



## Stylistic Devices (Uslūb Bayān) in Fundamental Qur'anic Verses on the Soul: The Universe, Knowledge, and the Scholar in Sirr al-Asrār

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the meanings of Qur’anic verses that serve as the foundation of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani’s thought concerning the concepts of *rūḥ*, *‘ālam*, *‘ilm*, and *‘ālim* in *Sirr al-Asrār* through the perspective of *‘ilm al-bayān*, and analyzes their correspondence with al-Jailani’s ideas. The study employs a qualitative method with a textual study approach. The data consist of relevant Qur’anic verses collected through documentation and analyzed using *‘ilm al-bayān*, encompassing *tashbīh*, *majāz*, and *kināyah*. The analysis was conducted by identifying and classifying the rhetorical form of each verse, analyzing its textual-rhetorical meaning, examining al-Jailani’s interpretation of the corresponding concept, and comparing the two levels of meaning. The findings show that one verse uses *tashbīh*, five use *majāz*, and five use *kināyah*. Six of the eleven verses show correspondence with al-Jailani’s interpretations. In contrast, the other five do not directly correspond to their textual-rhetorical meanings but demonstrate an extension of meaning toward the spiritual dimension. These findings indicate that al-Jailani’s interpretations do not necessarily contradict the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses but, in some cases, develop these meanings within a spiritual framework. Accordingly, al-Jailani’s interpretations need to be understood critically and contextually by considering the relationship between textual-rhetorical meanings and their spiritual interpretations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

For Muslims, the Qur'an serves as the primary guide to the straight path and the most authoritative source of Islamic teachings, alongside the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Scholars generally agree that Islamic teachings are grounded in two fundamental sources: the Qur'an as the primary source and the Sunnah as the secondary one, which serves as a *bayān* (clarification) of the Qur'anic text. Accordingly, Islamic thought or discourse should ideally be grounded in these two sources in order to establish legitimacy within the Muslim community (Fikri, 2015; Shihab, 2005).

Nevertheless, many Muslims tend to accept certain religious ideas simply because they are attributed to Qur'anic verses, without critically examining whether the interpretations genuinely reflect the intended meanings of those verses. This often leads to the mistaken belief that any thought supported by textual evidence must align with the intended meaning of the verses. In practice, however, some interpretations may diverge considerably from the original meanings of the verses, even when they are presented as being grounded in the Qur'an.

Moreover, the exalted status of the Qur'an is sometimes misused by certain individuals or groups to further personal or ideological interests, often by interpreting the verses arbitrarily and in ways that do not conform to the principles of Qur'anic exegesis or Arabic linguistics, including *'ilm al-bayān*. For example, some interpretations within the Shi'a school of thought show a tendency to link Qur'anic meanings with certain figures or ideologies far removed from their original contexts (Al-Ṣābūnī, 2011; Faqihudin, 2021).

Within the Sufi tradition, however, Qur'anic interpretation may extend beyond the outward meaning of the text to encompass spiritual or inner meanings through *tafsīr ishārī*. Such interpretation does not necessarily negate the outward meaning of the verse. Rather, the *ishārī* meaning should remain compatible with the apparent meaning of the Qur'anic expression, should not be presented as the only valid meaning while disregarding the outward meaning, should not constitute an excessively remote or unsupported interpretation, and should not contradict scriptural evidence or rational considerations (Al-Zarqānī, 1988). This principle indicates that spiritual interpretation should remain connected to the textual meaning of the Qur'an.

In this context, it is important to explore the thoughts of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani (470–561 H), a renowned Sufi scholar who frequently referenced the Qur'an in his works, including *Sirr al-Asrār*. His concepts of *rūḥ*, *'ālam*, *'ilm*, and *'ālim* have greatly influenced Islamic thought. Therefore, it is essential to analyze how he understood and interpreted the Qur'anic verses underpinning these concepts, especially through the lens of *'ilm al-bayān*, which includes rhetorical styles such as *tashbīh* (simile), *majāz* (figurative expression), and *kināyah* (indirect expression).

Previous studies have examined both the language of *Sirr al-Asrār* and the Qur'anic interpretations attributed to Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani. However, they have approached these subjects from different perspectives. Hidayat (2016), for instance, examined the Sufi language of *Sirr al-Asrār* and identified numerous symbolic, figurative, and metaphorical expressions, as well as more than one thousand Sufi-related lexical items. However, the study focused primarily on the linguistic characteristics of the text and their implications for Arabic language learning rather than on the

Qur'anic verses underlying al-Jailani's ideas. Haq (2015) investigated the epistemological foundations of al-Jailani's *tafsīr ishārī*, arguing that his interpretation integrates textual meaning with spiritual significance. Ys (2021) specifically examined the concept of *rūḥ* in the Qur'an by comparing the interpretations of al-Muyassar and al-Jailani of Qur'anic verses concerning *taqwā*, focusing on the concept and its spiritual dimensions in *Tafsīr al-Jailani*. Although these studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of al-Jailani's thought, the language of *Sirr al-Asrār*, and the spiritual dimensions of Qur'anic interpretation, previous studies have not systematically examined the Qur'anic verses underpinning al-Jailani's concepts of *rūḥ* (soul), *ʿālam* (universe), *ʿilm* (knowledge), and *ʿālim* (scholar) in *Sirr al-Asrār* through the framework of *ʿilm al-bayān*. Nor have they explicitly evaluated whether the rhetorical meanings of these verses correspond to al-Jailani's interpretive framework. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing selected Qur'anic verses through the three principal categories of *ʿilm al-bayān*, namely *tashbīḥ*, *majāz*, and *kināyah*, and subsequently examining the correspondence between their textual-rhetorical meanings and al-Jailani's interpretations.

