In our world of waking and sleeping, we experience suffering and bliss, ignorance and knowledge, death and life, none of which exceeds its contrary. Each pair is mixed, but it is our orientation towards bliss, knowledge, and life that marks out our higher value in the hierarchy of existence and our greater closeness to God, whose mercy exceeds His wrath.\textsuperscript{1}

This deployment of the levels of existence begins with Essence as Ineffable, revealed by the One, like or equal to nothing, whose names reveal Him. In the imaginal, these names connect the individual trapped in the material with God. Our being has five levels – Essence, God, the names, the imaginal, and sensory existence – through which God reveals Himself as real. Ibn al-ʿArabi said:

\begin{quote}
God created the cosmos in its essence only for felicity; wretchedness occurs to whom it occurs as an accident, since Sheer Good untouched by evil is the Being of God, who bestowed existence upon the cosmos; and nothing emanates from Him except that which corresponds to Him, which is good alone.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

Sheer good is in all things, revealed in contrast to evil, which is not a principle. In the moment as indivisible reality, good appears in contrast to its contrary. God has no other, no contrary. Talk of a contrary refers to the nature or form of His revelation. We, like everything else in existence, are constantly coming and going – coming from and returning to good. Good is a principle, evil is not. Distinguishing one from the other and cleaving to good, we realize ourselves according to our principle, which is constantly being revealed to and concealed from us. We are strangers to what is not by the principle, and, called by our higher potential and spurred on by its bafflement, we constantly struggle with forces keeping us from the principle, which thereby reveal what they are not and can never be.

God gives examples in the Recitation of how appearance and reality, loss and finding relate: word pictures of our capacities from our original and most beautiful sublimity to our lowest depth, and back in the return of all things to

\textsuperscript{1} See Bukhārī, 9:482.
the principle. The splitting of the self between the extremes of the empty dark and full light corresponds to how un-real relates to Real. The world is manifestation of the Real and our only possible essence. We stand before It from moment to moment and fade, with the world, as un-real, since only the Real is real. We bear this knowledge within. Everything in the world and the self reminds us of our original nature.

Acting to maintain both world and self with all their distinctions, language can comprehend the self’s conditions, reflecting all the changes in God’s revelation. A single root yields unlimited forms, each meaning something different in different sentences. Meaning derives from the context of sentence and speaking and listening subjects. When a form is repeated, the subjects are different. Existence is flux, never ceasing, ever new. Nothing limits God, not even the condition of the manifesting self.

God spoke to the people of the Praised through him in their own language, a claim that can be accepted or not. Either entails obligations. To discover the meaning of Hagar’s name or such concepts as “Hagaric heart,” “muhajir” and “hijra,” particularly in terms of traditional teaching about our entry into, passage through and exit from this world, we must consider their appearances in the Recitation.

God is the Protector of the believers; He brings them forth from the shadows into light. And the concealers – their protectors are idols, that bring them forth from the light into the shadows; those are the inhabitants of the Fire, therein dwelling forever.3

From whatsoever place thou issuest, turn thy face towards the Inviolable Mosque; and wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it, that the people may not have any argument against you, excepting the evildoers of them; and fear you them not, but fear you Me; and that I may perfect My blessing upon you, and that haply so you may be guided.4

Satan has decked out fair their deeds to them and he has barred them from the way, and therefore they are not guided, so that they prostrate not themselves to God, who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and earth; and He knows what you conceal and what you publish.5

Hast thou not regarded those who went forth from their habitations in their thousands fearful of death? God said to them, “Die!” Then He gave

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3 Qur’an, 2:257, yukhrijukum (…) yukhrijūnahum.
4 Ibid., 2:150, kharajta.
5 Ibid., 27:24–5, yukhriju.