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To the Householder

Practice right conduct, learning and teaching;

Be truthful always, learning and teaching;

Master the passions, learning and teaching;

Control the senses, learning and teaching;

Strive for peace always, learning and teaching;

Rouse kundalini, learning and teaching;

Serve humanity, learning and teaching;

Beget progeny, learning and teaching.

Satyavacha says; “Be truthful always.”

Taponitya says: “Master the passions.”

Naka declares: “Learning and teaching are necessary for spiritual progress.”



The upanishads ask that I live
my life learning and teaching.
Learning and teaching.
Learning and teaching.
Learning and teaching.

The yoga sutras implore me to
remember that I'm not the
things I learn or the things I
teach. They explain that what
I am isn't something that can
be learned or taught.

“Purusha can never be
seen or known, for it
cannot be an object of
knowledge. Anything
that can be known is not
Purusha, but is in the
realm of Prakriti.
Prakriti, which literally,
means ‘doing outward’ is
the world of nature at all
levels, from the coarsest
to the finest. The whole
of the manifest world, all
matter and all processes
which are subject to law
are within Prakriti.
Thoughts, ideas,
prayers, acts of service
and anything which can
be considered are all in
the realm of Prakriti.”
(Ravi Ravindra)



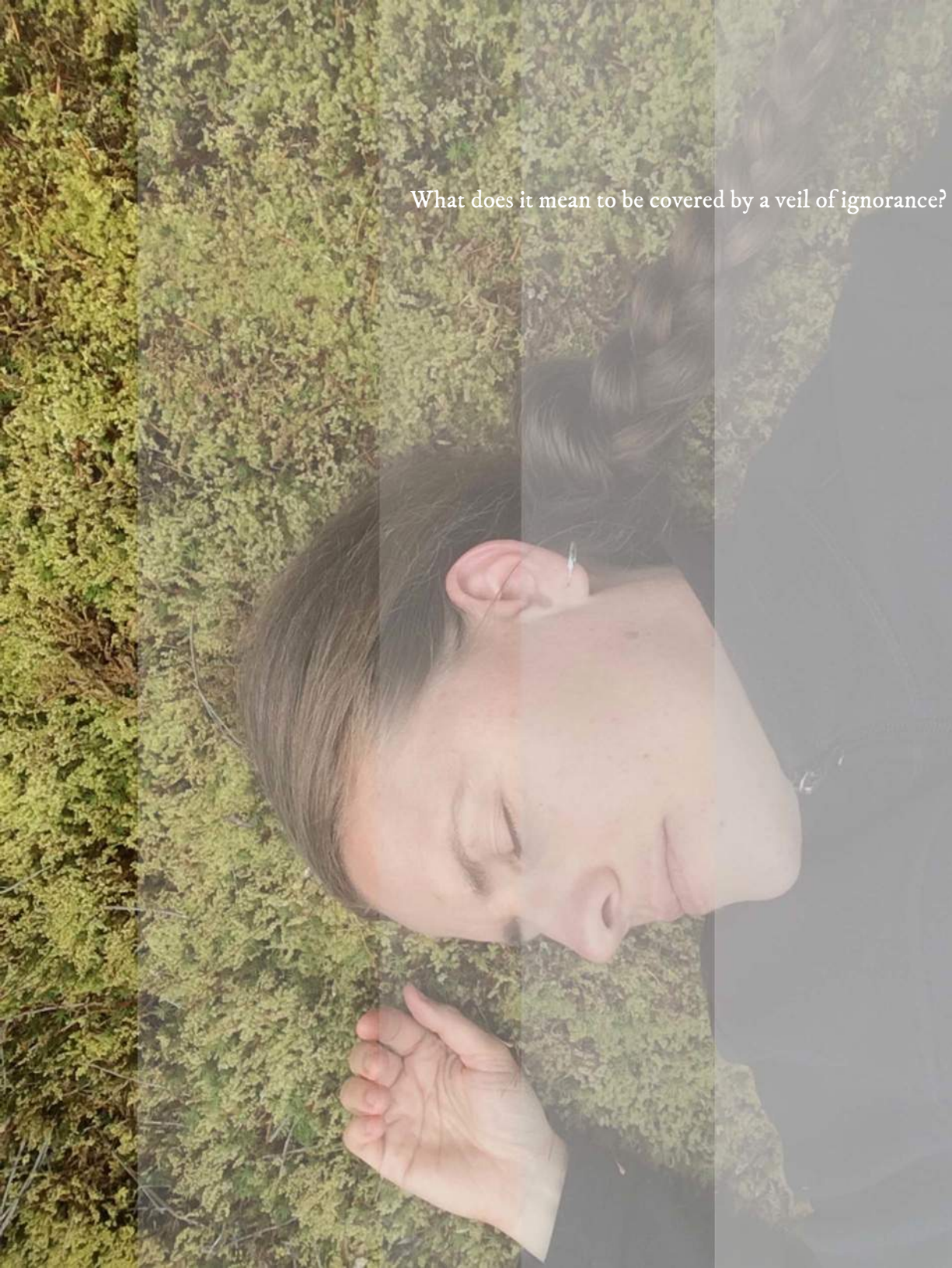
Yoga is establishing the mind (chitta) in stillness.
Then the Seer dwells in its essential nature.
Otherwise the movements of the mind (vrittis) are regarded as the Seer.
There are five types of vrittis, which may be detrimental or nondetrimental.
These are true knowledge, false knowledge, imagination, sleep, and memory.
True knowledge is based upon perception, inference, and valid testimony.
False knowledge is conception with no basis in reality.
Imagination is thought based on images conjured up by words devoid of substance.
Sleep depends upon and leads to non-being.
Memory is recollecting past experience.