## 2. METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach, focusing on the interpretive process behind Qur'anic verses that serve as the foundation for Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thoughts on the concepts of *rūḥ* (soul), *ʿālam* (universe), *ʿilm* (knowledge), and *ʿālim* (scholar) as found in *Sirr al-Asrār*. The qualitative method is suitable for exploring phenomena in depth and contextually, particularly within the fields of *tafsīr* (Qur'anic interpretation) and Islamic intellectual discourse (Rahardjo, 2020).

The type of approach employed is a textual study combined with elements of discourse analysis. This approach is used to examine how ideas are articulated through texts, including the use of metaphor, linguistic variation, rhetorical style, and the socio-psychological and historical contexts that shape such expressions (Rahardjo, 2020).

The primary data for this research consist of Qur'anic verses cited in *Sirr al-Asrār* as the basis for al-Jailani's thought. The data were collected through documentation. The analysis was conducted based on the principles of *ʿilm al-bayān*, a branch of Arabic rhetoric that examines ways of expressing meaning through three main forms: *tashbīḥ* (simile), *majāz* (figurative expression), and *kināyah* (indirect expression) (Tamam & Abdul Wakil, 2024). In identifying the rhetorical forms and meanings of the verses, this study draws on the concepts of *ʿilm al-bayān* as explained in *Jawāhir al-Balāghah fī al-Maʿānī wa al-Bayān wa al-Badīʿ* by Al-Hāshimī (1960) and *Jawhar al-Maknūn* by al-Akhdarī.

The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, the Qur'anic verses cited in *Sirr al-Asrār* and related to the concepts of *rūḥ*, *ʿālam*, *ʿilm*, and *ʿālim* were identified. Second, the verses that directly serve as the basis for the formulation of these concepts and contain *uslūb al-bayān* were selected. Third, the rhetorical form of each verse was classified according to the categories of *tashbīḥ*, *majāz*, and *kināyah*. Fourth, the textual-rhetorical meaning of each verse was analyzed by considering its linguistic structure, verse context, and the characteristics of its *bayān* form. Fifth, al-Jailani's interpretation of the verses in *Sirr al-Asrār* was analyzed. Sixth, the textual-rhetorical meaning of

each verse was compared with al-Jailani's interpretation to determine the degree of correspondence.

In this study, an interpretation was categorized as "aligned" when there was correspondence between the textual-rhetorical meaning indicated by the verse based on the analysis of *'ilm al-bayān* and the meaning or concept developed by al-Jailani. Conversely, an interpretation was categorized as "not directly aligned" when al-Jailani's interpretation was not directly indicated by the textual-rhetorical meaning of the verse and showed an extension or shift toward a spiritual or inner meaning. This categorization is not intended to judge al-Jailani's interpretation as right or wrong, but rather to indicate the degree of relationship between the textual-rhetorical meaning of the verse and the interpretation developed in *Sirr al-Asrār*.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

Etymologically, the term *bayān* refers to explanation or clarification (Al-Hāshimī, 1960). In *Lisān al-'Arab*, *bayān* is defined as any expression that reveals or clarifies meaning, whether explicitly or implicitly (Manẓūr, 1991). Terminologically, *'ilm al-bayān* is the science that provides principles for expressing meaning in both logical and aesthetic ways. Mastery of this science enables a speaker or writer to articulate the same idea through various rhetorical styles, depending on the context and communicative goals (Al-Hāshimī, 1960).

Shihābuddīn explains that *'ilm al-bayān* aims to avoid misinterpretation and to understand how a single meaning can be conveyed through different sentence structures with varying levels of clarity. Therefore, interpreting Arabic expressions, especially those found in the Qur'an, cannot rely solely on literal meaning. A deeper understanding of figurative language such as *tashbīh*, *majāz*, and *kināyah* is required (Lubis, 2025).

According to Al-Hāshimī (1960), *'ilm al-bayān* opens the door to appreciating the elegance and uniqueness of Arabic expressions in both prose and poetry and ultimately to experiencing the unparalleled beauty of the Qur'an, which surpasses all human and jinn compositions. *'ilm al-bayān* is one of the three main branches of Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*), alongside *ma'ānī* and *badī'*, with *bayān* often occupying a central position in classical rhetorical studies.

