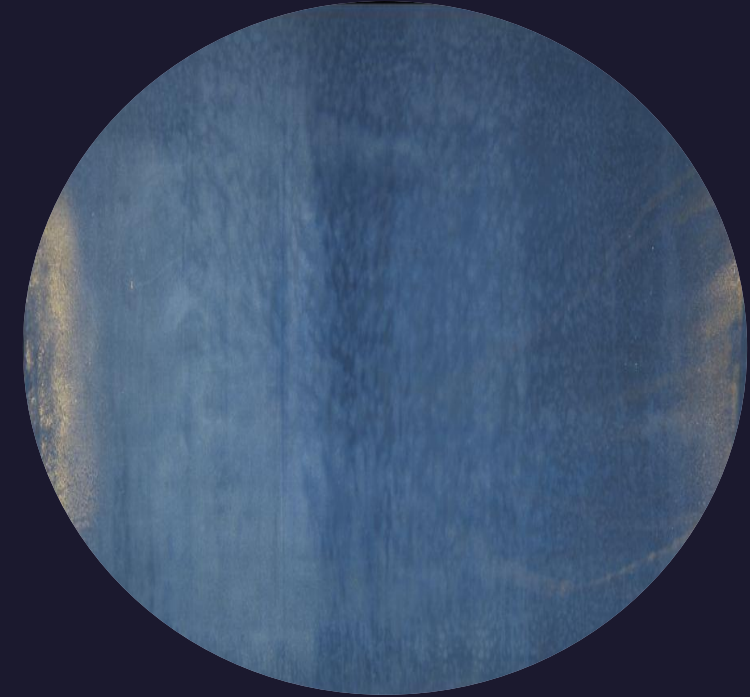


# Last Week's Homework: *Noticing*

- Begin each day with the intention to notice.
- Notice the people (and pets, if you have them) in front of you; be present to them – the features of their face, the tonality of their voices; listen to them. Do you sense an anxiety, a yearning for something?
- At the end of each day, take note. What did you notice that perhaps you would not see otherwise? Did it prompt anything new? Was the day somehow different, lighter perhaps?



