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Isti'żān as a Mechanism for Protecting Privacy and Individual Honor in the Tafsir of *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin Ar-Rāzī

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Abstract

This article examines Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī's interpretation of the *isti'żān* verses in QS. an-Nūr 27–29, with *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* as the primary source. The study focuses on three main aspects: the interpretive character of *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib*, ar-Rāzī's exegetical treatment of the *isti'żān* verses, and the implications of this interpretation for the protection of privacy and individual honor. Using a bibliographical approach and thematic analysis, this article shows that ar-Rāzī does not understand *isti'żān* merely as a form of visiting etiquette, but as an ethical-legal framework that protects private space from disturbance, surveillance, and unauthorized entry. *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* demonstrates a distinctive integration of rational, linguistic, theological, and juridical interpretation, connecting the meaning of the verses to broader social structures. In ar-Rāzī's interpretation, permission, greetings, body position, repeated requests for entry, the occupant's right to refuse, and the prohibition of peeping constitute preventive mechanisms for safeguarding personal privacy, tranquility, dignity, and authority over private space. The study concludes that the central implication of ar-Rāzī's interpretation of *isti'żān* lies

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in its recognition of privacy as an inherent right of every individual, including within family relations and close social relationships. These findings contribute to Qur'anic studies by highlighting the relevance of classical exegesis to contemporary discussions on privacy, dignity, and ethical boundaries in social life.

Keywords: *Isti'ẓān*; Privacy; Individual Honor; Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī; *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib*

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of *isti'ẓān* in Surah an-Nūr, verses 27–29, is often reduced to a section on the etiquette of visiting guests, as if the verse's content were limited to rules of etiquette when entering another person's home. This reading is not textually incorrect—the verse does contain practical instructions, such as asking for permission and greeting—but it narrows the verse's normative scope by ignoring more fundamental layers of principle. When viewed solely through the lens of social etiquette, the dimensions of rights protection and the power structures regulated by the text are often overlooked (Ansory & Muthiatunnisa, 2025).

The prohibition against entering a house other than one's own without first asking permission and greeting the homeowner actually embodies the boundaries of private space, the homeowner's right to privacy, residents' psychological safety, and respect for human dignity. This provision is not merely a formality. It establishes a mechanism of respect that prevents violations, disruptions, and potential exploitation in social relations (Musa, 2015). By requiring prior permission, the verse establishes a reciprocal relationship between residents' autonomy and guests' obligations, prioritizing the protection of domestic space and individual dignity.

Conceptually, the message of *isti'ẓān* emphasizes that domestic space is not an open public area accessible solely by social relations, kinship, or visiting customs. This norm establishes a normative boundary that distinguishes between private and public space and regulates access legitimacy based on the consent of the owner or occupant. This approach demonstrates the integral legal, ethical, and social dimensions of the verse—namely, maintaining a balance between community ties and respect for personal freedom, honor, and security within the domestic sphere.

This theme becomes interesting when read in the context of *Tafsir Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī. Ar-Rāzī is known as a *mufassir* who does not stop at the meaning of the verse. He develops questions, tests possible meanings, compares opinions, and then develops rational arguments to show the wisdom and legal consequences of a provision. In the context of *isti'ẓān*, this methodological tendency appears very strong. He doesn't just explain that asking permission is mandatory; he also asks why permission is needed, what valid forms of permission are, who can grant permission, whether permission must be explicit, what to do when the host refuses, and why snooping is considered a serious offense. Through these questions, *isti'ẓān* shifts from merely practical etiquette to the development of comprehensive social ethics (Maulida & Bashori, 2025).