The three principal rhetorical forms (*uslūb*) in *'ilm al-bayān* are: *Tashbīh* (simile): A comparison between two things based on shared characteristics. This form is often used to clarify abstract concepts by likening them to something more tangible or familiar (Al-Hāshimī, 1960; Aziz, 2013). *Majāz* (figurative expression): The use of a word in a non-literal sense due to a contextual cue (*qarīnah*) that prevents its literal interpretation. This involves using a figurative meaning that has a contextual relationship with the original meaning (Al-Hāshimī, 1960). *Kināyah* (indirect expression): The indirect expression of a meaning in which both literal and figurative interpretations are possible because there is no restrictive *qarīnah*. Unlike *majāz*, *kināyah* allows both the literal and figurative meanings to coexist (Aziz, 2013; Izzan, 2021).

Understanding *'ilm al-bayān* is essential for Qur'anic interpretation, as many Qur'anic verses employ figurative language (Ibrahim, 1988). For instance, the expression هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ هُنَّ (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 187) exemplifies *tashbīh balīgh* (an emphatic simile), (المائدة: ١٥) الظلمات إلى النور (Q.S. Ibrāhīm: 1) illustrates *isti'ārah taṣrīhiyyah* (explicit metaphor), and أَوْ لَأَمْسُتُمُ النِّسَاءَ (Q.S. al-

Mā'idah: 6) represents kināyah (metonymic or indirect expression). This study identified 11 Qur'anic verses that serve as the conceptual foundation for al-Jailani's ideas in *Sirr al-Asrār*, particularly those concerning *rūḥ* (spirit), *‘ālam* (universe), *‘ilm* (knowledge), and *‘ālim* (scholar), and that incorporate various forms of *uslūb al-bayān* (rhetorical devices). The findings are presented in Tables 1–4.

Table 1. *Verses used as the basis for the concept of the Soul (Rūḥ)*

| No. | Qur'anic Text                                                                                                                      | Type of <i>Uslūb Bayān</i>                                                | Rhetorical Purpose                                                        |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ<br>(المائدة: ١٥)                                                               | <i>Majāz isti'ārah taṣrīhiyyah</i><br>(explicit metaphor)                 | To clarify the meaning of Muhammad as a guide                             |
| 2.  | وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ (البقرة: ٨٧)                                                                                      | <i>Kināyah mawsūfah</i> (metonymy indicating a quality)                   | To honor Jibrīl and explain his exalted status before Allah SWT           |
| 3.  | وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ<br>(الإسراء: ١٣)                                                            | <i>Majāz isti'ārah makniyyah</i><br>(implied metaphor/personification)    | To beautify the expression by likening deeds to a necklace                |
| 4.  | قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي (يوسف: ١٠٨)                                    | <i>Majāz isti'ārah taṣrīhiyyah</i><br>(explicit metaphor)                 | To clarify the Qur'an's function as a source of guidance                  |
| 5.  | وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (آل عمران: ١٣٣) | <i>Majāz mursal</i> (metonymy using the consequence instead of the cause) | To evoke emotional resonance, encouraging repentance and obedience        |
| 6.  | يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (المؤمن: ١٥)                         | <i>Majāz isti'ārah taṣrīhiyyah</i><br>(explicit metaphor)                 | To clarify the function of revelation, which is to give life to the heart |

Table 2. *Verses Used as the Basis for the Concept of the Universe (‘Ālam)*

| No. | Qur'anic Text                                                                                           | Type of <i>Uslūb Bayān</i>                                  | Rhetorical Purpose                             |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (التين: ٥-٤) | <i>Kināyah ṣifāh</i> (metonymy indicating a characteristic) | To soften the meaning using refined expression |

Table 3. Verses Used as the Basis for the Concept of Knowledge ('Ilm)

| No. | Qur'anic Text                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Type of Uslub Bayān                                                                         | Rhetorical Purpose                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ (إبراهيم: ٢٧)                                                                                              | <i>Kināyah mawsūfah</i> (metonymy indicating a quality)                                     | To clarify the role of the declaration of tawhīd in strengthening faith in both worlds                                                                                              |
| 2.  | اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ (النور: ٣٥) | <i>Tashbīh balīgh</i> and <i>tashbīh mursal mufassal</i> (intensified and detailed similes) | The first simile aims to illustrate something imperceptible with something perceptible; the second aims to explain something not spontaneously understood through something that is |
| 3.  | وَالزَّمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى (الفتح: ٢٦)                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>Kināyah mawsūfah</i> (metonymy indicating a quality)                                     | To show the function of tawhīd in the heart, making its bearer among the pious                                                                                                      |

Table 4. Verses Used as the Basis for the Concept of the Scholar ('Ālim)

| No. | Qur'anic Text                                             | Type of Uslub Bayān                                     | Rhetorical Purpose                                                                                       |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ (القمر: ٥٥) | <i>Kināyah mawsūfah</i> (metonymy indicating a quality) | To clarify the noble attributes of Paradise, encouraging people to strive for it through righteous deeds |

From these findings, the conclusion is summarized as follows (see Table 5).

