

## ***Both by Thought and Feeling***

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When Franklin says, “both by thought and feeling,” this suggests that there are different aspects of our own nature or awareness that are peculiar to how we live the world, and how we orient to the Transcendent. He contends that we should determine our psychological strength so as to use it to progress toward our goals. This implies that self-knowledge is the first aspect of knowledge to concern us, so the first distinction to make is whether each of us is primarily a feeling type, a thinking type, or whatever.

Next we should consider the aspects of individuality that goes beyond simple thinking and feeling to those that make us unique. It is important then to come to an awareness of it so as to be able to access the values through it. This refers to the notion that Franklin was advancing a yoga that has more to do with individuality, or self-knowledge, than anything we have seen before.

By way of overview, let us consider three primary aspects of thought:

1. a psychological treatment of the three primary modes of consciousness (cognition, affection, and conation), as opposed to other ways to categorize it,
2. a specific focus on Franklin’s treatment of different kinds of thought (perception, conception, and Introception),
3. Application of thought in the direction of Transcendent Consciousness.

### ***Modes of Relative Consciousness***

The three modes of consciousness are cognition (thinking), affection (feeling), and conation (willing), which correlate to the three Indian approaches to spirituality, namely, *jñāna*, *bhakti*, and *karma* yoga—the *trimarga*. These refer to knowledge, devotion, and action or works, respectively. *Jñāna* is not just cognition as thinking, but has to do with a perceptual kind of knowledge (*vidya*) that reveals the true nature of things. This ultimately leads to Knowledge of the Self that constitutes the Liberation from suffering (ignorance, or *avidya*) that is sought.

The sense of devotion in *bhakti* is toward the Divine. It is, in a sense, an aspiration of one’s own soul toward the Transcendent. *Karma yoga* involves more practical action, perhaps dedicated to the same end, but more concrete and ritualized.

Turning within, each of us will sense a primary affinity for one of these three. However, it would not be uncommon to find a balance or combination of these. Whereas Franklin advocated developing the side for which we have the greatest facility, and using it to achieve a breakthrough, Carl Jung and Śri Aurobindo recommend striving for balance.

In Franklin’s treatment of psychology, he breaks it down somewhat differently. He gives precedence or the primary view to cognition, but here cognition is that which is pure, and that is knowing intrinsic concepts, so that only after language was developed would this sort of mode of relative consciousness be possible. This also relies on the power of abstraction, so the concept itself is an abstraction from the concrete warp and woof of our own experience, from which we then rearrange these relations of concepts into thinkable understanding after what has actually happened.

Below that he lists affection, but here what he would include is covered by both the Western view of affection as well as conation, the active aspect in our psyche—that which

impels us to action. So, along with the specific feelings that he lists—love, hate, anger, desire, fear, a feeling of justice/injustice—there is also the impulse from our own emotional nature or passions toward responding to certain situations, toward acting appropriately (or inappropriately) in the world, and so on. The impulse to action, by itself, gets us into trouble. However, ethical principles alone are impotent. As David Hume asserts, without some connection to our emotional nature, our whole ethical structure is without any means for impelling one toward activating the principles that one might intellectually affirm.

On the third level, below affection, is what Franklin calls sensation, that which is passive and prelinguistic, having nothing to do with concepts. It is something that we might share with our animal nature. As has been amply demonstrated, there is an animal nature that passively experiences the world, having sense perception, which is able to distinguish certain things without presumably being able to think about it or conceive how one might deal with it.

This is the layer of consciousness with which he is least concerned, for when he attained Recognition, or Fundamental Realization, it had least impact upon the sensing nature. It had more on the feelings, or affection, but primarily it impacted the cognitive aspect, as he conceived thought to be.

This is interesting because it is not just simple thinking as a logical organization of concepts. “Thought” is a mass noun as well as a discrete noun, which has implications for what he calls Transcendent Thought, thought that is, in a sense, transcendent of all concepts—formless. Even so, at the same time, its reflection within our own psyches can take on possibly a thinking or knowing or feeling aspect. It is the Root of both thought and feeling. At that level it is formless; it is only within our psyches that it becomes differentiated. In and of itself, that which he calls Transcendent Thought is unconditioned and formless, above what we would identify as thought. To a nonthinking being it would not appear as thought at all.

### ***Levels of Thought***

The four levels or kinds of thought that Franklin articulates refer to the three forms of cognition that he has related within ordinary experience—perceptual and conceptual—to which he adds the Introceptual. He includes feeling, sensation, and intuition within perception (the bottom level). The conceptual level is pure abstraction apart from any empirical reference. His purpose in organizing these functions in this way is to clearly distinguish the purely abstract level of thought from everything else in our ordinary psyches that could possibly be conceived as perception. He identifies the perceptual level as *kama manas* (desire mind). It is practical, serving the organism, but with a sense of wishfulness, without yet any wisdom seeming to guide it. That has to be imposed from above it.

The conceptual would be that which is active, but also laborious. There has to be effort in formulation at the abstract level. Things have to be right. In order to make them right, accurately organizing concepts in the proper pattern, effort has to be imposed upon it. This can sometimes be very exhausting, as Franklin attests. Furthermore, concepts articulate different possibilities, make critical distinctions, and are the foundation of mathematics and our Western science, which is based on mathematics.

The Introceptual he regards as pure thought reflected through the knowing function. We make it a cognitive function through the cognitive aspect with which our psyches is familiar, but it is not in a mode that is given as identifiable concepts interrelated in logical patterns. Instead it is self-flowing. The dynamic is *sui generis*—it comes of itself. One experiences the flow as it forms the patterns that it does, but it is supervenient, rather than given. It transcends language and symbols, so cannot be conceptualized.