(Yoga Sutra 1:2-11)

I know what I know by learning and teaching. Yet I am not what I learn and teach. Yet what I learn and teach is a valuable and important part of my life. These are complicated, seemingly disparate ideas aren't they? My mind is constantly moving. I imagine things. I sleep. I remember things. I understand things (sometimes correctly, sometimes not). All of these are part of what it means to be a human being. To live. They can be useful. They can be harmful. They, in and of themselves, can't really cause or solve problems.

It all gets sticky when I get stuck. When I begin to cling to the knowledge. When I live in the space of the chitta and attach mySelf to the vrittis. When I forget that vrittis are ever changing movements of my mind. I must learn. I must teach. But I have to hold it all lightly. I am not what I learn. I am not what I teach. And even though learning and teaching are useful, by their very nature, they cannot be held forever, no matter how hard I grasp.

And I grasp.



What does it mean to be covered by a veil of ignorance? What does it mean to forget who you are?

What does it mean to try and learn?

If we're constantly learning new things
is what we knew before invalid?

Said a better way... Is the work

I did, the teaching I offered,
invalid? How do I deal with the
knowledge that I did something (or
taught something) the wrong way?

Or that I could have been more
helpful back then. And what do I

do when I learn things differently
from different teachers? How do

I know what to think? These
are different questions.

