

Umma and sharia their relation and fundamental importance in islamic society.

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



The umma and sharia play an integral role in Islamic society. Umma, which is defined as an Islamic community or the totality of all Muslims, actually means “ people”. In the Quran there is reference which indicates a nation of people that are part of a divine plan. 1 In the early days it was the umma of Muhammad that developed Islam, which was segregated to only true believers. Non-believers, like the Meccans, were excluded just like some Muslims today exclude many non-believers or infidels from their Islamic community or umma. Sharia, which literally means “ the road to the watering hole”, is the clear path or right way that Muslims are to follow. It is God’s guidance for humanity and a source of law and moral guidance which is the basis for both Muslim law and ethnics. It was inspired by the Quran and Sunna as well as Muslim scholars over the first few centuries of Islam. Although Shaira is law it actually extends to all aspects of religion, politics, social, domestic and private life of Muslims. 2 Overall, Islam consists of a community of believers, the umma. They are traditionally protected by a khalifa or imama. God is sovereign, and the sharia, Islamic religious law, is the legal authority. Sharia is also the entire body of divinely revealed law and the path to Allah, which dictates the Muslim believer’s entire life from birth to death, and ensures his or her happiness in this world and the hereafter. Its authority and validity have never been significantly challenged, either by Sunni Islam or by the majority of sects. 3 Rulers or caliphs are only temporal, but they have the right and duty to implement the sharia and to defend the faith against heresy. As a consequence of the importance of Islamic law, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) has a significant and central position in Islamic religion. This jurisprudence, the traditional Islamic doctrine, is based upon

four fundamental principles in its classical theory. The first source is the Quran. It consists of both ethical and spiritual teachings and social legislation, in addition to politico-moral principles of community. The second source is the Sunna, which complements the Quran and consists of collections of Hadith, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and accounts of his deeds. The Sunna helps to explain the Quran, but it may not be interpreted or applied in any way that is inconsistent with the Quran. The third source is the consensus of the community or ijma, or the agreement of qualified legal scholars in a given generation. Collectively they express common religious conviction. The Quran, the Sunna and the ijma are relative easy to understand, but the fourth principle in Islamic law is disputed and has been identified as analogical reasoning or ijtihad. In actuality this principle is very subjective and results in interpretations that can range widely due to independent prejudices or judgment by analogy. 4 The regulations of umma and sharia are divided into worship and ritual duties, and those of judicial and political nature. Modern Islam would seem to generally oppose the traditional view of sharia that it cannot be changed by man. Opinions now lean towards the application of new ideas with new interpretations. Of course an exception to this is the recent prevalence of Islamic extremism and the impact of a small percentage of radicals in the umma. Ultimately the Muslim umma is the religious community of people who believe in the unity of Allah and the finality of the Prophet Muhammad and fulfill all the obligations required by the sharia. 1 Quran II. 128 2 “ A Concise History of the Middle East” by Arthur Goldschmidt Jr. and Lawrence

Davidson 3 " The Islamic Movement in Sudan" by Claes-Johan Lampi
Sorensen. 4 " Islam — The Straight Path" by John L. Esposito