Muslim beliefs have inspired charitable giving for over fourteen centuries, yet Islamic history has rarely been examined from this perspective. In Charity in Islamic Societies, Amy Singer explains the basic concepts and institutions of Muslim charity, including the obligation to give on an annual basis, as well as an array of voluntary activities undertaken at every level of society and across the span of individual lifetimes. Charitable endowments – bestowed by rulers, wealthy individuals, and even those of more modest means – shaped Muslim societies and cultures in every era. This book demonstrates how historical circumstances, social status, gender, age, and other factors interacted with religious ideals to create a rich variety of charitable practices, from the beginnings of Islam to the present day. Using written texts, buildings, images, and objects to anchor the discussions in each chapter, the author explores the motivations for charity, its impact on the rich and the poor, and the politicization of charity, arguing that the study of philanthropy affords a unique prism through which to examine the past. This lucidly written and accessible book will capture the attention of anyone who is interested in the nature of Islamic society and the role of philanthropy throughout history.

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THEMES IN ISLAMIC HISTORY comprises a range of titles exploring different aspects of Islamic history, society and culture by leading scholars in the field. Books are thematic in approach, offering a comprehensive and accessible overview of the subject. Generally, surveys treat Islamic history from its origins to the demise of the Ottoman Empire, although some offer a more developed analysis of a particular period, or project into the present, depending on the subject-matter. All the books are written to interpret and illuminate the past, as gateways to a deeper understanding of Islamic civilization and its peoples.

Editorial adviser:
Patricia Crone, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University

Already published:
Chase F. Robinson, Islamic Historiography
Michael Cook, Forbidding Wrong in Islam: An Introduction
David Cook, Martyrdom in Islam
Charity in Islamic Societies

Amy Singer

Tel Aviv University
To the memory of Mine An Ener (1965–2003), friend and colleague
Contents

List of illustrations v
Acknowledgments ix
Note on spellings and foreign words xi
Abbreviations xii

Introduction 1
1 Pray and pay alms 30
2 Even half a date 67
3 The upper hand 114
4 The poor and the needy 146
5 A mixed economy of charity 176
Conclusion: re-orienting charity 217

Select bibliography 225
Index 240
Illustrations

Cover *Emperor Jahangir weighing his son Khurram in gold*, attributed to Manohar, c.1615.

1 A pair of wooden doors from the Beyhekim Mosque (thirteenth century)  
(thirteenth century)  
2 Release of debtors; painting from the *Surname-i Hümâyûn*  
painting from the *Surname-i Hümâyûn*  
3 Inscription on a fountain  
4 A modern fountain  
5 Ramadan *iftar* tent, Istanbul  
6 Group of boys waiting to be circumcised; painting from the *Surname-i Vehbi*  
7 Plan of the Şehzade Mehmed complex, by Arben N. Arapi  
8 Axonometric projection of the Şehzade Mehmed complex, by Arben N. Arapi  
9 Complex of Bayezid II in Amasya  
10 Birqat al-Aqiqa, a pool on the Darb Zubayda  
11 Velvet with figurative design of a young man and a beggar  
12 Kashkul  
13 Inscription from the imaret of Mihrisah Sultan at Eyüp, Istanbul  
14 Distribution of robes to the poor; painting from the *Surname-i Hümâyûn*  
15 Supermarket advertisement for discount Ramadan package  
16 Photo of boys from the *Hamidiye Etfal Hastahane-i ‘Alisi*  
*nin Istatik Mecmuası-i Tibbiyesi*, 1906  
17 Newspaper advertisement for Kimse Yok Mu, 29 September 2006  
18 Mosque-hospital complex at Divriği, Turkey  
19 Earthenware bowl, Nishapur, Iran, c.850–1000
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Note on spellings and foreign words

Non-English words have been written in the most familiar form, to the extent possible, for example: Qur’an, qadi, Mecca. Arabic words have been transliterated without diacritics above and below the letters. However, the ‘ayn character (‘) has been retained. Turkish words have been written as they are written in Turkish; where possible, they have been written in familiar forms (for example, pasha). In some cases, they retain Turkish characters, including ç (like the ch in cheese), ğ (silent), ş (like the sh in ship), ğ (like the u in cushion), ö (like a German ö), ü (like the French ü). Only the first occurrence of a foreign word is italicized. Brief definitions will appear at the first use of a word and in the index.
Abbreviations

d. died


TDViA Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi Genel Müdürlüğü, 1988– )

USC-MSA University of Southern California, Muslim Students Association
In this sense, Charity in Islamic Societies adds as much to the study of philanthropy itself as to the study of charity in Islam. Singer’s analytical framework raises critical questions equally pertinent to our understanding of philanthropy in today’s world: relationships with power and political struggles; motivations; expectations between donors and recipients; how norms are created and furthered through charity; entitlement and dependency; relationships with class, gender, and other forms of identity; the ability of charity to achieve its stated goals; and the influence of. Email rcelal@chrestfoundation.org. Charity in Islamic Societies Amy Singer Cambridge University Press £15.99 ISBN 9780521821643. To order http://www.cambridge.org/uk/catalogue. Share this page. / Charity in Islam. Being caring and compassionate for one’s fellow human beings is a central part of Islam. When reading the Qur’an, one cannot help being struck by the number of times charity is mentioned: Feeding the poor and needy, supporting orphans, relatives and travellers, spending in the way of Allah. All of these references emphasise the importance of charity for every Muslim. Several hadith sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) refer to this deep affection and brotherhood. In addition to the indisputable benefits for those receiving charity, Islam also highlights the spiritual to give your wealth away selflessly to remember that every blessing they have in this life comes from Allah (SWT).