

# Satori Now

## Awakening your Highest Self

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To my beloved Nation of Four  
*Concordia Domi – Foris Pax*

*Who looks outside, dreams.  
Who looks inside, awakens  
– Carl Jung*

### **Acknowledgements**

I acknowledge Lao Tzu and the Buddha and the hundreds of mentors in my life who have shaped Satori Now, which has been a work in progress since 1970.

To my life partner Angela I owe a great debt for the profound wisdom that she innately possesses, and her willingness to share it with me.

Also the *Turrbal* and *Jagera* indigenous peoples, on whose ancestral land I write this book. This ancient continent has a profound story for those who would listen.

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## ***A.Satori in the modern world***

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*Satori* in Japanese means to be awakened, to understand, to be enlightened. In Zen\* Buddhism it means the sudden intuitive insight that this world of separate subjects and objects is an illusion that conceals the ultimate reality of a fully inter-connected universe.

In this book, *Satori* is defined more broadly to include what it means to be fully aware of your inter-connectedness with the universe even as you go about your life in the modern world.

The *experience* of *Satori* is not confined to Zen. It is described vividly in many traditions both old and new. While called by many names though, the underlying experience remains the same. Those who are experiencing it are pointing the way to the next stage in the evolution of human consciousness. Around the world, we are moving towards this higher consciousness. This book describes one way, but there are many such ways, all of them leading to the same destination, an awareness of your Highest Self.

*Satori* begins with the raising of ordinary consciousness to a higher level. You are born with this *potential*, but it requires sustained effort to achieve it. This raised consciousness is characterised by a sense of felt connectedness with all things.

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You no longer *think* of yourself as an isolated entity, rather you *feel* yourself to be connected to everything.

Some people will question the existence of the *Highest Self* because they have had no direct experience of it. If you have such questions, well that is good. Scepticism can help you towards the truth. All that I ask is that you suspend your disbelief long enough to understand and evaluate what is being said in this book.

If you look at the natural world with an open mind you will see ample evidence of an *informing principle* whose influence organises the natural world into an immensely complex, inter-connected system. Science has identified and catalogued only around two million species of life on this planet Earth, with many more yet to be classified.

The more one contemplates the inter-connectedness of Nature, the more one comes to recognise that there is something in common here. There appears to be just one Life in Nature, and that this one Life has many forms. All of these life-forms are animated by the same underlying principle. This *Informing Principle* is what the ancient Greeks called *Logos* in the fullest sense of the word.

Your Highest Self is aware *of* itself as an aspect of this Informing Principle, hence the exhortation by the Oracle of Delphi in Greece to *Know Thyself*.

*Satori Now* is a guide book for people who sincerely want to experience the reality of this higher awareness in the midst of their complicated lives and are prepared to make a strong commitment to achieving this over time. Whoever you are, wherever you live, whatever your accomplishments, if you have a sincere desire to work towards higher consciousness and are prepared to put in the sustained effort, this book can

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definitely help you to achieve this. The realisation of this awareness leads you to a deep inner peace. You are still *in* the world, but you are not *of* the world any more.

How long does the process take? It depends on how ready you are to let go of the limiting idea you have of yourself as a separate entity in the world. Since this is probably how you currently define yourself, letting go of it is *like* letting a piece of you die. Though liberating, diminishing your egoic identity can seem very threatening. This is certainly not to advocate suicide; simply to re-cast your ego in a supporting role, not as the controlling entity.

Your ego will not like the idea of being diminished. It will fight for its survival. Once you understand that the ego, in an evolutionary sense, is a sophisticated survival mechanism that helped us to flourish in a mostly hostile world, we are seeing the ego in its true light.

Is your world still like the hostile world of our ancestors with dangers lurking behind every bush? I hope not. More likely, you live in a more-or-less civilised society that has solved many of the challenges to survival that faced our ancestors, yet the ego still functions as though you are back in the jungle or on the savannah. If you are going to evolve your awareness to a higher level, you must put your ego in its proper place. More on this later.

The reality of your Highest Self can be experienced most fully in the present moment. The next chapter discusses how to focus your awareness in the Now, the only moment you can truly be alive.

\* Zen began in China as a school of Mahayana Buddhism. It is a blending of the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism and its deep reverence for Nature with

Mahayana Buddhism. Other influences on Zen include the Yogācāra and Mādhyamaka philosophies.

## ***A.1. The essence of Zen is simplicity***

*Satori Now* is not about turning you into a Zen practitioner in the strict sense; it simply presents the essence of Zen practice as a no-nonsense vehicle for attaining higher awareness. Zen is not a religion; it is a path to higher consciousness. Your challenge then is to absorb the essence of Zen.