Table 5. Classification of Verses

| Theme               | Number of Verses | Uslūb Bayān                            | Rhetorical Purpose                                                 |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Soul ( <i>Rūḥ</i> ) | 6                | <i>Majāz</i> (5), <i>Kināyah</i> (1)   | To explain the essence and function of the soul                    |
| Universe ('Ālam)    | 1                | <i>Kināyah ṣifah</i>                   | To soften the expression of disgrace                               |
| Knowledge ('Ilm)    | 3                | <i>Tashbīh</i> (1), <i>Kināyah</i> (2) | To describe the role of knowledge and monotheism ( <i>tawhīd</i> ) |
| Scholar ('Ālim)     | 1                | <i>Kināyah mawsūfah</i>                | To describe the nobility of the final abode of the pious           |

Based on Table 5 above, the analysis of the 11 Qur'anic verses, one verse was found to use *tashbīh*, five verses to use *majāz*, and five verses to use *kināyah*. These three forms of *uslūb al-bayān*

were found across the four themes examined in this study, namely *rūḥ*, *‘ālam*, *‘ilm*, and *‘ālim*. These findings indicate that *majāz* and *kināyah* are the most frequently occurring rhetorical forms in the verses underlying al-Jailani's thought in *Sirr al-Asrār*.

A comparison between the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses based on the analysis of *‘ilm al-bayān* and al-Jailani's interpretations shows that six verses have direct correspondence (*aligned*), while five do not have direct correspondence (*not directly aligned*). In the six *aligned* verses, the concepts developed by al-Jailani remain directly connected to the meanings indicated by the structure and linguistic usage of the verses. Meanwhile, in the five *not directly aligned* verses, al-Jailani's interpretations show an extension or shift toward spiritual meanings that are not directly indicated by the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses.

The four tables show that the Qur'anic verses underlying al-Jailani's conceptualizations employ three forms of *‘ilm al-bayān*, namely *tashbīḥ*, *majāz*, and *kināyah*. The rhetorical meanings of these verses provide the textual basis for examining al-Jailani's conceptualizations of *rūḥ*, *‘ālam*, *‘ilm*, and *‘ālim*. However, the comparison shows that al-Jailani's interpretations do not always correspond directly to the rhetorical meanings identified through *‘ilm al-bayān*. Some interpretations correspond to the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses, whereas others extend beyond or differ from the meanings directly indicated by the verses based on the analysis of *‘ilm al-bayān*.

### 3.2 Discussion

In analyzing the research data, which consists of Qur'anic verses used as the foundation of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thoughts on the soul (*rūḥ*), the universe (*‘ālam*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), and the scholar (*‘ālim*) in his book *Sirr al-Asrār*, the author collected these verses, arranged them according to al-Jailani's order of thought, and then analyzed each verse individually using the approach of *‘ilm al-bayān* (the science of rhetorical expression).

The following is the analysis process:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ (المائدة: ١٥)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the word *nūr* (light). The author found that the term *nūr* is often used with two meanings: first, its literal (denotative) meaning, which refers to the light that allows the eye to perceive visible objects, such as sunlight, lamplight, and so on; light in this sense being the opposite of darkness; and second, its figurative (connotative) meaning, referring to something that provides guidance, like light. Therefore, the word *nūr* in this verse is considered a *Majāz isti‘ārah taṣrīḥiyyah* (explicit metaphor). It is classified as *majāz* (figurative expression) because *nūr* is used in a figurative sense, as indicated by the presence of contextual evidence (*qarīnah*) that prevents it from being interpreted literally. It is classified as *isti‘ārah* (metaphor) because of the resemblance (*mushābahah*) between the two meanings. The Prophet Muhammad, who brought the Qur'an, is likened to light because both serve to guide. Just as physical light leads people from darkness to brightness, the Prophet leads people from the darkness of disbelief to the light of faith. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad is a guide through the Qur'an. Similarly, the Prophet is likened to light in his ability to open one's vision, not the physical eyes, but the inner vision of the heart. The purpose of this metaphor is to clarify the Prophet Muhammad's role as a guide. The contextual clue (*qarīnah ḥālīyyah*) that prevents the literal interpretation comes from the verse that follows:

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ  
(المائدة: ١٦)

Therefore, the meaning of the verse (Qur'an 5:15) is that the Prophet Muhammad has come to you from Allah as a guide. This interpretation aligns with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who stated that Allah created the soul of Muhammad from His Divine Light (*nūr*), and that this light refers to the Muhammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyyah*). It is called light because it is pure from all forms of darkness. Hence, the soul of Muhammad is the essence of the universe and the origin of all creation (Al-Jailani, 1960).

وَأَيَّدَنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ (البقرة: ٨٧)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (the Holy Spirit). The author observes that the term *Rūḥ al-Qudus* in this verse is a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to the angel Jibrīl, as this expression is commonly used to refer to him, as seen in another verse of Allah's Word: (النحل: ١٠٢) نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ (النحل: ١٠٢). Jibrīl is referred to as *rūḥ* (spirit) because he brings to the prophets, including Prophet Isa (peace be upon him), something that revives the heart. He is called *qudus* (holy) because, like the other angels, he is free from sin and never disobeys Allah's commands, including delivering revelation from Allah to the prophets and messengers. The rhetorical purpose of this *kināyah* is to honor Jibrīl and to emphasize his elevated status in the sight of Allah Almighty.

