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UNDERSTANDING
of ISLAM

Ibrahim, A. S. *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution: Why Americans Must Choose Freedom*. Lovettsville, VA: Think and Tell, 2026.

A. S. Ibrahim, the author of *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution: Why Americans Must Choose Freedom*, brings a distinctive combination of personal experience and academic expertise to his examination of sharia and its compatibility with the U.S. Constitution. A Coptic Christian born and raised in Egypt, Ibrahim lived there for more than thirty years and witnessed firsthand how sharia-informed social and legal structures can affect religious minorities. He holds PhDs from Fuller Theological Seminary and the University of Haifa and serves as a professor of Islamic Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored more than fifteen books on Islam, including *Muhammad's Military Expeditions and Conversion to Islam* (Oxford University Press) and *A Concise Guide to the Quran* (Baker Academic).

Overview and Major Arguments

In *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution: Why Americans Must Choose Freedom*, Ibrahim examines classical sharia alongside foundational principles of the American constitutional order. From the outset, he distinguishes between Muslims as individuals and Islamism as a political ideology, making clear that his critique is directed at sharia as a legal and political system rather than at Muslim people themselves (xxviii). He affirms that “individual Muslims deserve the full protection of American law and the respect of their fellow citizens” (xxviii). With that distinction in place, Ibrahim examines whether the legal assumptions of classical Islamic jurisprudence can coexist with American commitments to religious liberty, free speech, equality, limited government, and popular sovereignty. He answers that question with a clear thesis: “Sharia—in its classical, authoritative form, as derived from the Quran, the Hadith, and the accumulated

rulings of Islamic jurisprudence—is a legal and political order that is fundamentally incompatible with the United States Constitution” (xxxix).

In each chapter, Ibrahim focuses on a particular aspect of classical sharia and compares it with a corresponding principle or protection in the U.S. Constitution. **Chapter 1** demonstrates that classical sharia places ultimate legal authority in Allah, whereas the First Amendment rests on the principle that legitimate government derives from the consent of the governed. **Chapter 2** turns to the issue of religious liberty, showing how classical sharia’s death penalty for apostasy directly conflicts with the constitutional right to leave, change, or reject one’s religion. **Chapter 3** addresses blasphemy, contending that punishments for insulting Muhammad or Islam are incompatible with the First Amendment’s protection of free speech. **Chapter 4** compares sharia’s legal distinctions based on religion and gender with the Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection under the law. **Chapter 5** argues that classical *hudud* punishments, including flogging, amputation, and stoning, stand in tension with the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. **Chapter 6** contrasts Islamic divine sovereignty with American popular sovereignty, arguing that the two systems differ fundamentally over who possesses ultimate legislative authority. **Chapter 7** considers the tension between sharia-based parallel legal systems and the constitutional principle of one law for all, emphasizing that religious practice may be protected without allowing religious law to override the rights guaranteed to all citizens.

In the conclusion, Ibrahim brings these arguments together and shifts from comparison to appeal. He explains that his case is grounded in the Quran, Hadith, and classical jurists, and encourages readers to approach the subject in the same way—by engaging the primary sources directly and allowing them to speak for themselves. He further highlights that this analysis is not

the idiosyncratic conclusion of one scholar working in isolation. He points to congressional hearings held across multiple legislative sessions that have examined sharia and its implications for the American constitutional order, including testimony from national security experts, constitutional scholars, former Muslims, and survivors of sharia governance. This topic is ultimately a matter of constitutional defense. At stake is the preservation of constitutional freedoms rooted in religious liberty, equal protection, free speech, and one law for all. Ibrahim calls readers to respond to these issues with clarity and conviction: “This challenge must be named. It must be understood. It must be opposed—not with fear, not with violence, not with hatred, but with the full force of constitutional clarity and civic courage” (94).

Critical Analysis

The strengths of *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution* are evident in Ibrahim’s methodology for developing his argument and his use of primary sources. Particularly significant is his consistent engagement with the Quran, Hadith, and classical Muslim jurists. Rather than relying primarily on popular perceptions of Islam or isolated contemporary examples, Ibrahim grounds his analysis in primary Islamic texts and the classical legal tradition to establish how sharia has historically been understood, interpreted, and applied. This source-based methodology allows readers to consider the textual basis for the book’s claims and reflects the importance of evaluating a religious tradition through its own authoritative sources.

The book is also marked by a coherent structure and accessibility. Ibrahim organizes each chapter around a particular constitutional principle and places it in conversation with a corresponding feature of classical sharia, providing readers with a consistent framework for following the argument. Technical terms and legal concepts are explained along the way, making the discussion accessible to those without extensive backgrounds in either Islamic studies or

constitutional law. At the same time, the book maintains engagement with Islamic jurisprudence and historical sources, allowing it to serve as an introduction to the subject without reducing the discussion to generalizations.

Especially important is Ibrahim's clear distinction between Muslims as individuals and Islamism as a political ideology. Throughout the book, he affirms the dignity, religious liberty, and constitutional rights of Muslim individuals while subjecting the legal and political claims of sharia to critical examination. This distinction provides a helpful framework for engaging Islamic beliefs and political ideas seriously without reducing Muslims themselves to those ideas. It also reinforces the important principle that evaluating a religious or political system is not the same as expressing hostility toward the people who identify with that religion. Taken together, these features make *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution* a well-sourced, credible, and relevant contribution to contemporary discussions of sharia and the American constitutional order.

Conclusion: How This Book Can Help Christians Engage Muslims

For Christians seeking to understand Islam and engage Muslims faithfully, *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution* offers more than information and knowledge about Islamic law and constitutional principles. It helps readers identify deeper questions behind discussions of religion, freedom, law, authority, and human dignity, providing a useful framework for approaching classical sharia and its legal and political implications. Rather than relying on assumptions or speculation, Christians can use these themes as a starting point to ask thoughtful questions, listen carefully, and engage in meaningful discussions with Muslims about the issues the book raises. In this way, the book contributes to the broader task of developing a solid Christian understanding of Islam, which is essential for engaging Muslims with wisdom and confidence in ways that foster meaningful and fruitful conversations.

Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution is especially helpful because it models an approach that combines conviction with respect. Ibrahim's distinction between Muslims as people and Islamism as a political ideology prepares Christians to avoid hostility while still engaging Islamic beliefs and political ideas intellectually and honestly. For pastors, ministry leaders, students, and lay believers who want to speak thoughtfully and effectively with their Muslim neighbors about faith and freedom, this book is a valuable resource. At the same time, it is not a resource for Christians alone; its subject matter is relevant to all Americans who care about religious liberty and the protection of constitutional rights. Given the continued importance of these questions in the United States and across the West, *Sharia Versus the U.S. Constitution* is a timely and important contribution to the conversation.

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