Satori is a state of heightened *intuitive* awareness. The problem for many people is that intuition is often not something that the rational mind is comfortable with. You cannot analyse and logically understand it. Satori is not an understanding obtained through intellectual analysis; it is an *intuitive* awareness that comes from inner experience. This means that most of us will need to re-program the way we think, from being heavily invested in left-brain intellectual analysis as our primary way of thinking, to a state in which right-brain Intuition and left-brain analysis can work harmoniously with each other.

Bringing your whole mind into balance in this way is the key to functioning in the everyday world, while creating awareness of a spacious inner world in which Intuition can flourish and Satori be experienced.

*The essence of Zen is simplicity.* For the purposes of this book, a Zen practitioner is someone who has good will towards the world, breathes deeply and is mindful most of

the time. It does not require learning, rather the *un-learning* of the accumulated layers of orthodox knowledge that helps you function in the world.

*Good will towards the world* means selflessly serving others and not living only for yourself. As the philosopher Daniel Dennett said, the key to happiness is to *find something more important than yourself, and devote your life to it.*

*Breathing deeply*, from the abdomen, brings more oxygen into your body which gives you a feeling of well-being. It seems obvious to say *breathe deeply*, yet when you are preoccupied and stressed your breathing tends to be shallow, using the ribs not the diaphragm. You may not be conscious of this, but the decrease in oxygen to your body has a profound effect on your sense of well-being, and over time, your health. Mindfulness helps you to cultivate the correct breathing habit. In the Indian tradition, oxygen contains *prana*, the universal life energy that permeates the Cosmos.

*Being mindful* has several aspects; whatever you are doing, be fully present when you do it. If you are washing your hands or peeling potatoes, you are fully present doing it, not thinking about something else, and certainly not multi-tasking. You can cultivate the right conditions for mindfulness by simplifying your life, getting rid of the clutter and unnecessary possessions. Establishing daily routines or rituals is also helpful. A full chapter on mindfulness follows.

## **A.2. *How to use this book***

*Satori Now* should be a leisurely journey. Rushing through it may give you some quick insights, but nothing like what you can get if you take your time. Read slowly and carefully, vocalising the words in your mind as you go. There is meaning down deep, well below the surface of the words. Make it your goal to seek out this deeper meaning. Reflect on what you find. Resist the temptation to skip ahead to the good part. Every part is good.

Part B brings you greater awareness of the present moment, the only time and place where you can experience Satori.

Part C opens the door to your Highest Self by introducing you to your best friend and guide – your Intuition. It can tell you more in one flash than a professor might teach you in a year. Your Intuition is the voice of your Highest Self, and this part tells you how to listen.

Part D describes how to quiet your mind so that you can be more aware of your Intuition. There are so many ways that a person can meditate, but underneath the various forms of meditation are some simple principles that you can learn quickly and easily. The hard part will be to discipline yourself to practice meditation every day.

Part E describes the path to Satori through communion with Nature, or how to cultivate a sense of felt connectedness with all things by building a bridge of awareness between your microcosmic inner self and the macrocosmic world outside as represented by Nature. Then there is no separation

between microcosm and macrocosm, and felt connectedness is your companion.

Part F outlines the basic principles of the teachings known as Buddhism. Anyone wishing to achieve Satori must live their lives in harmony with these principles. This will create an internal living space in which enlightenment becomes possible.

Part G outlines the basic principles of Taoism, the ancient Chinese philosophy that together with Mahayana Buddhism forms the basis of Zen. Taoism is about learning to live in complete harmony with Nature, which is another way of saying you harmonise your inner world with the outer world. When this deep reverence for Nature and intimate knowledge of the inner workings of Nature is combined with the life-style advice contained in Buddhism, a seeker after Satori creates the right conditions within themselves and in their environment for Satori to spontaneously occur. We cannot induce Satori on demand, we can only create the right conditions for it to occur when it is ready.

Part H opens the door to one of the great mysteries in life – what happens to us when we die. It contains a summary of the *Bardo Thodol*, otherwise known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead. This knowledge is invaluable for the spiritual seeker.

Part I is a collection of classic Zen Kōans that come down to us from ancient Japan. They were used by teachers of Zen to encourage the development of Intuition in their students. The Kōans have been rewritten in the everyday language of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to make their meaning more readily accessible to readers who are probably unfamiliar with the subtleties of medieval Japanese.

*Approach this book more as a journey than a destination.*

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