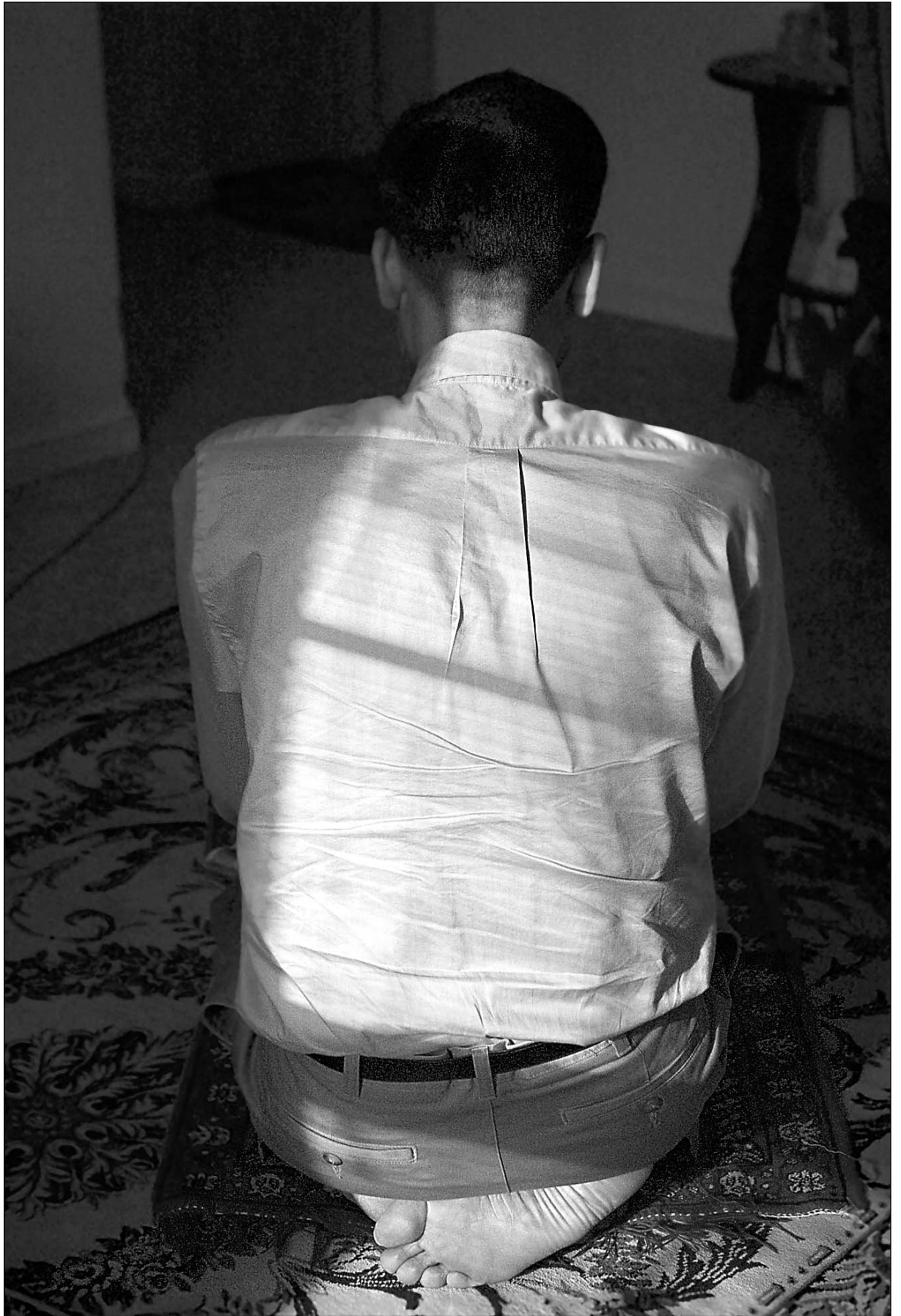
By the time I finished medical school I proved the existence of God to myself. I could have stopped here, but I didn't want to. I had concluded there is a God, and I had to test my argument. My parents didn't know what to make of me anymore. They thought, what is this? What's wrong with you, man?

I had already discarded the secular systems of communism and capitalism because they said there is no infinity, which was contrary to my logical proof. Then I studied the nonmaterial systems, which emphasize thought and spirituality. I looked at all religions and asked: How many allow logical analysis of their core? If your religion is for everybody, it has to be able to satisfy everybody, and logic is the only common ground in humanity.

Islam — and even here, only certain sects — was the only one that allowed questioning. Islam is a monotheistic heavenly religion, just like Judaism and Christianity. The founding pillar of the latter two religions is faith, and their foundation of faith, by definition, is based on non-questioning. This means faith is an entity given per se and exists as such. You cannot question why one should believe in God. You cannot ask whether there is a God or not, or who created God. You just believe because you believe. That is what it is. If a system says it's not open to logical critique, I won't spend further time with it.

Islam is very unique. It says “no.” The founding principle of Islam is also faith, but the foundation of faith is completely different. The foundation of faith is questioning and logic. The Quran says early on: *La ikraha fi'd-dini*. “There is no compulsion in religion.” The letter “a” in the negation — *ikraha* — changes the semantics of the word “compulsion,” which becomes understood as the “concept of compulsion.” Thus when the Quran says there is no compulsion in religion, it says the concept of compulsion is not existent. Unless you are grounded in reason you cannot have a passion that will be directed to God.

My next step was to find the application of my conclusions to my daily life as a Muslim. I proved the principle of Islam, *tawhid*, the oneness of God. Once you love and understand this principle cogni-



Hasan prays at his home. His faith developed from years of careful thought. “I looked at all religions and asked: How many allow logical analysis of their core? If your religion is for everybody, it has to be able to satisfy everybody, and logic is the only common ground in humanity.”

tively, that is called faith. Faith in Arabic is *aqd*, meaning knot. Faith is a knot between cognition and passion, which in turn propels you towards action and becomes the foundation of piety, the most important quality of a Muslim.

The Quran, as it says in the second chapter, is a guide for those who are pious, meaning they have done their homework, understood the foundations and developed a love for them. This foundation is propelling them toward seeking the guidance from the divine in order for them to act upon that guidance. That is piety.

It is extremely important to understand that Islam is a religion in which by logic, understanding and questioning you can acquire satisfactory answers to all your questions. I believe Islam is a whole

way of life. And life encompasses pleasure, leisure, helping, growing, teaching, and at the end of the day, it's all about making someone a better person than he was a minute ago or a day ago.

It's not that my dad didn't understand this, but he took it for granted without questioning. If you take things for granted you don't know why you are doing something and you create a shell to defend it.

I know there are Muslims critical of me and my interpretation. They ask me how I dare question my religion. I have only one response for them: If you can't question, how can you claim this religion is for all of humanity? There is no common ground in the entire humanity but logic and no better way to explore and understand ideas but dialogue.