

# The Gold Standard, Chemical Weddings, & the Journey of Zero Distance

By Jason Horsley 2012

"If you are truthful you will have as much gold as you want."  
— Greek proverb

## EXTRATERRESTRIAL

"It is observed of gold, in an old epigram, that to have it is to be in fear, and to want it is to be in sorrow."  
—Samuel Johnson

"There were three things sought by invaders who crossed oceans to discover America. Those were gold, gospel, glory. There are four things sought by aliens who crossed heavens to discover planet earth. Those are gold, gospel, glory, gene."  
—Toba Beta, *My Ancestor Was an Ancient Astronaut*

The well-known astrological (and now astronomical) symbol for the Sun is a circle with a dot in it. The same image was once the alchemical symbol for gold, "the most perfect of the metals. For the alchemists, it represented the perfection of all matter on any level, including that of the mind, spirit, and soul."<sup>i</sup> So it may come as no surprise to learn that gold (which is "god + 1") really does come from the stars.

"The source of about half of the heaviest elements in the Universe has been a mystery for a long time. . . The most popular idea has been, and may still be, that they originate from supernova explosions that end the lives of massive stars. But newer models do not support this idea."<sup>ii</sup> Newer models suggest that heavy metals are the product of *stars colliding*—making not dying stars but "interstellar sex" the means by which gold is created. "In just a few split seconds after the merger of the two neutron stars, tidal and pressure forces eject extremely hot matter equivalent to several Jupiter masses."<sup>iii</sup> This plasma-like matter then cools (to less than 10 billion degrees), allowing nuclear reactions to enable the production of heavy elements. Gold and other precious metals were then transported (or seeded) to Earth via meteorites.<sup>1</sup> "[M]ost of the precious metals on which our

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<sup>1</sup> "As Earth formed, molten iron sank to the center, making the core. This attracted the vast majority of Earth's precious metals, such as gold and platinum, which migrated to the core with iron. There are enough precious metals in the core to cover the entire surface of the Earth with a layer four meters thick (over 12 feet). The concentration of gold in the core should have left the outer portion of the Earth without any. But precious metals are abundant in the Earth's silicate mantle. Some scientists think this over-abundance resulted from a cataclysmic

economies and many key industrial processes are based have been added to our planet by lucky coincidence when the Earth was hit by about 20 billion billion tons of asteroidal material.<sup>iv</sup>

Before we bring the discussion back down to Earth, here are a couple more cosmic factoids:

Life on Earth so far spans 3.5 billion years. It takes place in a Universe made up of roughly (!! ) two hundred billion galaxies, each consisting of several billion stars and an impossible-to-even-guess-at number of planets. That's the backdrop to our existence. It's always there, whether or not we include it in our personal philosophy of life. Everybody knows we are surrounded by an unimaginable vastness of both time and space, but few people take time out in their busy schedules to wonder what this fact might mean for us in our daily lives.

As well as being unimaginably vast, the Universe is a wholly coherent system and is complete unto itself. No part of it is extraneous, random, or separate from that larger, wholly coherent system. This makes us like the sleeping cells of a vast living organism, dreaming of autonomous lives independent of the Universe that created us. It's a rich and vivid dream we are dreaming, but it is only a dream. When a man dreams of being a butterfly, the dream may be quite real to him, but eventually he wakes and realizes that his body is still that of a man. So it will be for us, who dream of being people, when we are *something else entirely*.

None of this is news. Yet the question still haunts us. What are we doing here? What is this dream of existence for? How can we live a life that measures up to that vastness? If the life of the Universe is our life, seen through a lens wiped clear of delusion, through awakened eyes looking outward on reality, instead of inward at fantasy; how can we become more than just face-blurred figures in a teeming crowd of extras, glimpsed for a split second as the Universe rushes by? The answer has to do with attention and what we pay it to.

## **INFRA-TERRESTRIAL / PROSPECTING**

"I've been a miner for a heart of gold."

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meteorite shower that hit Earth after the core formed. The full load of meteorite gold was thus added to the mantle alone and not lost to the deep interior." <http://earthsky.org/earth/did-meteorites-bombard-earth-with-gold>

—Neil Young

“Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind.”