Research on *isti'ẓān* as a mechanism for protecting individual privacy and honor in Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī's *Tafsir Mafaṭiḥ al-Ghaib* is still relatively limited. Still, six previous studies are relevant as the foundation for this study. First, Shobichah (2020) in his thesis on the values of sex education in QS. An-Nur verses 58-59 found that *isti'ẓān* as social etiquette has a crucial role in maintaining privacy and genitals in domestic life. Second, research on *isti'ādhah* in *ar-Rāzī's Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghaib* shows that this exegete emphasizes the dimension of protection in the verses of the Qur'an, with ar-Rāzī establishing three conditions for *isti'ādhah*: *'ilm, ḥāl*, and *'amal*, which are relevant to the concept of privacy protection (Qonitiyyah, 2021). Third, research on the ethics of visiting in QS. An-Nur verses 27-29 in the Tafsir of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia confirms that *isti'dzān* is fully designed to protect and uphold the right to life and privacy of others (Sa'diyah, 2022). Fourth, a study of the contextualization of the hadith on personal data protection in the digital era shows that Islamic teachings, as conveyed through the hadith, provide strong ethical guidance for maintaining the privacy and security of personal data, in line with the principle of *isti'dzān* (Sidiq, 2025). Fifth, a comparative study of *Tafsir Al-Huda* and *Tafsir Al-Ibrīz* on the verses on the ethics of visiting (*isti'nās, isti'dzān*) found that both interpretations emphasize the ethics of visiting as a form of respect and as a means of maintaining social harmony (Fitriani, 2025). Sixth, a study of *Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghaib* generally confirms that this book is a monumental work that combines a rational-philosophical approach with Sunni Ash'ariyah theology, resulting in an argumentative, multidisciplinary narrative that covers several aspects (Akbar, 2025). Although these six studies are relevant, none have specifically examined *isti'ẓān* from the perspective of

individual privacy and honor, as interpreted by ar-Rāzī in *Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghaib*, thereby filling a significant scientific gap.

This article is based on a thesis that examines Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī's perspective on *isti'ẑān* in *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib*. This article deliberately omits discussion of modern social relevance, as its primary focus is directed at the internal construction of ar-Rāzī's interpretation and its normative implications. Thus, attention is not directed to expanding the theme into the digital space or to contemporary issues, but rather to how ar-Rāzī constructs the notions of privacy, honor, property rights, and the authority of the householder through verse analysis. The narrative of this article is also not structured as a list of implications, but as a flowing description, so that the relationship between the book of interpretation, the method of interpretation, and its ethical-legal consequences is more fully presented.

METHODS

This study uses library research with a qualitative approach. The primary source of the research is *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* by Fakhruddin ar-Rāzī, specifically the commentary on QS. an-Nūr verses 27–29. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, and relevant previous studies on the methodology of ar-Rāzī's interpretation, Islamic social ethics, the concept of privacy, and the discussion of *isti'ẑān* (Adiyaksa & Hastaning, 2016; Rijali, 2019; Satori & Komariah, 2017). Data collection was conducted through collective scanning of texts, recording relevant quotations, and cataloging discourses related to the research theme (Moleong, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted in a hermeneutic-thematic manner: reading relevant sections of the commentary, identifying the question structure and hermeneutic strategies employed by ar-Rāzī, and examining the relationship between the linguistic, theological, and juridical arguments developed in his commentary. The researcher codified themes, tracked argumentation patterns, and cross-compared primary texts and secondary literature findings to ensure the validity of the interpretation. The validity of the analysis was supported by source triangulation and critical reflection on ar-Rāzī's historical-scholarly context (Creswell, 2013).

The thematic approach was chosen because the research does not discuss the entire Surah an-Nūr, but rather focuses on the theme of *isti'ẑān* in verses 27–29, while still

maintaining attention to the sequence of ar-Rāzī's discussion in his commentary. This approach respects the systematics of ar-Rāzī's interpretation, which generally moves from linguistic issues to legal wisdom, then to operational procedures, and concludes with exceptions or limitations, thereby tracing interrelated argumentative stages to understand the construction of Qur'anic concepts in the commentary.

RESULTS

Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib and the Character of the Book of Tafsir ar-Rāzī

Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib is one of the most extensive works of exegesis in the Islamic intellectual tradition. This book is also known as *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, a term that reflects the breadth and depth of its discussion. In it, ar-Rāzī not only interprets verses from a literal perspective but also engages in discussions of theology, logic, philosophy, *usul fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), language, *qirā'āt* (religious interpretation), and the comparison of scholars' opinions. Therefore, this book is often read not only as an exegesis but also as an encyclopedia of Islamic thought, demonstrating the intense interaction between revelation and reason(Maulida & Bashori, 2025).

