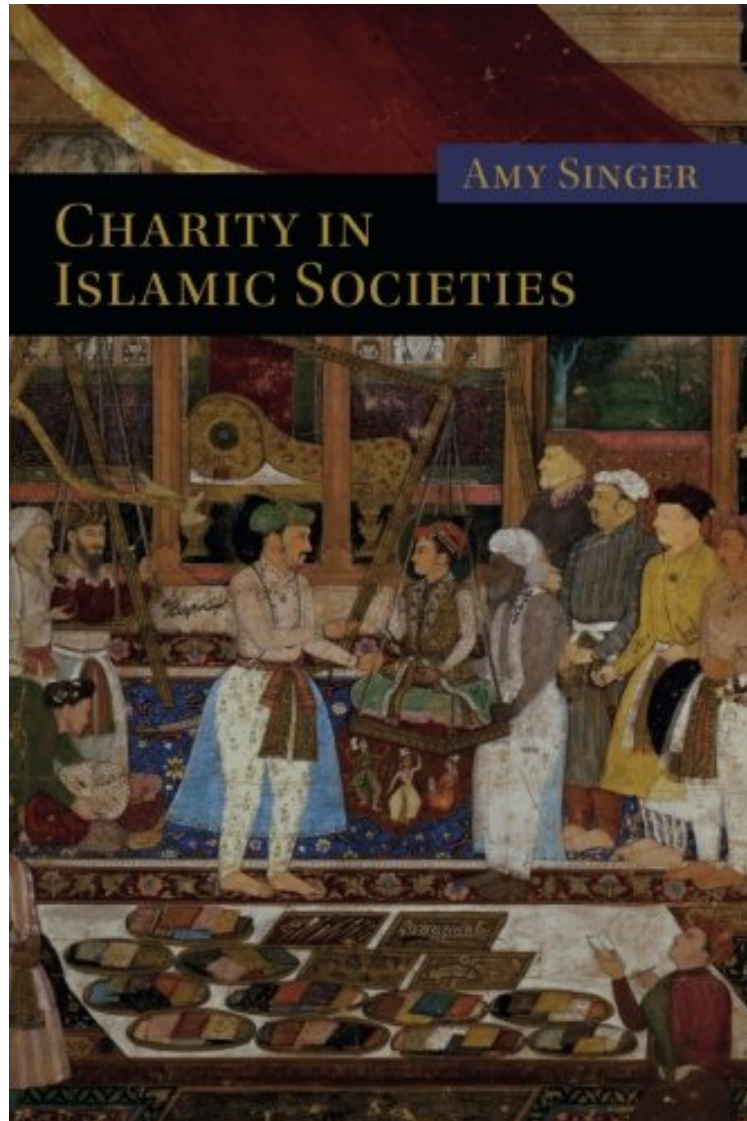


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## Charity in Islamic Societies (Themes in Islamic History)

*Dr Amy Singer*

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**Dr Amy Singer : Charity in Islamic Societies (Themes in Islamic History)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charity in Islamic Societies (Themes in Islamic History):

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. Charitable endowments 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 politicisation of charity. This lucidly written book will capture the attention of anyone who is interested in the nature of Islamic society and the role of philanthropy throughout history.

"What the book does best is to drive home the central role of charity in the social and religious life of Muslim societies, both past and present. The author directly and unreservedly rebuts perceptions of contemporary Muslim charity as a cover for radicalism and violence. But the book does much more than that. We all know that zakat is one of the pillars of faith (while jihad is not), but historians of Islam have failed to make its significance apparent. This book does an admirable job at rectifying this omission." - Middle East Journal

"In this extraordinarily rewarding book, Professor Amy Singer again demonstrates with clarity and insight how the study of the formal and informal institutions of gift-giving and gift-receiving (charity, philanthropy, alms, votives, tithing) can enrich our understanding of North African, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian societies through history and, just as important, the inseparability of that history from our own time." - Robert D. McChesney, New York University, International Journal of Turkish Studies

"Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, is more mentioned than studied, as Amy Singer emphasizes in a book that should be read by all serious students of the Middle East.... In *Charity in Islamic Societies*, Singer juggles themes, diverse texts, and social scientific theories with such ease that readers may not realize what awesome literary and scholarly skills are involved. This magisterial book spans several centuries to explain how charity has operated, politically, socially, and culturally in Muslim societies across time and space." - Donna Robinson Divine, Smith College, Digest of Middle East Studies

"Singer's work successfully distills the complexities of Islamic charity into a volume that will fascinate students and specialists alike." - Elyse Semerdjian, Whitman College, Journal of World History

"This is an engaging introduction to charitable practices in the Islamic world.... The book has much to recommend it. It is well written, cogent in its organisation and rich in examples of Islamic societies past and present. Trained historians will enjoy Singer's engagement with a wide body of historiography. Newcomers to the field and a wider audience will appreciate the book's variety of examples and the breadth of contexts which the author draws from." - Lisa Pollard, The University of North Carolina Wilmington, The English Historical Journal

About the Author: Amy Singer is Associate Professor, Ottoman History, in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University, Israel. Her recent publications include *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (2002), *Middle East Historiographies* (ed., 2006) and *Feeding People, Feeding Power: Imarets in the Ottoman Empire* (ed., 2007).