Thus, the meaning of the verse is that Allah strengthened Prophet Isa through Jibrīl, namely by sending revelation to him and protecting him through Jibrīl. This indicates a discrepancy with the view of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who stated that the knowledge of Allah's essence is part of the *Rūḥ al-Qudus* in the hereafter, referring to the true human self that is placed in the innermost depths of the heart (Kafrawi, 2020; Al-Rāzī, 1990).

وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ (الإسراء: ١٣)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase *alzamnāhu ṭā'irahū fī 'unuqih*: "We have bound every human being's fate to his neck." According to Arab linguistic usage, *ṭā'ir* refers to the predetermined destiny assigned to a person in the pre-eternal realm, concerning their intellect, understanding, actions, lifespan, sustenance, happiness, and misfortune. Meanwhile, *'unuq* refers to the part that connects the head to the body (Al-Rāzī, 1990). Thus, the term *ṭā'ir* in this verse is a case of *majāz isti'ārah makniyyah* (implied metaphor or personification), because it is not literal to say that one's *ṭā'ir* (destiny) is physically bound to the neck. It is classified as *isti'ārah* because of the resemblance between the literal (denotative) and figurative (connotative) meanings. *ṭā'ir* is likened to something attached to the neck, as both are closely associated with and remain attached to a person.

The original expression is: "We have fixed each person's destiny as a necklace around his neck." The *musyabbah bih* (the thing to which it is likened) is omitted, while an element associated with it is retained, creating an implied image of something attached to the neck. When the *musyabbah bih* is omitted in this manner, it is classified as *isti'ārah makniyyah* (implied metaphor). The contextual indicator (*qarīnah*) that prevents a literal interpretation is the idea of binding destiny to the neck, which is physically impossible; only a necklace can be bound there. The rhetorical purpose is to

beautify the expression by likening a person's destiny or deeds to a necklace. Therefore, the meaning of the verse is that every person's fate is fixed by Allah and clings to them like a necklace around the neck. This aligns with Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's view that whatever a person does in this world is metaphorically hung on their neck, and thus each individual should be mindful of their conduct in their existential reality (Al-Jailani, 1960; Fuadi & Ibrahim, 2020).

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي (يوسف: 108)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the word *baṣīrah* (inner vision). The author interprets *baṣīrah* in this verse as *majāz isti'ārah taṣrīhiyyah* (explicit metaphor), in which *baṣīrah* refers to the Qur'an. The Qur'an is likened to *baṣīrah*, the inner eye or insight, because both can serve as means of discernment; through either, one can attain guidance and truth. It is possible that the metaphorical use of *baṣīrah* for the Qur'an aims to clarify its function as a source of illumination that helps distinguish truth from falsehood and guides people toward righteousness. The contextual clue (*qarīnah*) that prevents interpreting *baṣīrah* in its literal sense is the broader context of the verse, which is a command from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad to declare: "This is my path," meaning the path of Islam. He is then instructed to say that he calls to Allah, which he clearly does through the Qur'an, as it was revealed to him as a guide for humankind. Thus, the meaning of the verse قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي is: "Say, this is my way, I and those who follow me call to Allah through the Qur'an, which serves as a light of insight." This interpretation contrasts with the view of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who holds that *baṣīrah* refers to the spiritual eye ('ayn al-rūḥ) that is opened in the hearts of the saints (*awliyā'*) (Fauzi, 2023; Kholifah, 2021).

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (آل عمران: ١٣٣)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse lies in the words *maghfirah* (forgiveness) and *jannah* (Paradise). The author observes that *maghfirah* and *jannah* are used figuratively (*majāz*) in this verse, since it is not literally possible for humans to hasten toward Allah's forgiveness and Paradise, as both are ultimately granted by Allah rather than performed by human beings. Therefore, what is meant by *maghfirah* and *jannah* is the cause that leads to them, namely, repentance (*tawbah*) and obedience to Allah. Thus, *maghfirah* and *jannah* in this verse constitute *majāz mursal*, in which the effect (forgiveness and Paradise) is mentioned while the intended meaning refers to the cause (repentance and obedience). The rhetorical aim of this figurative language is likely to touch the heart more deeply, encouraging people to hasten in repentance or *istighfār* and in practicing obedience in order to attain forgiveness and Paradise. Accordingly, the meaning of the verse وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ is: "Hasten to repentance from all that is forbidden and fulfill all that is commanded, or acts of obedience."