The intellectual background of *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* is closely related to ar-Rāzī's position as a scholar who mastered many disciplines. He lived during a time when debates between kalam, philosophy, and linguistics were flourishing. In such an atmosphere, ar-Rāzī viewed the Qur'an as a text possessing infinite depth of meaning. His statement that *Surah al-Fātiḥah* could give rise to thousands of scholarly discussions demonstrates his belief that Qur'anic verses should not be understood superficially. This claim also served as a methodological impetus for ar-Rāzī to prove that interpretation can be a space for rational proof, not merely a brief explanation of the meaning of words (Akbar, 2025).

The main strength of this book lies in its analytical bent. Al-Rāzī often expands the discussion through *istiṭrād*, that is, by addressing several issues considered related to the verse. On the one hand, this tendency makes his commentary appear lengthy and rambling; on the other hand, it is precisely this that distinguishes ar-Rāzī's commentary. He does not let the verse rest as a normative statement, but examines the basis, purpose, consequences, and possible objections to its meaning. When discussing the verse of *isti'zan*, for example, he does not simply state that a Muslim is obligated to ask permission. He questions the

meaning of *isti'nas*, its relationship to *salam*, the reasons for the law of asking permission, the forms of permission, and the limits of its exceptions (Mardlotillah, 2020).

The book *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* also shows great attention to language. Ar-Rāzī uses lexical, syntactic, grammatical, and *qirā'āt* analysis to uncover the possible meanings of verses. In the discussion of Surah an-Nūr verse 27, the issue of the word *tasta'nisū* is key. The word is not understood simply as asking for permission in the narrow sense, but rather as a process of making the occupants of the house feel safe, knowing who is coming and not being surprised by others' presence. Thus, the analysis of language does not stop at the definition of the word, but moves towards an ethical and psychological understanding (Zaini & Mohd, 2023).

In addition, ar-Rāzī is known as an interpreter who combines the naqlī and ʻaqlī approaches. He continues to refer to the views of the Companions, the Tabiʻin, and previous scholars, but does not make narrations the sole path of interpretation. Reason, for ar-Rāzī, functions as a tool for understanding wisdom, weighing arguments, and explaining the objectives of sharia (T. Moqbel, 2025). This characteristic is very evident in his interpretation of *isti'żān*. The verse about permission is not merely read as a command, but as a norm with social rationality: humans have personal conditions that are not always readily apparent; homes have honor; and residents have the right to regulate others' access to their space (Erkmen, 2022).

Criticism of the *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* has also been part of the history of this book's reception. Ibn Taymiyyah, for example, famously criticized the book for containing much more than just exegesis (Sharifirad et al., 2016). This criticism refers to the breadth of philosophical and theological discussions, which he argued could distract from the primary purpose of interpretation. However, many other scholars view this breadth as a strength. For academic readers, the breadth of the *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* allows social verses such as *isti'żān* to be understood not only as practical commands but also as a gateway to discussing rights, space, dignity, and the structure of social relations (Al-Zahabi, 2000).

Ar-Rāzī's Interpretation of the Verses of *Isti'żān*

Al-Razi's interpretation of Surah an-Nur, verses 27-29, begins with a careful reading of the prohibition on entering another person's house without first seeking permission and offering greetings. This command demonstrates that the home is not a neutral space. It has moral and legal status because it contains the private lives of its inhabitants. A home is not

just a place to live, but a space that holds private parts, secrets, emotional states, and family situations that are not always appropriate for outsiders to know. Therefore, the prohibition on entering without permission serves as the first barrier protecting the dignity of the occupants (Razi, 1981).

In explaining the term *isti'nās*, ar-Rāzī demonstrates the depth of his analysis. *Isti'nās* does not simply mean asking for permission; it also implies creating a sense of security and familiarity. A guest who arrives should not cause surprise, fear, or disturbance. He must first announce his presence so the occupants have the opportunity to prepare, accept, decline, or ask the guest to return. Thus, the essence of isti'nān is not merely a formal greeting at the door, but rather an acknowledgment that the final decision rests with the occupants of the house (Razi, 1981).

Al-Razi also highlighted the relationship between *isti'nās* and greetings. While the verse mentions *isti'nās* before greetings, Al-Razi's discussion demonstrates that the order of the words does not necessarily negate the function of greetings as an opening to communication. Greetings contain dimensions of security, respect, and self-identification. They transform a person's arrival from a potential threat into a civilized communication (Knight, 2016). Therefore, greetings are not merely religious greetings, but rather social protocols that signal that the guest's arrival is conducted in an atmosphere of peace and respect.

