A theory of interpreting texts, specifically religious texts, that centers the interests and rights of women as primary in its understanding of the content.

In modern times, women are excluded from the ulema, the interpreters of Islam’s religious texts, contrary to the early days of Islam, when women, like the wives of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), were responsible for transmitting the Qur’an and the Hadith. Rather than benefit women, this exclusion has only served to harm Muslim women, who are unable to cultivate their ilm (knowledge) as commanded in the Holy Qur’an.

Moreover, refusing a woman’s authority over religious texts is a direct contradiction to the egalitarian lessons of the Qur’an which was revealed to subvert patriarchal misogynistic and oppressive practices.

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As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty & ill-conduct (nushūz), admonish them first, (next), refuse to share their beds, & last beat (ḍaraba) them (iḍribū) lightly.

Surah al-Nisa 4:34

Nushūz is interpreted as wife's disobedience, disloyalty or rebellious attitude towards her husband. Daraba has been interpreted in a number of different ways including: strike, scourge, beat, and discipline.

TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION

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FEMINIST INTERPRETATION

- Nushūz is interpreted as a disruption of marital harmony as it is used in verse 4:128 to refer to men. Recognizes that a literal meaning cannot be applied to daraba because:
  - The Prophet (PBUH) was always kind towards his wives.
  - There are multiple meanings of the word daraba, including "to separate".
  - Other verses in the Qur’an (4:19) prohibit violence and harm in a relationship.
  - To condone domestic violence would violate the basic themes of the Qur’an including compassion, justice and human dignity.

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