

Abul A'la Maududi

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Ref. 1324

Dated 23/6/75

Mr. Umar Ali
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Dear brother-in-Islam:

ass^alamo alaikum wa rahmatullah

I have received your letter dated may 27, 1975. My brief answer to your detailed letter is that Riba (interest) is completely and eternally forbidden in Islam. Our Holy Prophet (peace & blessing of Allah upon him) and his esteemed companions were economically more "hard pressed" than the present-day Muslims. Many Muslims were money lenders and their sole means of income was interest. One of them was Abbas the uncle of the Holy Prophet. But when the injunction banning the interest was revealed, the prophet gave a sermon and ordained: I nullify every amount of interest accrued to any person and first of all I deprive my beloved uncle of all interest which any-body owes to him. Hadhrat Abbas was a needy and thrifty person but he willingly bowed his head before Allah and His prophet.

To take and to give interest is perhaps the greatest sin in Islam. Persons who commit this sin have been given an ultimatum of war from Allah and His prophet. The Holy Prophet has cursed a person who consumes or pays interest, writes its document, bears witness to it or keeps its account. The Prophet has further said: "The sin of interest is so enormous that if it is divided into seventy portions, the smallest portion is like committing adultery with one's own mother".

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In an Islamic state Non-muslims can worship their idols, they can drink wine and eat pigflesh but they are not permitted to give or to take interest even from a non-muslim. When Christians of Najran came to the Holy Prophet and they offered to live under his protection, he said to them: If you pay an agreed tax you can live under our protection and can practise your religion and personal laws, but you are not allowed to contract interest-bearing loans, If you do, you are liable to loose all your rights and privileges.

I think this brief answer would be enough to clear all doubts and misgivings created arround this matter. This subject has been discussed in full detail in one of my books entitled "Sood". There is another book "Islam and the Theory of Interest" written by a Pakistani economist Mr. Anwar Iqbal Qureshi. You may also read this book with benefit.

Yours sincerely

A. Maudoodi

(Abul A'la Maudoodi)