One of ar-Rāzī's important contributions is his explanation of the obligation of *isti'ẕān*. He mentions the possibility that a person may be in a situation that others are not allowed or do not want to see. This situation could expose private parts, family activities, or personal circumstances that one wishes to keep private. Here, ar-Rāzī distinguishes between two areas of protection: protection of what is seen and protection of what is known (Shihadeh, 2006). In other words, *isti'ẕān* safeguards both visual privacy and informational privacy. This concept is crucial because it broadens the understanding that human honor is not only damaged when private parts are exposed, but also when personal circumstances are discovered without one's consent (Razi, 1981).

Ar-Rāzī then linked the prohibition on trespass to the principle of ownership. Entering another person's home without the owner's consent is akin to the unauthorized use of another person's property. Even if the perpetrator does not intend to steal or damage, the act of entering another person's space without permission still carries an

element of unilateral control over something that does not belong to them. In this perspective, *isti'ẓān* serves as a bridge between ethics and law: it is both an *adab* (ethical practice) and a legal-moral requirement for someone to exercise access to another person's private space (Razi, 1981).

On a practical level, ar-Rāzī discussed the correct form of permission request. He related this to a hadith that corrected the permission formula that did not include a greeting or self-identification. A guest should not simply convey their intention to enter but must also inform the host who is requesting permission (Fahcrodin, 2026). It demonstrates that valid permission requires sufficient information. Without identification, the occupant cannot make an informed decision. The right to accept or reject a guest is only meaningful if the occupant knows who is coming and why. Ar-Rāzī also outlined a limit to the number of permission requests. Requests should not be repeated indefinitely, as excessive repetition can become social pressure. When someone continually knocks or asks for permission, the occupant may feel forced to accept. Therefore, limiting permission requests safeguards the host's freedom. Here, it appears that the sharia prohibits not only physical entry but also subtle forms of coercion that can deprive the occupant of comfort (Razi, 1981).

Even the body position when asking for permission is considered. Ar-Rāzī emphasized the prohibition of standing directly in front of the door in a way that allows direct visibility into the house. Guests should stand to the side of the door so that their arrival does not turn into surveillance (Straface, 2020). This detail demonstrates that the essence of *isti'ẓān* lies in protecting the gaze. A person may not have entered the house yet, but already violates privacy if their eyes precede their permission. In Ar-Rāzī's logic, a visual violation can occur before a physical violation.

Another issue discussed by ar-Rāzī is whether permission alone is sufficient to allow entry. He answers that the entry still depends on the occupant's actual permission. The absence of a prohibition is not the same as the presence of permission. A quiet house, an unanswered door, or the absence of an occupant are not grounds for entry. This provision demonstrates a strong precautionary principle: access to private spaces is only valid with a sign of consent, not simply because there is no refusal (Razi, 1981).

QS. an-Nūr verse 28 emphasizes that if a guest is told, 'Go back,' then he must return. Ar-Rāzī reads this command with social empathy. The occupant not only has the right to refuse entry, but also the right not to be disturbed by someone who waits too long

at the door. Refusal should not be understood as an insult to the guest, but rather as the occupant's right to manage his own time, space, and circumstances. The command to return is even considered more sacred because it subdues the guest's ego and cleanses social relationships of negative prejudice.

Verse 29, concerning uninhabited houses, is given special attention by ar-Rāzī. He presents several opinions on the meaning of *buyūt ghayr maskūnah*, such as public inns, markets, shops, border posts, certain ruins, and other public places. Ar-Rāzī tends to take an inclusive position: entry to these places is permissible because it is permitted by common practice. However, he still places an important limitation. If the building is seized property or is in an illegal state, then the general permission is not valid. It shows that ar-Rāzī does not rigidly divide space into private and public; he considers ownership status, customs, and consent (Razi, 1981).

DISCUSSION

Implications of Interpretation for the Protection of Individual Privacy and Dignity

The most fundamental implication of ar-Rāzī's interpretation is that privacy is understood as a right under sharia, not merely a feeling of embarrassment or social custom. When the Qur'an prohibits entry before *isti'nās* and *salam*, it establishes a normative boundary that protects the occupants from outside interference. This boundary is not created by social status, wealth, or position, but by the fact that every human being has a space that must be controlled by themselves. The home is the most concrete symbol of this space. Within the home, a person is at their most private. They can reveal their private parts, rest, talk with family, or keep secrets that others should not see. Therefore, a violation of the home is a violation of the occupants' honor (Yousif & Aziz, 2021).