This interpretation aligns with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who states that humans must become aware and hasten toward Allah's forgiveness through repentance. On this basis, he calls people to enter the *ṭarīq* (path) and return to Allah together with the spiritual group (*rawḥāniyyūn*), because the path will eventually end and there will be no companions left to return to the realm of origin, the divine world (*'ālam al-lāhūt*) (Al-Jailani, 1996). This interpretation aligns with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who states that humans must become aware and hasten toward Allah's forgiveness through repentance. On this basis, he calls people to enter the *ṭarīq*

(path) and return to Allah together with the spiritual group (*rawḥāniyyūn*), because the path will eventually end and there will be no companions left to return to the realm of origin, the divine world (*‘ālam al-lāhūt*) (Al-Jailani, 1996). However, the Qur’anic verse does not indicate that repentance depends on entering the *ṭarīq* in the sense of a specific *ṭarīqah* (Sufi order), such as the *Qadiriyya* or similar paths.

يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (المؤمن: ١٥)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani’s thought in this verse is the word *ar-Rūḥ* (the spirit). The author observes that *al-Rūḥ* in this verse is used figuratively (*majāz*) because the term *rūḥ* is commonly used with two meanings. The first is its literal (denotative) meaning, referring to the soul that gives life to the body, the separation of which from the body causes death. As scholars have described, the *rūḥ* is a subtle substance, like air, that flows within the body as water flows through the roots of a tree. (Katsir, 1992). The second meaning is figurative (connotative), referring to revelation (*wahy*), which revives human beings from the spiritual death of disbelief. Thus, the word *al-Rūḥ* in the verse constitutes *majāz isti‘ārah taṣrīḥiyyah* (explicit metaphor). It is classified as *majāz* (figurative expression) because *al-Rūḥ* is used in its figurative meaning, referring to revelation, and as *isti‘ārah* (metaphor) because of the resemblance between the original and figurative meanings.

Revelation is likened to *rūḥ* because both give life: *rūḥ* gives life to the body, whereas revelation gives spiritual life by bringing people from disbelief to faith. The contextual clue (*qarīnah ḥālīyyah*) that prevents interpreting the word in its literal sense can be found in another verse: وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا . . . إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا . . . (الشورى: ٥٣). The rhetorical purpose of using this figurative expression in the verse is to clarify the function of revelation as a life-giving force for the heart. Accordingly, the meaning of the verse يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ is: “He (Allah) sends down the spirit by His command upon whom He wills among His servants, in order to warn them of the Day of Meeting (the Day of Judgment). This interpretation shows a disagreement with the view of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who states that there exists the subtlest kind of *rūḥ* among all spirits, called *ṭif al-ma‘ānī*. This subtle essence draws a person toward Allah and exists only in certain individuals (Al-Jailani, 1996).

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (التين: ٤-٥)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani’s thought in this verse is the phrase “*asfala sāfilīn*” (“the lowest of the low”). The author observes that *asfala sāfilīn* is a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to the disgraceful state of human beings in Hell, or *ar-rādhil* (the despicable ones). This is classified as *kināyah ṣifah* (indirect expression of an attribute), because what is positioned at the very bottom is generally associated with something low or vile. Thus, *asfala sāfilīn* in this verse may refer to human beings in a humiliated or disgraced state in Hell, since Allah returns human beings to a lowly state after initially creating them in the best of forms, except for those who believe and perform righteous deeds, for whom there is an unending reward. (Zabidi dkk., 2026).

Thus, the phrase *asfala sāfilīn* constitutes a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to the despicable state of human beings in Hell. The rhetorical purpose is to soften the meaning by using a more refined expression. Therefore, the meaning of the verse ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (then We returned him to the lowest of the low) is that Allah returned him to a disgraceful place, which is Hell. This

indicates a discrepancy with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who stated that human beings were created in the most perfect form in the realm of *Lāhūt*, and then returned to the body in the realm of *Mulku*, or the physical world (Al-Jailani, 1996).

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ (إبراهيم: ٢٧)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase *al-Qawl al-Thābit*. The author considers this phrase a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to the statement of *tawhīd*, namely *lā ilāha illallāh*, or, more fully, *Muhammadun Rasūlullāh*. This is because the natural consequence of the declaration of *tawhīd* is firmness and conviction in the heart. The rhetorical purpose is to clarify the function of the statement of *tawhīd* in strengthening faith in both this world and the Hereafter. (Zabidi dkk., 2026).

Thus, the meaning of the verse يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ is that Allah strengthens those who believe with the firm word (kalimat al-tawhīd: *lā ilāha illallāh*) in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. This interpretation aligns with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who stated that Allah establishes twelve names in the hearts of the lovers, corresponding to the letters of *lā ilāha illallāh*, placing one name in each part of the heart for each letter and assigning three names to each realm. (Ibrahim, 1998; Junaidi, 2018).

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ (النور: ٣٥).

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase "*nūr al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ wa mathalu nūrihi ka-mishkāh...*" and so on. The author observes that Allah employs the rhetorical style of simile (*tashbīh*) in this verse. At the beginning of the verse, Allah likens His essence to the light of the heavens and the earth. This type of simile is called *tashbīh balīgh* because it mentions only the two essential elements, namely the *musyabbah* (the thing being compared) and the *musyabbah bih* (the thing to which it is compared), without mentioning the *adāt al-tashbīh* (comparative particle) or the *wajh al-shabah* (point of similarity).