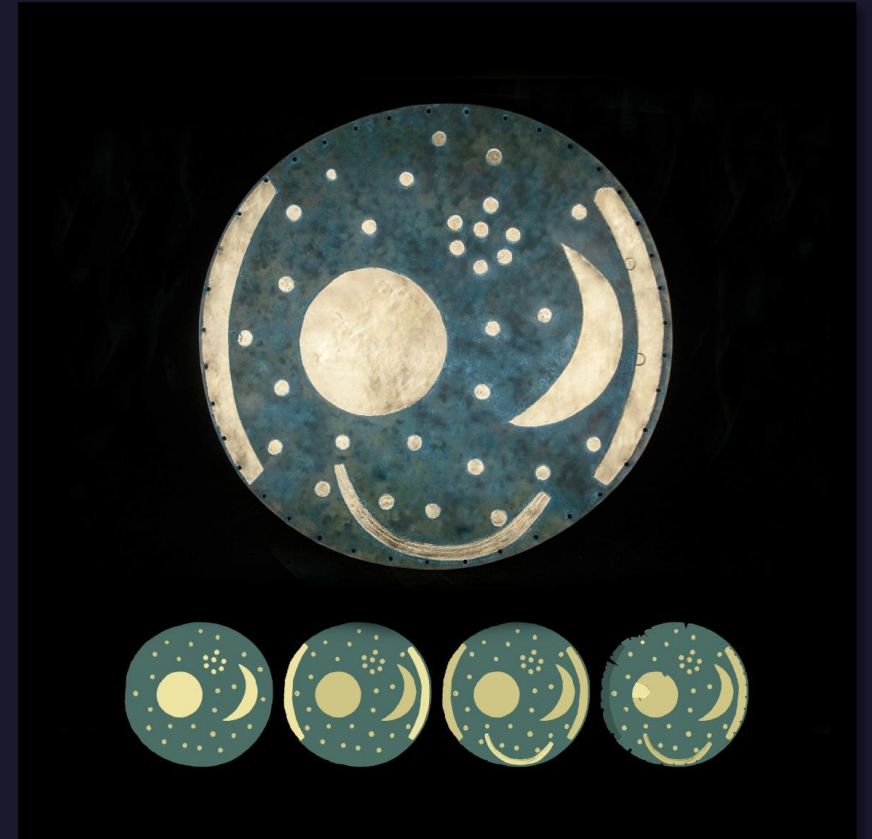


# Transforming Practices: Attention

The Journey School

July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Many of you think that Self-Observation consists merely in noticing that you feel moody, that you feel unwell, that you feel negative or bored or gloomy or depressed and so on. Let me assure you that this is *not* Self-Observation. Self-Observation begins with the establishing of Observing 'I' in your own inner world. Observing 'I' is *not identified* with what it observes. When you say: "I am feeling negative," you are not observing yourself. You *are* your state. You are identified with your state. There is nothing distinct in you that is standing outside your state, something that does not feel your state, something that is independent of it, and is looking at it, something that has a quite different feeling from your state. If you say: "I wish I were not negative," this is quite useless. It is 'I' speaking the whole time. You are taking yourself as one mass. You are not dividing yourself into two, which is the beginning of Work on yourself. You are not saying: "Why is *it* negative?" but "Why am *I* negative?" You are taking *it* and *you* as the same. Try to understand what it means to divide yourself into two—an observed side and an observing side—and try to feel the sense of 'I' *in the observing side* and not in the observed side. This is the whole point. Remember that *unless a man divides himself into two he cannot move from where he is*. It is like this: we are all fastened inside to wrong things which we take as *ourselves*—wrong thoughts, worries, etc. We take them as *us*. Work is to separate ourselves from them. This is the beginning of *inner freedom*. This is what the Work is about. If you can *observe* your thoughts and worries, then you establish the starting-point of the Work in yourself. It is this observing side that is the new point of growth in you. So try to feel the sense of 'I' *in Observing 'I'* and not in the observed side. Try to be conscious in Observing 'I'.







# Chateau du Prieure (the Priory)

**July 1922 ...**

The Journey School

July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022



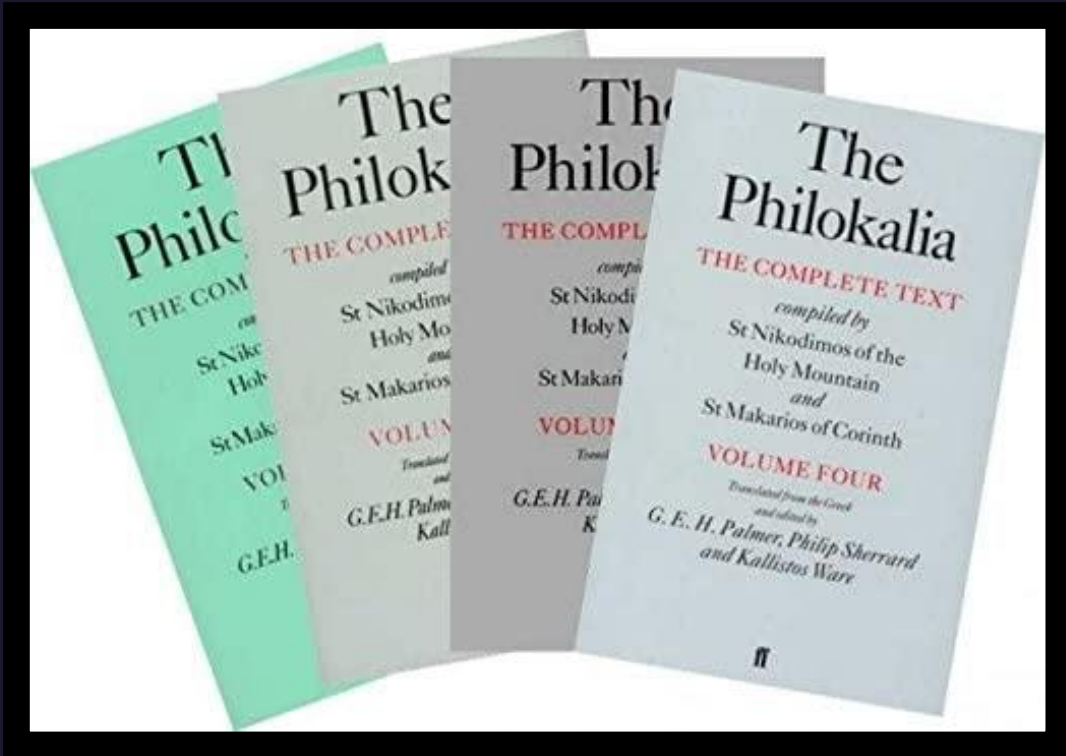
**About Twenty Years  
Before ...**



Nepsis (Greek: νῆψις) is an important idea in Orthodox Christian theology and is related to *hesychia*, stillness.