—Buddha

Everyone knows about gold – or thinks they do. But how many people have ever found gold or made a strike? Everyone thinks they know about “enlightenment”—but again, all we have are stories. Genuine gold prospectors are as rare these days as faeries or enlightened beings. Of these already extremely rare creatures, even fewer are talking. I am fortunate enough to have met both an enlightened person, in the form of Dave Oshana ([link to daveoshana.com](http://link.to/daveoshana.com)), and a genuine, old-time prospector, a man called Indian Joe. In one of those curious twists of fate, I am learning from both, and in the process, I am discovering the truth of the old alchemical maxim: “As above, so below.” The search for gold and the quest for enlightenment are *mirror processes*.

What I have learned from Indian Joe so far is that developing the eyes (the wisdom) to discern gold from dirt is what prospecting is all about. For the amateur prospector, it is all dirt, because even gold looks like dirt without the eyes—the experience and training—to see. (Conversely, as in the case of fool’s gold, sometimes what appears to be gold is only “dirt.”) The trick of finding gold is that you have to be able to keep your attention on the gold, even when you can’t see anything but dirt. Otherwise, you may walk right past it, or dig right next to it, and never even know it. At the same time, being overly focused on finding gold (consumed by the lust for it) may cause you to start imagining gold where there’s only dirt. As with all heroic quests, finding gold requires *absolute self-honesty*.

Indian Joe laughs about naive prospectors who exert themselves digging large holes on sandy beaches or shallow holes in rocky ground, expecting to find large, shiny, yellow nuggets. They expect it to be easy. They expect it to glitter and shine. But it’s only fool’s gold (pyrite) that glitters and shines on the surface of rocks and sand, and fool’s gold is easy enough to find. In reality, large nuggets are very rare; and though there is considerably more gold *dust* than nuggets, it is often indistinguishable from sand—as shown in the ironic finale of John Huston’s classic film, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.<sup>2</sup>

My own interest in gold prospecting has to do with a desire—a need—to look, see, find and know the ground beneath my feet. To start to pay

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<sup>2</sup> Sometimes there can be a wealth of gold that is finer than flour, so that a miner will wash it all into his “tailings” without ever realizing it.

attention to the gold of what is lasting, eternal and true, instead of what is fleeting, temporary and false. Gold-prospecting—both literal and metaphorical—requires a constant overcoming of inertia, a rejection of ordinary, everyday comforts (and values), and a willingness not only to fail but to fail ever more spectacularly and distressingly each time. Accepting that there is no substitute for gold means being ruthlessly honest about what is only dirt and what is pyrite or “fool’s gold.” Yet pyrite only fools the fools; for the seeker who recognizes it for what it is, it will eventually lead to the real thing. The same applies to “failure”: it’s a state of mind, not a verdict.

In our present social system, there is no correlation between an individual’s integrity, or even necessarily his or her skill or prowess, and an ability to accumulate wealth. Being successful prospecting, panning, and mining gold, on the other hand, requires all of these qualities and more. In fact, it requires a similar (often identical) skillset as the one needed for basic survival. In the prospector’s way of life, material wealth (gold) and adaptability, awareness of one’s environment, and natural survival capacity are all part of a *single focus*. Compare this to our current system, in which the wealthiest and most successful individuals are often those with the least integrity (and the least capacity to survive in Nature). Simply put: the inherent value of gold is inseparable from the internal values that are required to find it (though all may seek). It is, like death, a great leveler.

Like the heroes of myth, the gold prospector must “get his hands dirty,” apply all his skills, courage, discipline, and imagination (and/or discover and develop these qualities within him- or herself), as well as reawaken a fundamental relationship with Nature, in order to achieve the desired goal. The shift in emphasis, the “single-mindedness,” is the same, then, for the mythical hero, the gold prospector, and the genuine spiritual seeker: what is seen as having value changes, or evolves, through a deepening of honesty and a reduction of denial. As awareness grows accordingly, it is no longer money, or even gold, that is seen to have value, but the *self-transformation*—and the renewed connectedness to Nature—of the “mining” (questing) process itself.

## **AN INNER TREASURE**

“Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

—Carl Jung

“Individuality is only possible if it unfolds from wholeness.”

—David Bohm

In the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece (to name just one mythic narrative), the quest begins with Jason's desire to find a specific "power object" (the fleece) which he believes will bestow special status and power upon him. Traditionally, the quest for the power object is the necessary means for the hero to prove his mettle, while at the same time benefiting the community in some way. Jason gathers together his Argonauts (a name, not coincidentally, given to the prospectors who traveled to Western states of American and Canada in the 1800s) and sails forth to achieve his goal, to find the Golden Fleece, by whatever means necessary. (An example of secret knowledge encoded into myth: fleece was one of the means used, in olden times, to collect invisible gold particles in rivers. The wool becomes magnetized by the water current, and the tiny gold particles stick to it, eventually turning it into a "golden fleece".)

