



Feldenkrais Skolan

*Life is a process. Improve the quality of the process and improve life itself: - Moshe Feldenkrais
I hear, and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. – Chinese proverb*

Hebrew words appear here and there in the text. They are part of how the ideas hold together, but you don't need to learn them – what matters is the content. Just take them as waymarks along the path, like spices in a dish: you can discern the taste even if you don't know the recipe.

The Third Path

To Read as a Deed

Before you lies a text that may appear both familiar and new. In his final published book, Moshe Feldenkrais reminds us that understanding often emerges from doing. This is a longer text that asks you to read—and to let the reading explain itself. I have tried to be clear, while remaining true to the Feldenkrais idea that learning should be non-habitual. By this I mean that the text, rather than being difficult, may be unfamiliar and renewing, and thus require attention.

In 1974, I regularly visited the hall on Alexander Yanai Street where Moshe Feldenkrais taught. For fifty years, I have continually returned in various ways to this learning that took shape for me there – the place that is the origin of the book I am writing about. I stand in the tradition of offering a new interpretation of a given text – a consistent flow of words, if you will – just as a lesson can feel new when it is reshaped and presented differently to the inquirer.

Keep in mind: the text places no demands on you as reader. It is built like a lesson, and I will approach the theme from several directions.

Words, Fields, and Paths

The theme for the autumn term 2025 has emerged over the summer through a deepened reading of individual Hebrew words, their meanings, and how they are used by Moshe Feldenkrais in his foundational texts on the Feldenkrais pedagogy. His language, often described as archaic, is in fact misunderstood. The language contains meaning-bearing forms that are not added from the outside. A growing understanding of these nuances now gives me a more stable ground for the teaching I have carried out since 1991. I study and teach Feldenkrais in three languages: Swedish, English, and Hebrew. Three become a surface, a field to move across freely. To walk across a real field is to discover something we had not seen before. This field is the same.

I intend to speak more directly about The Third Path – the Feldenkrais path – based on these new insights. This means placing myself more clearly outside the binary choice that Swedish, English, and Western cultural expression often presume, and conveying more of the ancient tradition in which Hebrew is interpreted and applied.

Summary of the Text

I develop the theme by placing the words *hafshata* and *milulit* at the centre, together with the words *d'mut atzmenu*. The departure lies in Moshe Feldenkrais' textbook *Shichlul HaYecholet: Halacha u'Ma'aseh* and the systematic distinction that is lost in the English translation, where two of the words are reduced to "abstraction."

By showing how *milulit* refers to the literal level of language and *hafshata* is not a thing in itself, but a virtue that arises when something is withdrawn, another order emerges—different from the Western dualism between theory and practice, body and psyche, or body and soul.

The four components—thought, feeling, sensation, and movement—function simultaneously and shift internally, which emphasizes the indivisibility of the whole. The text leads to an understanding of the Feldenkrais Method as a third Path: not a synthesis of opposites, but an undertaking in which language, action, and direction are one and mutually forming.

As an Introduction to the Third Path

For many years I have used ten guidelines as guidance, and they function both as an introduction to the pedagogy and as a reminder for students' practice. They open, as a beginning, the narrative of the Third Path. I divide the ten into two groups based on the meaning of the words *hafshata* and *milulit*. What these words mean, and why they cannot be translated as *abstraction*, is what the text now turns to—this is where the path begins.

The First Five – *hafshata* (withdrawing, so that form appears):

1. **Do the practice slowly**

This is *hafshata* because the tempo is reduced so that disturbing speed and the drive to perform are removed.

2. **Do less than you are capable of**

Here *hafshata* takes place by reducing what is maximal. The unnameable that pushes toward boundary performance is set aside, and thereby the form and organisation of the movement become more visible.

3. **It is easier to feel differences when the effort is small**

Hafshata means reducing what overloads perception, so that what remains are the differences in form – as described by the Weber–Fechner law.

4. **Do not compel yourself to be efficient**

Hafshata lies in removing the demand for efficiency – where prediction becomes compulsion and obstructs learning.

5. **Learning and life are not the same thing**

This is *hafshata* when the conflation between the conditions of life and the possibilities of learning is pulled apart. When the two are kept separate, it becomes easier to see what is actually learning.