A fourth mode of thought also exists—a blend of the Introceptual and the conceptual. In order for this to take form in a coherent or understandable way, there has to be a rising of our conceptuality to bring into form that which is pre-formed in the Introceptual to then give it articulation. Thus, in a sense, it is partially verbal, but still largely self-flowing. It has more of an easefulness than if one were, for example, doing a deductive proof in logic or mathematics. The combined form is distinct from the other three. It is the mode in which the Aphorisms were written. It took effort, but at the same time, was largely an autonomous function of the author's consciousness.

Because the way in which the Aphorisms were formulated was typical of much spiritual literature, this would suggest that the thought aspect of our own psyches can be effective in rising to grasp the meaning of such literature—including the Aphorisms. There is, as it were, a spiritual methodology involved that would be oriented more specifically to thought.

Concerning the notion of conceptuality itself, it plays a critical role. Franklin states that conceptual thinking functions here so as to arouse self-consciousness to reflect upon the content precipitated from the Transcendent Consciousness. One cannot simply take it at face value; there has to be a consideration of it. It has to be something that lies outside the confines of one's own consciousness that is essential to appropriateness or correctness.

### ***Spiritual Methodology Oriented to Thinking***

More directly, thinking can take various dynamics in a spiritual methodology that can be fruitful or effective. For instance, within the yoga of knowledge, Shankara introduced the method of *Atmavidya* (Knowledge of the Self, or *Atman*) that uses the mind to discriminate Self from not-Self by actually experiencing the difference between the Pure Subject and the objects with which we most often tend to identify. These are the things to which we refer when in confusion we say "I," when these are really objects of which the I is aware. The method of disidentification begins with the most gross and moves to the most subtle. First one imagines in thought that the "I" is in behind one's forehead, and mentally says, "I." This is what one realizes as other than the objects that in a set sequence are thus known as not-I. This process may take quite a long time, for the distinction must be experienced, not merely intellectualized. The final step is to take the thought of I, which has been used as proxy for the Self, and experience it as object, saying, "I am not this thought." Which thought? The thought of I. As soon as one is experientially aware of this thought as object, then the Self is Realized and is self-luminously aware. The thinking process involved in this method is not particularly elaborate, but it has a precise purpose.

Franklin found Shankara's work invaluable for his breakthrough, even though he used a more essential version of the technique. At the time of his first Fundamental Realization (Realization of the Self) he isolated the subjective moment of consciousness and focused there, allowing all objects to fade into irrelevancy.

Mathematics is the other application to the spiritual path that Franklin used. His expressed intention was to pioneer a yoga of mathematics, which he sees as a way to provide thinkable concepts for Transcendent values. There are no thinkable referents for a great deal of mathematics, such as hypernumbers and the transfinite, for there is nothing in the world that concretely corresponds to them. Even so, they are still thinkable and arrangeable, and may be used metaphorically to direct our consciousness to the kinds of Transcendent values that Franklin experienced directly. Although mathematics is only one of numerous resources that he actually used on his path of "self-induced effort and self-devised means," he is uniquely suited to develop its application for others to use. We may infer that the degree to which one ought to use this approach will be mainly a matter of individual temperament.

Concerning the understanding of spiritual literature, including, in particular, the Aphorisms, how are we to understand their meaning? Franklin provides a quintessential teaching on this. First, one must acquire acuity of thought, where acuity means a sharpness, a readiness, a clarity—the state of mind that one has when waiting for something to be given. Along with this, one must ‘feel’ one’s thought, so it cannot be merely at the level of conceptuality, because the Aphorisms were not produced simply from that level. It involved a blending of the Introceptual and the conceptual. So, one has at the same time to draw upon one’s own capacity for grasping the Introcept—that which lies beyond the pure meaning of the concept. In fact, Franklin says that we have to be careful. The real or deeper meaning may be lost by a more rigorous, contained sense of the terms. So, if we are only looking at the terms themselves, the words that are used, and looking for clearly defined meanings and their logical relations, then we will fall short of the subtle, Transcendent meaning that is infusing it.

When he says that we have to feel our thought, there is a certain sense in which the active aspect has to be subordinated to a sense of self-giving. There is a devotional attitude that is required there, which is a self-surrender. In other words, there is something of mystery that infuses the Aphorisms—something from the Transcendent that cannot possibly be completely and totally grasped by our conceptual process. The self-giving is the only way in which, by opening, it can inform our consciousness. We can then have a sense of this—but perhaps, in order to do it, we have to give up the pride of the knower. Then one is possessed by it, and then becomes one with That, and the knowledge that we then have is knowledge of the Divine.

Franklin advises that

The reader should strive not so much to understand the formal meaning contained in these writings, but to make a certain turn in his own consciousness toward a Matrix that surrounds the expression. He should concentrate upon faint stirrings in his consciousness which he cannot really express, even to himself (*EP* 127).

In ordinary thought, the meaning is contained within the expression; in the Aphorisms, the meaning extends beyond the expression—it contains the expression. It takes a subtle shift in consciousness to try to attain to That, and to attend to these faint, inexpressible stirrings in consciousness—that which has not been captured by the form, but is horizontally implied by the form. It is while one is in this mode that one has to apprehend it, but he says that we have to tread lightly—tread lightly in thought, in feeling, and in action. “One should reach out almost as though not reaching at all” (*Ibid.*). Eventually, if successful, the aspirant becomes transformed, becoming the all-containing Matrix.