Through the course of their material quest, however, Jason and his Argonauts encounter a series of obstacles and challenges, both physical and "moral" (spiritual), which force them to develop their capabilities and deepen their understanding, both of themselves and of "the gods." A process of self-development is necessary for the hero to prevail over adversity, find the treasured object, and return in glory. (We will leave aside Jason's later misfortune for now.) The qualities which Jason discovers within himself by facing the series of challenges are the same qualities that allow him to "find the gold." Yet implicit in the story—as in so many mythic tales—is a crucial idea: it is the uncovering of such qualities—the transformation of an ordinary man into a hero—that is the real treasure. In other words, the quest for an outer prize both depends upon and facilitates the discovery of an inner treasure, the finding of which renders largely symbolic the attaining of the outer one. The same has often been said of the Alchemists: they began their experiments believing they were trying to turn lead into gold; but the discipline and knowledge necessary to achieve their material ends entailed a subtler transformation of their own awareness—from *mundane, egoic consciousness to divine*. At which point, their interest in purely physical gold became largely academic.

The actual, little known facts about gold prospecting seem to match this blueprint closely: in order to find gold, the senses, inner and outer, must be refined to such a degree that a transformation takes place. This gradual transformation or refinement both leads to and is completed by the finding of actual gold (which Indian Joe describes as the gold "revealing itself to you"). At this point, according to Joe, the prospector will undergo a transformation, akin to a kind of "shock," which he says is the *true* "gold fever" ("You are never the same again," Joe says.) Its particular manifestation is unpredictable, however.

This transformational process is shown in John Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, in two very different ways, in the two main characters: the novice Fred C. Dobbs, played by Humphrey Bogart, and the old-time prospector, Howard, played by Walter Huston (John's father). After the men find the gold, Howard leaves the site to heal a young boy in a nearby Indian village. He is successful and comes back to the site, at which time the men agree to pack up and leave. As the team is getting ready to go, however, several of the Indians return and invite Howard to come and stay with them. Howard declines but the Indians will not take no for an answer: their code of gratitude demands that he accept their hospitality. Realizing that he has no choice, Howard leaves the gold in the care of his partners. In the Indian village, the old man is showered with gifts and waited on hand and foot. He is regarded as a kind of holy man, and realizes that, should he decide to stay, he need not worry about his livelihood ever again. This development is the result of Howard's discovering his inner resources, or "medicine," when he chooses to go and heal the Indian boy, a decision all the more remarkable since it takes place on the heels of *finding the gold*. So it is finding the material prize that results in Howard's spiritual transformation.

The opposite extreme is shown with Fred C. Dobbs. Dobbs also undergoes transformation through exposure to gold, but his lack of "moral fiber" leads to a very different result. Consumed by paranoia, he succumbs to greed and madness and meets a brutal end at the hands of bandits (ironically also Indians). Similar fates often befall mythic characters who prove unworthy of the power which they uncover, and the spiritual or alchemical path is often said to be fraught with the same dangers. Ironically, the two kinds of transformation in the film (negative and positive) are together responsible for the loss of the mined gold. Towards the end of the film, the Indian bandits (having taken the gold from Dobbs after murdering him) empty the sacks onto the ground, mistaking it for dirt. (They think it's a trick of Dobbs to make the animal hides he is carrying weigh more when he sells them.) Before the old man can reclaim his prize, a wind storm has come and blown all the precious gold dust away. Howard laughs uproariously at the cosmic irony of it: the gold has gone back to the place it came from, the mountains. Unlike Dobbs, he can afford to laugh: since he has discovered his true calling as a medicine man, he is set for life.

The return of the gold to its proper abode echoes how the prospectors in the film initially buried their respective gold stashes in the ground, to make sure the others didn't steal it. The safest place for it is in the ground. Indian Joe's own account confirms this: the first thing you do once you get the gold out of the ground, he says, is put it back again! Joe's experience is that it is *finding* the gold, and knowing one has access to the riches of the earth (the

body's secret wisdom), that frees the individual, not accumulation of wealth *per se*. In other words, it is connecting to source energy (what Dave Oshana calls the Enlightenment Transmission – [link to http://daveoshana.com/articles/20-The-Disillusionist-What-Is-a-Spiritual-Teacher](http://daveoshana.com/articles/20-The-Disillusionist-What-Is-a-Spiritual-Teacher)) *through the body*, not increase of mind knowledge (or inflation of ego), that constitutes true enlightenment.