Ar-Rāzī developed the meaning of *isti'nās* to encompass privacy beyond physical protection. *Isti'nās* presupposes a sense of security. A good guest makes the occupant feel prepared, not one who surprises them. From this, it is clear that privacy protection also encompasses psychological states. A person can be disturbed not only by being seen, but also by feeling a loss of control over their space. When someone suddenly enters, the occupant experiences psychological shock: they do not have time to choose how to present themselves, organize their situation, or determine their attitude. Within this framework, isti'n functions as a mechanism to restore control to the space owner.

Al-Rāzī's emphasis on consent gives his interpretation strong legal weight. Entering another person's home without permission is like taking advantage of another person's property without consent. This analogy is important because it demonstrates that privacy is not a soft value that relies solely on good manners. Privacy is closely related to property rights, though not identical to them. Property rights protect objects, while privacy protects a person's relationship to space and information about themselves. When a home is entered without permission, what is violated is not only the walls and doors, but also the occupant's will as the authority holder over the space (Supriyadi, 2023).

Another strong implication is the broadening of the concept of honor. In many discussions of Islamic jurisprudence, honor is often associated with maintaining modesty and a good name. Ar-Rāzī expands on this by emphasizing hidden conditions that one does not want others to know. Thus, honor concerns not only the body but also information, inner state, and domestic circumstances. A person may not be revealing their private parts, but still has the right to refuse to let others know about their home. They may be ill, in conflict with family members, grieving, or in a situation that they do not want to become public knowledge. *Isti'zān* protects these areas.

In the context of social relations, ar-Rāzī's interpretation prevents the guest from dominating the host. In many cultures, the guest is often positioned as someone who must be respected, to the point that the host feels he cannot refuse. The verse of *isti'zān* corrects this tendency. While the guest is respected, the householder retains primary rights to their space. When ordered to return, the guest is obligated to do so. There is no room for excessive resentment. Thus, the sharia strikes a balance between respect for the guest and protection for the host.

Limiting the number of permission requests demonstrates ar-Rāzī's concern with psychological pressure. Coercion does not always come in the form of violence. One can coerce through persistent presence, repeated knocking, or requests that do not give the host a comfortable opportunity to refuse. The *isti'zān* interpretation holds that permission must arise from a sense of willingness rather than from pressure. It is where the ethical value becomes subtle but powerful: the validity of permission depends on the freedom of the person granting it. If permission is given under duress, the substance of the consent is damaged (Putra, 2024).

The prohibition on peeping discussed by ar-Rāzī occupies a crucial role in protecting privacy. Peeping is more dangerous than simply trespassing because the victim is often unaware of the violation. They have no opportunity to cover their private parts, stop their activity, or avert their gaze. Therefore, ar-Rāzī places peeping as a serious offense. In this ethical system, the eye can become a tool of violation just as the foot can become a tool of trespassing. In other words, the boundaries of the home are protected not only from bodies entering the space, but also from gazes intruding into it (Razi, 1981).

This assertion demonstrates that the *isti'ẓān* sharia is both preventive and defensive. It is preventive because it requires seeking permission before entering; it is defensive because it provides occupants with a basis for protecting themselves from surveillance. The home should not be a space open to others' curiosity. Curiosity cannot be used as an excuse to look at, examine, or learn about someone's private life. From ar-Rāzī's perspective, curiosity must be subject to the consent of the party being studied.

Ar-Rāzī's interpretation also has important implications for family structure. He emphasizes that the obligation of *isti'ẓān* remains in effect within certain kinship relationships. Lineage closeness does not automatically eliminate privacy. A brother must still ask his sister's permission; one must still respect one's mahram's space; even a very close relationship should not be a reason to eliminate personal boundaries. This principle is crucial because many violations of privacy occur within the family space, when proximity is used as justification to enter, see, or know something without permission (Syarif et al., 2023).

