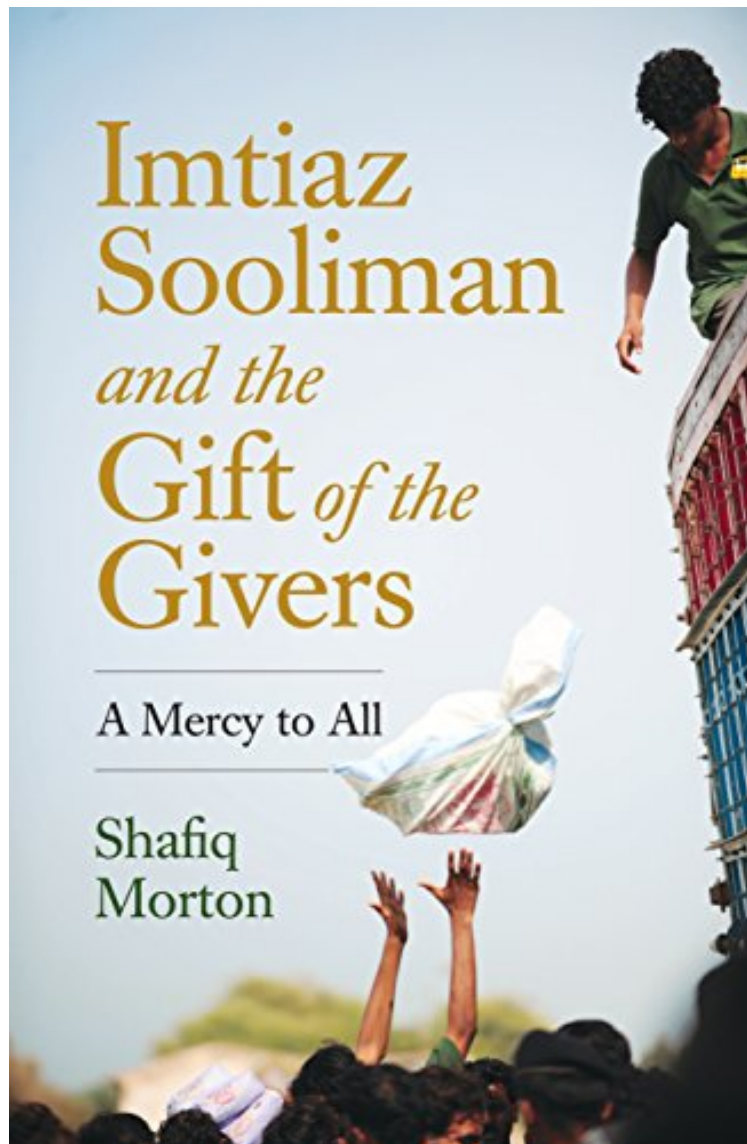


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Imtiaz Sooliman and the Gift of the Givers: A Mercy to All

Shafiq Morton

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Imtiaz Sooliman, a medical doctor practising in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, visited a Shaikh in Istanbul in 1992.

The Sufi teacher gave him a message that would dramatically change the lives of countless people. To my absolute astonishment he told me I would help people for the rest of my life. He then instructed me to form a humanitarian organisation called the Gift of the Givers, and repeated the phrase the best among people are those who benefit mankind. Over 20 years later Gift of the Givers, Africa's largest disaster agency, has a reputation for speedy responses to floods, war, famine, tsunamis, kidnapping and earthquakes. Well known for their interventions in South African and international disasters, teams of volunteers have undertaken missions to places such as Bosnia, Palestine, Japan, Haiti, Indonesia, Malawi and Mozambique. They have put up hospitals, run clinics, dug wells, built houses, offered scholarships and provided shelter, food and psychological succour to millions. Journalist Shafiq Morton, who has been on several of Gift of the Givers missions, tells the story of the organisation, its missions and its inspirational and tireless leader, Imtiaz Sooliman.

About the Author Shafiq Morton is an award-winning Cape Town-based photo-journalist and radio presenter who has over 30 years of experience. He has covered South African stories such as the anti-apartheid campaign, the release of Nelson Mandela, the 1994 elections and the Truth Reconciliation Commission. He has been on assignment in places such as Palestine, Libya, Somalia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Namibia and Niger.