## THE SUBSTANCE OF VALUE & THE VALUE OF SUBSTANCE

"Gold is not necessary. I have no interest in gold. We will build a solid state, without an ounce of gold behind it. Anyone who sells above the set prices, let him be marched off to a concentration camp. That's the bastion of money."

—Adolf Hitler

"Gold is the corpse of value."

—Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*

In purely material terms, the spiritual principle described above is oddly mirrored by "the gold standard," gold being the substance against which all other currencies are measured (or once were). As everyone knows, money has no intrinsic value in itself. What gives money value is the social agreement that it *has* value, i.e., to pretend that something has worth when it does not.

In the Gospel, Jesus advised his followers to "render unto Caesar," pointing out that the Roman gold coin had Caesar's face stamped on it. When he overturned the money lenders' tables in the temple, Jesus likewise showed his lack of respect for gold in its profane manifestation. "Thou canst not serve two masters," he warned, and money and Mammon have always been closely associated. The idea that money is the root of all evil may seem simplistic, but sociologically, money can be seen as symbolic, and symptomatic, of a split between authentic experience (inherent value) and fantasy, projection, and externally sourced values. It is both a symptom and a cause of collective delusion. The money-devil is a divider, not only of nations and of men, but, at deeper, subtler levels, between heaven and earth, the body and the soul.<sup>3</sup>

Divorced of the monetary systems of control, however, what sort of innate qualities does gold have that have led to its being valued by Caesars and Kings? There are many. It is the most malleable and ductile metal, so that a

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<sup>3</sup> According to David Graeber (*Debt: The First 5000 Years*), monetary systems were imposed on communities in order to enforce systems of taxation, which was an implicit form of slavery. The Caesars of Jesus' time would only accept tribute in Roman-minted coinage, and in order to get the coins, peasants had to labor hard and accrue debt. This isn't so far from the experience of countless students and house owners today.

single ounce of gold can be beaten out to 300 square feet. (Theoretically, it can be reduced to the thickness of *a single atom*.) Egyptian inscriptions dating back to 2600 BC describe gold, and it's likely they used it both for its healing properties and as a conductor/transmitter. (It's a good conductor of both heat and electricity, and is unaffected by air and most reagents.) It is also reputed to increase intelligence and energy levels, witness the sale of monatomic gold nowadays as a kind of super-vitamin. A recent (2008) article describes how gold particles can be used as part of a drug-delivery system which may someday be able to treat cancer.<sup>v</sup> Gold nano-particles can also be used to increase the capacity of solar cells to convert sunlight into electricity.<sup>vi</sup> The origin of the symbol for gold, Au, is the Latin word "*aurum*," from which we get the English word *aura*. According to one source,

"Since Gold will not tarnish and seems immune to the effects of weathering and most acids, it was associated with immortality and invincibility and hence, many healing properties were given to the metal. Gold was thought to be the excrement of the Gods and some dousers claim that the vibrations of Gold and excrement are quite similar. . . . Hindus call Gold the Mineral Light and believe it is sunlight that was swallowed by the earth. In nature, Gold is often attracted to organic materials, i.e., the roots of a tree near a stream, etc. . . . Gold has been attributed magical healing powers for eons. In ancient Hebrew times, drinking powdered gold in water was thought to resurrect even the sickest. An old remedy for infections was lemon juice, white wine and angelica root soaked overnight with gold. Pliny believed that rubbing a sty with gold would cure it. Modern doctors sometimes treat arthritis with injections of gold salts. World famous Psychic, Edgar Cayce, mentions Gold as being excellent in rebuilding nerve and brain function. Gold is thought to trap and maintain the power of the stones set in it. Wearing Gold is thought to bring Sun like qualities to the wearer—strength, confidence, courage and a long prosperous life."<sup>vii</sup>

[Elvis image]

The difference between money and gold is perhaps akin to the difference between mere social status (a pope, king, or celebrity) and true spiritual standing, as embodied by a sage, shaman, or holy man. In the current economic crisis, we are seeing an increase in the value of gold and a decrease in all other currencies. Is it possible this indicates a subtler, psychological shift within the collective, away from false values (represented by legal tender), back to the true ones symbolized by gold—i.e., what is of "substance"?