Thus, ar-Rāzī distinguished between emotional closeness and the right to private space. Being closer to another person does not mean having more freedom to enter that person's space. Healthy closeness actually demands greater sensitivity to boundaries. *Isti'ẓān* within the family is not a sign of suspicion, but rather a sign of respect. He taught that a person's dignity is not diminished by being a sibling, a child, a parent, a wife, or a husband. Each individual retains a personal identity that does not require them to reveal to others.

This implication is particularly strong in the protection of women's honor. When ar-Rāzī emphasized the importance of permission in mahram relationships, he implicitly acknowledged that women have control over their private space. Women are not domestic objects whose space can be accessed at any time by male family members. They are subjects with will, a sense of shame, and the right to determine their readiness to accept the

presence of others. In the logic of *isti'żān*, respect for women is not confined to public spaces; it begins in the home, where violations are often considered normal due to family ties (Hasan, 2025).

Furthermore, if the right to privacy is to remain anonymous, it can also apply to very close relationships. Ar-Rāzī recognized that a person may sometimes find himself in situations he does not want witnessed by even those closest to him. It emphasizes the dimension of personal autonomy. Honor is not only guarded from strangers, but also from excessive access by those close to him. Thus, privacy establishes the etiquette of intimacy: the closer the relationship, the greater the moral responsibility to avoid violating the rules.

Another implication concerns the distribution of authority for protecting the home. Al-Razi discusses the validity of permission from various parties within the home, not just the male head of the family. It demonstrates that protecting domestic privacy should not depend on a single figure. If only the head of the family is considered legitimate in granting or denying permission, the home becomes vulnerable in his absence. By accepting the possibility of permission from other occupants, the home's protection mechanism becomes more sustainable. Each occupant has a role as guardian of the honor of the domestic space (Hasan, 2025).

This idea also has an important social dimension. A home is not simply a person's formal property, but rather a place of shared living. Children, women, servants, or other family members can be aware of the current state of the house. When they are given the authority to grant or deny permission, Sharia recognizes them as moral subjects. The protection of privacy is not centered on a power hierarchy, but on the real importance of preserving the peace of the home and the honor of all its inhabitants.

The discussion of uninhabited houses demonstrates that ar-Rāzī understood permission in relation to '*urf*. Certain spaces are traditionally open to the public, such as markets, inns, or public service establishments. In such spaces, permission need not be granted personally, as it is inherent in the place's social function. However, ar-Rāzī did not consider '*urf* to be an absolute justification. If there are elements of injustice, usurpation, or unclear rights, then entry may be revoked. It demonstrates that social permission must still be framed by the validity of ownership and legitimate consent (Razi, 1981).

The balance between explicit permission and permission based on 'urf demonstrates the flexibility of ar-Rāzī's interpretation. He does not make the law rigid, but

also does not allow the private sphere to become obscured. In a private home, permission must be clear. In a public space intended for public use, permission can be understood implicitly (Low, 2013). However, boundaries remain: the status of the space, the purpose of entry, and the owner's rights must be considered. Thus, *isti'ẓān* not only regulates the home in a narrow sense, but also teaches how to read the boundaries between private, shared, and public spaces.

The spiritual dimension of this interpretation is evident in the closing verse, which affirms that God knows what is apparent and what is hidden. Ar-Rāzī interpreted this warning as a moral check on human intentions. A person may appear to be simply standing at a door, passing by a house, or entering an empty building, but God knows whether their intentions are pure or questionable. Thus, protecting privacy depends not only on external rules but also on inner awareness. Sharia governs behavior, while faith safeguards intentions (Hasan, 2025).

Spiritual awareness is crucial because privacy violations are often carried out covertly. People can peep unnoticed, enter a room when no one is present, or seek personal information for seemingly legitimate reasons. The *isti'zan* verse closes this gap by introducing God's oversight. Human privacy is protected not only by doors, walls, and laws, but also by the fear of God, who knows hidden glances, intentions, and impulses. Within Al-Rāzī's framework, social ethics cannot be separated from theological awareness.

The overall implication of ar-Rāzī's interpretation is the establishment of a system for protecting human dignity. *Isti'ẓān* protects the body from unauthorized glances, the home from unauthorized access, information from unwanted dissemination, feelings from harassment, and social relationships from prejudice. He teaches that human honor does not rest on a single aspect. Honor is a unity between the body, space, reputation, tranquility, and will. When any of these are violated, human dignity is also compromised.

