

# The Reality of the Human Situation

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[T]here has to be a distinction between prayer as a petition and prayer as an entry into the reality of a situation: into Reality itself. What we are doing when we meditate is accepting the gift of our own being, and if our being happens to be full of joy and light at that moment we accept that. If our being happens to be facing fear or the trauma of death we accept that.

It is the acceptance of our own being, as we are, at this moment in our life's journey. That is what meditation is about. It is not trying to regain control over life, not trying to change God's mind, not trying to change our fate or destiny, not trying to reinstate the threatened ego as managing director of our personality. Meditation leads to an acceptance of the reality of the human situation, as it is here and now.

After meditation: "Witness" by William Stafford in *THE WAY IT IS: New and Selected Poems* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 1998), p. 144.

## Witness

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This is the hand I dipped in the Missouri  
above Council Bluffs and found the springs.  
All through the days of my life I escort  
this hand. Where would the Missouri  
meet a kinder friend?

On top of Fort Rock in the sun I spread  
these fingers to hold the world in the wind;  
Along that cliff, in that old cave  
where men used to live, I  
grubbed in the dirt  
for those cool springs again.

Summits in the Rockies received this diplomat.  
Brush that concealed the lost children yielded  
them to this hand. Even on the last morning  
when we all tremble and lose, I will reach  
carefully, eagerly through that rain, at the end—

Toward whatever is there, with this loyal hand.

*Image by AveCalvar, Pixabay.*