The original phrase, *Allāhu ka-nūri al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi fī hidāyatihī*, can be understood as "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth in His guidance." He then compares His light to a niche containing a lamp and so on, using *tashbīh mursal mufassal*, since both the comparative particle *kāf* and the point of similarity, namely guidance, are explicitly indicated, as seen in the verse, "*yahdī li-nūrihi man yashā*" (He guides to His light whom He wills).

This second simile, when examined from both sides, is a simile in which the simple (*mufrad*) is compared with the composite (*murakkab*). This means that the elements of the *musyabbah bih* should not be considered separately but understood as an integrated whole in order to grasp the intended meaning.

The first simile aims to make something beyond human perception (Allah) understandable by comparing it to something perceptible (light). In contrast, the second simile aims to make something not immediately perceptible (Allah's guidance) understandable by comparing it to something perceptible. Although Allah's light, understood here as His guidance, cannot be measured or fully comprehended, it is understood to refer to His guidance, which may also be conveyed through other means, such as His messengers (Dawood & Alwan, 2026).

Thus, Allah expresses His guidance through this simile to help the reader understand that He is the One who guides the heavens and the earth, meaning all of His creation. The *musyabbah bih* in this composite simile depicts the strongest possible light, a light above which no other light exists. This helps us understand that Allah's guidance is the strongest: whomever He guides will never go astray, and whomever He misguides will never find the way.

This interpretation aligns with Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's view of Allah's light in the verse. However, there is a difference between the meaning indicated by the verse and the interpretation quoted by al-Jailani from other sources, namely that *al-mishkāt* represents the heart of the believer, *al-miṣbāḥ* represents the secret of the heart (the spirit of divine power), *al-zujājah* represents the heart, and the blessed olive tree represents the tree of spiritual initiation (*talqīn*). (Daraj & Mahmood, 2025; Ibrahim, 1998).

وَالزَّمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى (الفتح: ٢٦)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase *kalimat al-taqwā* (the word of piety). The author observes that *kalimat al-taqwā* in this verse is a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to the statement of *tawḥīd*, or the *shahāda*, namely: *ashhadu allā ilāha illallāh wa ashadu anna Muḥammadan Rasūlullāh* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). This is because *taqwā* (piety) depends on the presence of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) in the heart, while the presence of *tawḥīd* is expressed through the utterance of the *kalimat al-tawḥīd*.

The rhetorical purpose may be to highlight the function of *tawḥīd* in the heart, namely, to make its possessor among those who are truly pious. Thus, the meaning of the verse *وَالزَّمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى* is that Allah made it obligatory for them to remain steadfast in adhering to the declaration of *tawḥīd* or the *shahāda*, namely, *lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammad rasūlullāh*. This interpretation aligns with the thought of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, who stated that the *kalimat al-taqwā* is the phrase *lā ilāha illallāh*, provided that it is received by a heart that is pious and purified from anything other than Allah (Albudairi & Almahasees, 2026).

However, the meaning of the verse does not indicate the condition that the statement must be received by a pure heart. Rather, it indicates that Allah instills it in the heart through His divine guidance (*tawfīq*) (Ibrahim, 1998; Ulum, 2022).

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ (القمر: ٥٥)

The focus of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thought in this verse is the phrase *maq'adi ṣidq* (a seat of truth). The author considers this phrase a *kināyah* (indirect expression) referring to Paradise. It is referred to as *maq'ad* (a seat or dwelling place) because Paradise is the abode of the righteous, just as Hell is the dwelling place of disbelievers. This indicates that Paradise is a place prepared for those who are mindful of God (*muttaqūn*).

It is called *ṣidq* (truthfulness) because there is no falsehood in Paradise; its inhabitants are the righteous, who do not need to lie to gain benefit, as they are sustained solely by Allah's grace. The likely rhetorical purpose of this *kināyah* is to highlight the noble qualities of Paradise and thereby encourage people to hasten toward it through righteous deeds.

Thus, the meaning of the verse *فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ* is “in a seat of truthfulness, in the presence of the Almighty Sovereign,” that is, in Paradise, in the presence of the All-Powerful Lord. This interpretation differs from Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani’s view, in which *qurbah* (closeness to God) is considered synonymous with *maq’ad al-ṣidq*, a special place for prophets and saints (*awliyā’*) in the realm of *Lāhūt* (the divine realm).

Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani also made a distinction between *qurbah* and *jannah* (Paradise), assigning *qurbah* to esoteric scholars (*‘ulamā’ al-bāṭin*) and *jannah* to exoteric scholars (*‘ulamā’ al-ẓāhir*). However, the Qur’anic verse clearly states that the righteous are in Paradise, raising the question: are esoteric scholars not among the righteous? (Ibrahim, 1998; Suhartono & Faizah, 2017).