Therefore, *isti'ẓān*, as read by ar-Rāzī, is not a marginal norm, but rather part of the Islamic social order. A civilized society is not merely one that greets one another, but one that understands boundaries. Civilized people do not feel entitled to another's space, do not force acceptance, do not offend when rejected, do not stare into homes, and do not use proximity as an excuse to violate privacy. All of this demonstrates that *adab* in Islam is not merely an expression of politeness, but also a tool for protecting human rights.

At this point, it appears that ar-Rāzī made *isti'ẓān* a multi-layered protection mechanism. The first layer is linguistic: greetings and asking for permission. The second layer is bodily: standing posture and the prohibition against peeking. The third layer is legal: the obligation to ask for permission and to return it when refused. The fourth layer is social: the recognition of the authority of the occupant and the function of 'urf in public spaces. The fifth layer is spiritual: the awareness that Allah knows hidden intentions. These five layers work together to maintain privacy and honor.

Furthermore, ar-Rāzī's interpretation shows that permission is a language of recognition of the subject. When someone asks for permission, they are essentially stating that the occupant of the house is not a passive object that can be visited at any time, but rather a person with a will and the right to make decisions. Asking for permission implies an acknowledgment of a boundary between the guest and the host. This boundary is not hostile, but rather a requirement for social relations to proceed with dignity. Without boundaries, closeness can turn into domination; without permission, a visit can turn into an intrusion. Without greetings, presence can turn into a threat. Ar-Rāzī captures this meaning by linking *isti'nās* to a sense of security and the removal of alienation (Aziz, 2011).

Within this framework, human dignity is maintained through two simultaneous actions. The first is the guest's self-restraint. He or she restrains their steps, gaze, voice, and desires until the guest grants permission. The second is the granting of authority to the guest. They are given the right to respond, remain silent, accept, reject, or ask the guest to return. These two actions form a balanced social ethic. Islam does not build a society by suspecting everyone, but neither does it allow everyone to invade another's space in the name of familiarity. Politeness arises from the ability to control oneself and to respect others' decisions.

The power of ar-Rāzī's interpretation is also evident in the way he makes small details the foundation of larger values. Standing by the door, not looking inside the house, not repeating excessive requests for permission, and returning when asked to leave may seem like simple rules. However, in ar-Rāzī's interpretation, these details serve a greater purpose: protecting people from shame and preserving the home's prestige (Rosenthal, 1978). Sharia often works through small actions repeated many times to shape social character. *Isti'ẓān* teaches people not to feel entitled to see everything, not to feel obligated to be accepted at all times, and not to view rejection as a cause for hostility.

This interpretation also demonstrates the close relationship between privacy and trust. A person granted entry is essentially entrusted with safeguarding what they might see and hear inside the home. Permission is not a ticket to observe the occupants' entire situation. Permission only opens a space for interaction when justified and needed. Therefore, a person who enters after being granted permission remains bound by the etiquette of guarding one's gaze, guarding one's speech, and maintaining confidentiality. By interpreting *isti'ẓān* as a system of protecting honor, ar-Rāzī argues that the honor of the home does not end with permission; it continues to be maintained throughout one's stay and after one leaves.

From a moral education perspective, *isti'zan* fosters awareness that one person's freedom always clashes with others' rights. A guest is free to visit, but that freedom ends at the door until the host gives consent. One is free to desire to meet, but that desire must not override the host's circumstances. One is free to have close relationships, but that closeness cannot eliminate the obligation to respect private space. Ar-Rāzī's interpretation demonstrates that Islamic law not only mandates outward actions but also fosters an inner sensitivity to often-invisible boundaries.

This implication becomes clearer when ar-Rāzī distinguishes between inhabited houses and those open to the public by right. This distinction is not simply a classification of places, but a way of interpreting the social purpose of a space. Private homes are essentially closed unless permission is granted. Public spaces are essentially open as long as their function and customs permit entry. However, the openness of public spaces does not erase all dimensions of honor. One is still not permitted to act as one pleases, damage, control, or enter a place whose status is problematic. Thus, in ar-Rāzī's interpretation, permission is not merely a statement but a relationship among humans, space, function, and rights (T. H. Moqbel, 2026).