If money is the root of evil, then what of gold, which is the root of all money systems? The answer perhaps has to do with the *misuse* of gold's special properties. As in the tale of King Midas, gold is a kind of amplifier that magnifies the qualities of whoever holds it. Whatever brings out the worst in us, however, must also have the potential to bring out the best. Valuing gold

over money isn't a solution to spiritual bankruptcy, but it may signal that we are nearing the root of the problem. If so, then the special knowledge of gold prospecting is the next logical stage in this "return to basic value(s)." Successful prospecting requires a deeper understanding, not only of the origins and properties of gold, but of what mysterious "X" factor *makes* it so valuable—i.e., what distinguishes it from its surroundings.

Gold may come from the stars; but finding it demands an intimate understanding of, and respect for, the ground.

## **THE EYE THAT IS SINGLE**

"Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold."

—Tolstoy

"Pure gold does not fear furnace."

—Chinese Proverb

So how can we apply this "reading" to the spiritual quest? In place of gold, think of "God" or enlightenment. In place of dirt, put "the world."

Most people think of the search for gold as profane and the quest for God as sacred; but just as there's no gold without dirt, there's nothing sacred without the profane, no spirit separate from matter, and no enlightenment without a world to be enlightened. A gold prospector sees gold where other people see only dirt. A holy man sees God where an ordinary man sees the world. To locate the outer treasure, we have to uncover what's within. But to do that, we have to look *outside* of ourselves and really see what's there. What is above is like what is below because there *is* no dividing line between above and below, within and without. Where is the line between perceiver and perceived, or between the earth and the heavens? There is none.

So how can we pay attention to the eternal as well as the temporary? How can we locate the invisible gold that is everywhere inside the dirt, that is really nowhere, since it's not really dirt, just a misapprehension of the facts? It comes down to those few basic questions, questions which children ask but which adults learn to stay away from. Who am I? Where did I come from & where I am going? Why am I here? As adults we learn to stay away from these questions because of the terrifying awareness that no happiness or meaning is possible—for any of us—until we have answered them; or rather, until we have begun to live the answers. It's not that nothing else but the quest matters; it's that nothing can ever be real for us until the quest is over

and we have found the ground on which we stand. Only then can we begin to move forward.

The story we are caught up in extends over billions of years and spans a near-infinity of stars and planets. We were there at the beginning, and we will be there at the end. The only question is: are we paying attention?

The heroic journey of myths usually entails a quest for an object of highest value. In spiritual language, what is of highest value is enlightenment. In alchemical terms, enlightenment is the recovery of our true "stellar" nature as a "monad soul." The real gold, worthy of possession at any price or personal sacrifice, is an "undivided mind." Let thine eye be single, Jesus said. While being the highest of all attainments, the principal is simple enough: the one who does not violate his or her conscience is "a golden fellow." The alternative is denial of our true nature, of the facts of existence and the evidence of the senses, both inner and outer. To do so is to be split in twain, divided against oneself, and to suffer eternal doubt, or two-mindedness (doubt comes from the word "double," which is the root of the French word *diable*, devil). From the angelic or enlightened point of view, two-mindedness is *insanity*, the very paranoid delusion that consumed poor Fred C. Dobbs whole. A lamentable fate; but there is another destiny that's available to us.

Enlightenment is to move beyond the world, not by transcending it but by moving all the way through it and to the core of it. Only by going all the way inward, into the blood and grime of our corporal selves, can we reach the nuclear heart of pure molten gold that is the living soul-center of existence and source the god-atom of the Enlightenment Transmission. This "cataclysmic" encounter is the long-desired union of Body and Soul that is our forgotten heritage and birthright, and the alchemical gold of the ancients. It is, in the words of Dave Oshana, "the journey of zero distance."

It may be more than just a poetic metaphor that the unearthed gold which finally completes this transformation is sourced, not just in the dirt of the ground, but, still more primordially, in the cataclysmic union of stars. The alchemist's goal of transmuting base matter into gold (the union of body and soul) is, after all, *the chemical wedding*.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.crystalinks.com/alchemyart.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Hans-Thomas Janka, senior scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics (MPA) and within the Excellence Cluster Universe.

<sup>iii</sup> Andreas Bauswein.

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<sup>iv</sup> Mattias Willbold of the University of Bristol. <http://earthsky.org/earth/did-meteorites-bombard-earth-with-gold>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.topnews.in/healthcare/content/-2652gold-nanoparticles-may-carry-multiple-drugs-treat-cancer>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.gizmag.com/gold-nanoparticles-boost-solar-cell-efficiency/19565/>

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.luckygemstones.com/gold-legends.htm>