

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910787402603321
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Titolo	The rightful way of banking // by Omar Masood and Shahid M. K. Ghauri
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Newcastle upon Tyne, England : , : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, , 2015 ©2015
ISBN	1-4438-7524-4
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (237 p.)
Disciplina	332.1091767
Soggetti	Banks and banking - Religious aspects - Islam
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	""CONTENTS""; ""ABOUT THE AUTHORS""; ""PREFACE""; ""LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS""; ""GLOSSARY""; ""CHAPTER ONE""; ""CHAPTER TWO""; ""CHAPTER THREE""; ""CHAPTER FOUR""; ""CHAPTER FIVE""; ""CHAPTER SIX""; ""REFERENCES""; ""INDEX""
Sommario/riassunto	It has taken over five centuries for banking to evolve to its present state, and the concept of ""interest"" is undoubtedly the life-blood of the whole financial system. Interest was religiously prohibitive for centuries in several faiths, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and, Islam, and was also strongly opposed by neo-classical economists in the 1930's. Interest (riba) is still outlawed in Islam, with the term ""riba-eater"" being one of the cruelest insults. Islamic scholars have explained that the current practice of contracts without interest is a result of following t