In the social structure envisioned by the verse of *isti'ẓān*, honor is not only protected after harm has occurred, but is safeguarded from the outset through prevention. Ar-Rāzī seems to understand that much social damage begins with minor boundary violations. An unguarded glance can breed prejudice; an unauthorized arrival can give rise to offense; an unwelcome refusal can breed hostility; the spread of domestic information can damage a good reputation. Therefore, *isti'ẓān* serves as an initial barrier that prevents the causes of harm from escalating into larger conflicts. With this reading, the term *adab*

can no longer be understood lightly. *Adab isti'ẓān* is a form of self-regulation that has legal, social, and spiritual consequences. It demands the awareness that another person's home is not an extension of our will, that another person's body and personal circumstances are not objects of our gaze, and that good social relations can only endure if each party feels secure within their respective boundaries. Ar-Rāzī makes this meaning apparent through a combination of evidence, language, reason, and considerations of the public interest.

Ultimately, ar-Rāzī's reading of *isti'ẓān* demonstrates that the protection of privacy in Islam does not stand outside the objectives of the Shari'a, but is part of safeguarding human well-being. Covering private parts, keeping secrets undisclosed, avoiding hurt feelings, and keeping a home uninvited are all linked to the preservation of dignity. This dignity is not only valuable in public spaces, but is most evident in the domestic space closest to them. Therefore, a violation of the home has a deeper impact than a simple intrusion; it touches the very core of human security (Hasan, 2025).

It is where ar-Rāzī's uniqueness as an interpreter becomes apparent. He does not allow the verse of *isti'ẓān* to be understood as a technical rule that ends with the practice of knocking on the door. He connects the word, the law, the cause, the wisdom, and its social consequences. With a single command, he demonstrates a system of protection encompassing gaze, steps, speech, intention, and decision. This system demands humility from the guest and demands respect from the occupant as the authority over their space. Thus, ar-Rāzī's interpretation provides strong theoretical weight for the study of Islamic social ethics.

This narrative also emphasizes that individual honor in Islam does not solely depend on societal recognition after someone has been insulted, but is maintained before the insult occurs. *Isti'ẓān* operates before private parts are exposed, before secrets are revealed, before shame arises, and before social conflict develops. This preventative nature is what makes ar-Rāzī's interpretation so crucial to understanding Qur'anic ethics. He demonstrates that sharia does not simply repair damage but establishes a code of conduct that reduces the likelihood of damage from the outset. Thus, in ar-Rāzī's interpretation, isti'ẓān can be understood as a social discipline that unites legal awareness and moral sensitivity. Law sets clear boundaries: a home may not be entered without permission, while morality fosters gentleness in asking for permission and in accepting refusal. The two do not replace each other, but complement each other. Without law, *adab* can be seen as a

matter of personal choice; without morality, law can become dry and formal. Ar-Rāzī demonstrates that the Qur'an combines both in one simple yet profound command.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* provides a broad framework for understanding *isti'ẓān* as an ethical-legal concept. The analytical, rational, linguistic, and dialectical character of ar-Rāzī's tafsir allows for a thorough reading of Surah an-Nūr, verses 27-29. Ar-Rāzī does not stop at the obligation to ask permission, but rather unravels the reasons, objectives, forms, and consequences of that obligation. He shows that the house has honor, the occupants have authority, and guests have a moral obligation not to transgress. Ar-Rāzī's interpretation also shows that privacy in Islam encompasses visual, physical, informational, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. *Isti'ẓān* prevents the exposure of the private parts, the disclosure of personal conditions, the disturbance of tranquility, and the breakdown of social relations due to unauthorized entry or viewing. By emphasizing the occupants' consent, ar-Rāzī places individual autonomy as a crucial element in protecting honor. A person's private space should not be accessed simply out of habit, proximity, or curiosity. This article argues that the most significant implication of ar-Rāzī's interpretation of *isti'ẓān* is the recognition of human dignity within the domestic sphere. Every individual has the right to set boundaries, even with family and close friends. Every home has a dignity that must not be violated. Every guest is obligated to subordinate their desires to the pleasure of the occupants. Thus, *isti'ẓān* is not merely a courtesy of visiting, but rather a Qur'anic mechanism for maintaining privacy, dignity, and social order.

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