

“In Search of King Solomon’s Mines”, by Tahir Shah is a non-fiction account of the author’s search for the source of the gold attributed to the king’s wealth. Shah’s quest takes him to Ethiopia where he enlists the services of a taxi cab driver named Samson. Their travels take them over rough and precarious terrain. Taxis, buses, camels, donkeys, a jeep and even a leather rope - put to use to ascend a mountain - are modes of transport. They encounter both extremely generous people (given the level of poverty in certain areas) and others who are corrupt and dangerous. They find both legal and illegal mining operations. The illegal mining operations can involve whole towns with women and young children working in life threatening conditions. Shah and Samson face numerous difficulties and it makes any reasonable person question the pursuit of this adventure. In some ways it reminds me of the story of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Is Shah tilting at windmills in his quest to find the source of the gold? I would recommend this book not only for its background in history, but also to experience such fantastic travels in a country I’m not likely to visit personally.