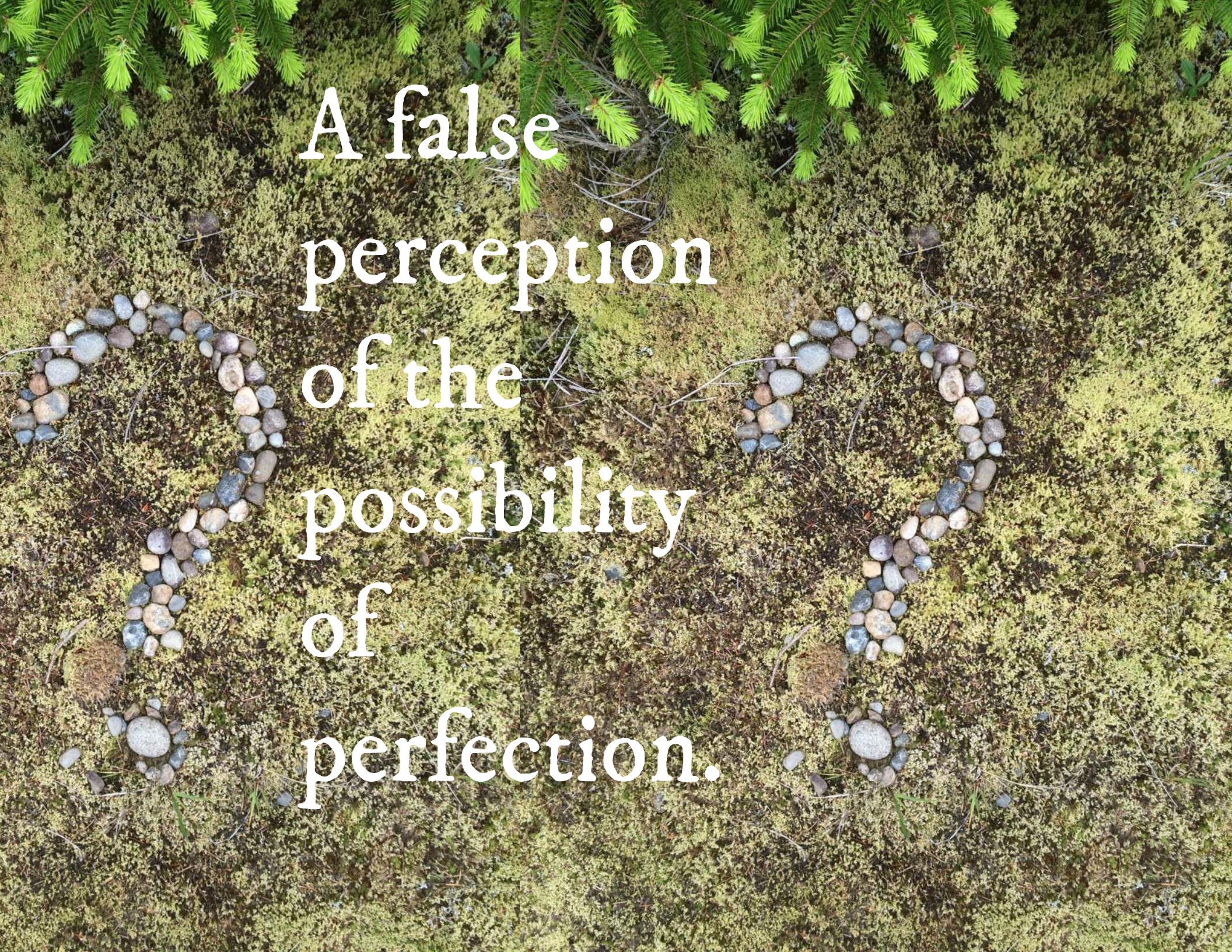
Question 1: I have to remember that I
always try to teach with integrity. I
have to remember that I did the best I
could back then. I offered what I had.
I can't be afraid to learn or of fear
of realizing that I do things differently
in response to new information.

Question 2: the answer to this question lies
in teasing out the difference between
memorized knowledge + experiential knowledge


I have to give myself permission to make mistakes

My answers are good. To many they seem
obvious. But they aren't to me. They are
very difficult to enact. I remind myself
+ remind myself. But my guts continue
to fear mistakes. To fear not being perfect.

Who am I failing through my imperfection?

The image features a dense, green mossy ground with two symmetrical, heart-shaped arrangements of small, smooth, grey and brown stones. The stones are laid out in a way that creates a mirror-image pattern on either side of a central vertical axis. The text "A false perception of the possibility of perfection." is overlaid in a white, serif font, centered horizontally and vertically. The background is a lush, green mossy surface, and the top edge of the image shows the dark green needles of a pine tree.

A false
perception
of the
possibility
of
perfection.