It means wakefulness or watchfulness and constitutes a condition of sobriety acquired following a period of purgation/purification/Work on oneself (Catharsis).

Nepsis is the practice of continual vigilance and attention to one's inner life and the guarding of one's thoughts and emotions; i.e. guarding one's heart.



# Watchfulness Is Perfect Action

-Guy Finley

The Philokalia distinguishes four steps in paying attention to oneself:

- (1) Calling out for help from above.
- (2) Remaining silent and still in prayer.
- (3) Remembering our death.
- (4) Observing and not identifying with the thoughts of fanciful notions.



For the earliest monks, a basic prerequisite for genuine growth in the spiritual life involved a constant attitude of nepsis or watchfulness, attention.

The word nepsis (νήψις) in antiquity literally meant to drink no wine, but by extension it also included the metaphorical sense of being sober-minded, sane, alert, attentive, and vigilant.

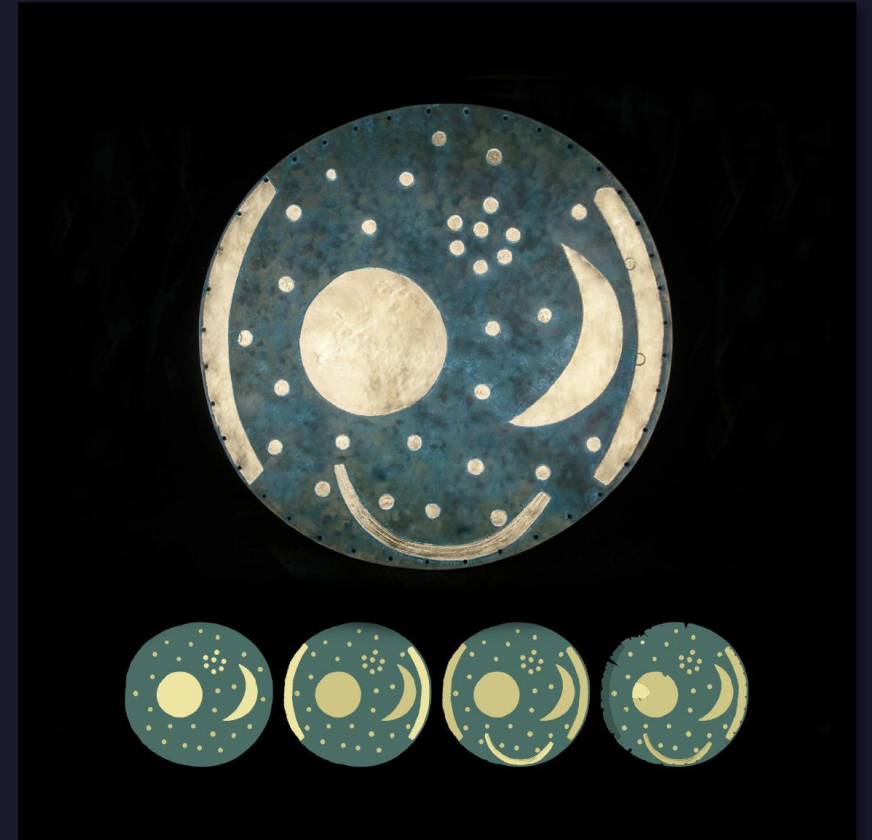
If one desires to not be under the influence of the passions, if one wishes to not be “drunk” with anger, with envy, or with desire, one must, spiritually speaking, be attentive to not “drink” that influence.

How we pay attention to ourselves is paramount because as scripture guides, “Be sober (νήψατε), pay attention (γρηγορήσατε meaning stay awake); because your adversary is like a roaring lion, roving about, seeking one to devour.” (1 Peter 5.8).





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# Attention and the Body



# Attention and Care





# Next Week's Homework

- Begin each day with the intention to become more aware to what you are giving your attention.
- Notice how your attention is given to what you love. Notice how your attention avoids what you dislike.
- Practice tending to or caring for someone or something living, by giving your conscious, loving attention. Notice what it feels like. What do you sense in your body? What thoughts arise or dissolve? What do you observe occurs in the other to whom your care and attention is directed?