The comparison shows that differences between the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses and al-Jailani’s interpretations mainly emerge when the meanings indicated by the structure of *‘ilm al-bayān* are extended into a spiritual framework. For example, *maq’adi ṣidqin*, which in the analysis of *‘ilm al-bayān* is understood as a *kināyah* referring to Paradise, the abode of the righteous, is interpreted by al-Jailani as the abode of the saints and prophets in the realm of *lāhūt*, also referred to as *qurbah*. In some verses, however, al-Jailani maintains a connection with the basic meaning of the verse while developing it toward more specific inner concepts. For instance, *Rūḥ al-Qudus*, which in the analysis of *‘ilm al-bayān* is understood as a *kināyah* referring to Jibrīl, is interpreted by al-Jailani as the reality of the human being entrusted within the depths of the heart, through which God can be known in the Hereafter. Likewise, *baṣīrah*, which in the textual-rhetorical analysis is understood in relation to guidance and the ability to recognize truth, is interpreted by al-Jailani as a spiritual eye (*‘ayn al-rūḥ*) that is opened within the hearts of the saints. This pattern indicates that differences do not necessarily constitute a rejection of the meaning of the verse but may represent an extension of meaning toward a spiritual framework that is not directly indicated by the linguistic structure of the verse.

This extension of meaning can be understood in relation to the characteristics of *tafsīr ishārī*, namely interpreting the Qur’an beyond its outward meaning on the basis of a subtle indication perceived by those engaged in spiritual discipline and Sufism, while still allowing it to be reconciled with the outward meaning of the verse (Al-Zarqānī, 1998). However, in this study, the term *tafsīr ishārī* is not used to categorize all interpretations that do not directly correspond to the analysis of *‘ilm al-bayān*. Rather, it is used as a framework for understanding the possibility of extending meaning from the textual-rhetorical level toward a spiritual meaning. Thus, the difference between the two interpretations indicates different levels of interpretation, namely between meanings that can be directly indicated by the linguistic structure of the verse and spiritual meanings developed within al-Jailani’s conceptual framework.

From the perspective of *‘ilm al-bayān*, the presence of *tashbīh*, *majāz*, and *kināyah* in the analyzed verses indicates that the Qur’an conveys some meanings through forms of expression that are not always literal. These rhetorical forms allow meanings to be conveyed through comparison, semantic relationships, or indirect expressions that can be understood by human beings. In the context of this study, these rhetorical forms provide the basis for analyzing how al-Jailani understands Qur’anic verses in developing the concepts of *rūḥ*, *‘ālam*, *‘ilm*, and *‘ālim*. However, as

demonstrated by the five *not directly aligned* cases, al-Jailani's interpretations do not always stop at meanings that can be directly identified through the analysis of *'ilm al-bayān*.

The findings of this study complement previous research on al-Jailani's language and thought. Hidayat (2016) demonstrated the richness of Sufi language in *Sirr al-Asrār*, including the use of symbolic and figurative expressions. Haq (2015) showed that al-Jailani's interpretive thought has an epistemological dimension that connects textual meaning with spiritual significance. Meanwhile, Ys (2021) demonstrated the spiritual dimension of al-Jailani's interpretation of the concept of *rūḥ* in the Qur'an. The present study extends these findings by placing *'ilm al-bayān* as an analytical basis for comparing the textual-rhetorical meanings of the verses with al-Jailani's interpretations. Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies in mapping the degree of correspondence between the rhetorical meanings of the verses and al-Jailani's conceptualizations in *Sirr al-Asrār*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis presented, it can be concluded that the Qur'anic verses forming the foundation of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's thoughts on the concepts of *rūḥ* (soul), *ālam* (universe), *'ilm* (knowledge), and *'ālim* (scholar) in *Sirr al-Asrār* contain a variety of rhetorical expressions as outlined in *'ilm al-bayān*. Among the eleven verses analyzed, one contains *tashbīḥ* (simile), five contain *majāz* (figurative expression), and another five contain *kināyah* (indirect expression).

The analysis revealed that six of these verses are aligned with the interpretations offered by Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, as they correspond to the textual-rhetorical meanings indicated by the verses. However, five verses are not directly aligned with these meanings, as al-Jailani's interpretations extend toward spiritual meanings that are not directly indicated by the textual-rhetorical structure of the verses. This difference does not necessarily indicate a contradiction but may reflect an extension of meaning from the linguistic level toward the spiritual dimension.

Accordingly, this study demonstrates that *'ilm al-bayān* can provide an analytical basis for examining the relationship between Qur'anic rhetorical meanings and al-Jailani's Sufi interpretations. The findings contribute to a more contextual understanding of al-Jailani's thoughts in *Sirr al-Asrār* by distinguishing between meanings directly indicated by the textual-rhetorical structure of the verses and spiritual meanings developed through his interpretive framework.

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C : Conceptualization

I : Investigation

Vi : Visualization

M : Methodology

R : Resources

Su : Supervision

So : Software

D : Data Curation

P : Project administration

Va : Validation

O : Writing - Original Draft

Fu : Funding acquisition

Fo : Formal analysis

E : Writing - Review & Editing

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors state no conflict of interest.

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