I'm sitting in a room with a large notebook in my lap. I'm listening and doing my best to understand—to learn. There are four teachers and 14 other students with me. The teacher who is speaking is telling a story:

“A friend and I were leaving a yoga workshop when she turned to me and said: ‘She just made that mudra up.’ To which I replied: ‘So. It’s all made up.’”

I'm not sure if anyone else in the room thought much about this story. I have no idea how they reacted to it. I wonder if they remember it. But for me... My eyes welled with tears.

In order to try and explain my reaction, let me tell you another story:

While in seminary I heard a story about a man interviewing for the position of pastor at a UU church. He was asked whether he considered himself to be more conservative or liberal. To which he answered: “What are you? I’m the opposite.”



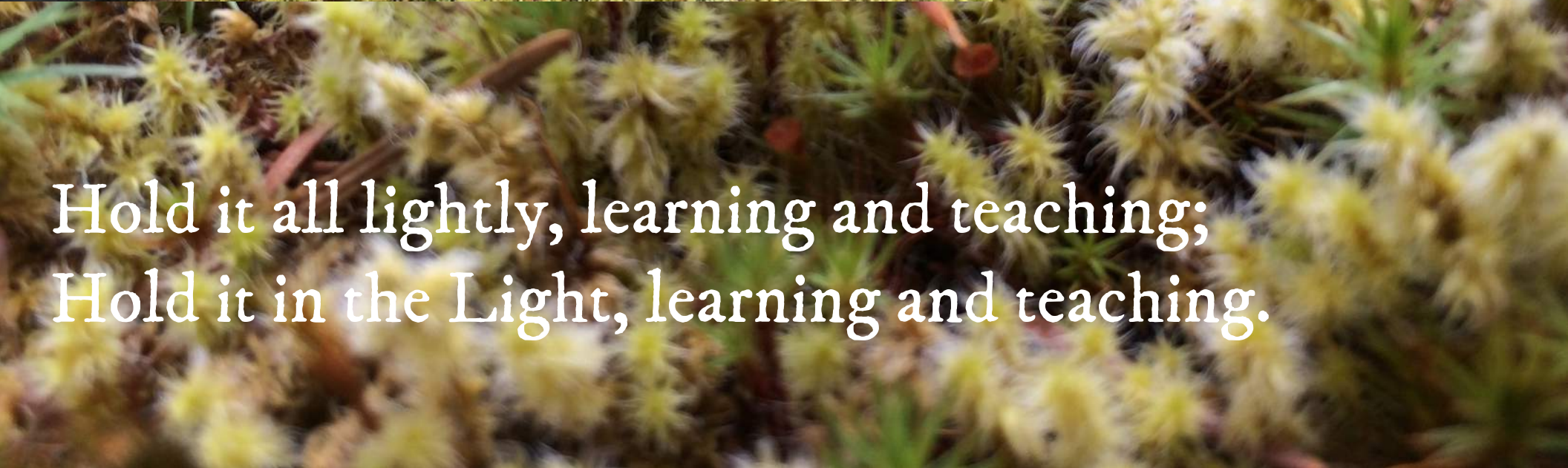
In the introduction to *Bhagavad Gita and its Message*, Anilbaran Roy writes:

[Truth] cannot be shut up in a single trenchant formula, it is not likely to be found in its entirety or in all its bearings in any single philosophy or scripture or uttered altogether and for ever by any one teacher, thinker, prophet or Avatar. Nor has it been wholly found by us if our view of it necessitates the intolerant exclusion of the truth underlying other systems; for when we reject passionately, we mean simply that we cannot appreciate and explain. ...

[T]his Truth...expresses itself in Time and through the mind of man; therefore every Scripture must necessarily contain two elements, one temporary, perishable, belonging to the ideas of the period and country in which it was produced, the other eternal and imperishable and applicable in all ages and countries.

tradition and change
can coexist
~~in fact they must~~
in fact they do
it's only our attachments
that tell us otherwise.





Hold it all lightly, learning and teaching;
Hold it in the Light, learning and teaching.