The Five That Follow – *milulit* (the literal):

6. **Complete light and simple movements**

This is *milulit* because the instruction is literal: do exactly what it says. Simplicity speaks for itself once it is understood and accepted as guiding.

7. **Alternate between details and the whole and relate to the space**

This is *milulit* because the words literally state what is meant: attention in a dynamic action between concrete details, a whole, and how you are situated in the room. This is safety.

8. **Look for the pleasant sensation**

Here, *milulit* is clear: it is a direct invitation, feelings are addressed without detour. Look for what they mean to you. The wording itself points the way.

9. **Do not try to do the movement well, neatly, or correctly**

This is *milulit* because the negation is literally in the words. The text carries itself: don't do that – do as it says and meet yourself.

10. **Do not say in advance what the final goal will be**

Milulit is what is literally said. Do not go ahead of the process—it blocks new thinking and is based on assumptions.

Language, Translations, and Forms

The starting point is the textbook written by Moshe Feldenkrais, *Shichlul HaYecholet: Halacha u'Ma'aseh*. It was published in Hebrew in 1967 and appeared in English under the name *Awareness Through Movement* in 1972. It consists of two parts: one theoretical and one practical. The theoretical part provides the conceptual and functional basis for the practical part, which contains lessons with theoretical sections or meta-commentaries. The lesson part is the concretization of the theoretical explanations: learning by doing.

Moshe Feldenkrais emphasizes that the theoretical part should be read first, since a deepened understanding of the principles from the beginning makes the practical elements more effective. I have taken that to heart. Yochanan Rywerant always emphasized that the book contains everything — referring to the Hebrew edition. I do not believe that he read the deficient English translation in depth. It is well known that every translation is a new book. I therefore read three different ones.

Guidance and Deed

The book's title also has two parts: the first part is translated as *Improving the Ability*, the second part *Halacha v'ma'aseh*—*Halacha and deed*—and has disappeared in the English book but is deliberately part of the title. In a textbook, a title is concrete and indicates the functional direction of the content—in contrast to a novel, where the title can often be more symbolic.

Halacha is not an instruction in sequence, but a form of direction that emerges in interaction with the deed. The word comes from the root *halach*—“to go, to walk”—which shows that its meaning is fundamentally progression and path. I therefore translate *Halacha v'ma'aseh* here as *Guidance and Deed*. It does not refer to

instruction and execution as cause and effect, but to a mutual and continuous virtue—a correlation in which direction and deed shape one another.

Guidance and Deed carry simultaneity and feedback in one. This has been lost in translation, when the intention and the whole second part of the title were omitted and simplified into *Awareness Through Movement*. Thus, the linear form is given precedence.

From Epilogue to Textbook

Feldenkrais continues the path he staked out already in 1929, when he published his Hebrew translation of *The Practice of Autosuggestion by the Method of Emile Coué* by C. Harry Brooks and supplemented it with an epilogue entitled *Hamachshava VeHama'aseh*, or – *The Thought and the Deed*.

A title with the definite article – about the delimited and the particular. Not general, but specific: *the Deed*. *The Thought and the Deed* – and the consequence of this union.

Ma'aseh from the 1929 title, in the sense of *deed*, returns in another combination in the book from 1967, where he gathers many years of teaching experience. He does so in the same direction, now as documentation of student processes and as instruction for the pedagogy in his name, for learning how to learn – *again*, now with an articulated experience and insight that his path works – for those of us who follow him further, it also becomes a natural continuity hundred years later.

Structure of the Book

Shichlul HaYecholet: Halacha u'Ma'aseh begins with a *mavoh* (introduction), then the first part consists of five theoretical chapters. The second part opens with two chapters—general instructions and concrete instructions—followed by twelve lessons that are not a systematic continuity but were selected solely to illuminate the principles of the inquiry and its means.

That is precisely how Feldenkrais writes in the introduction to the lesson section: “to illuminate the principles of the method.” This disappears in the English edition. He points out that they encompass the whole person and her most fundamental functions. This means that the human being, in all her parts, is present in every lesson, regardless of theme, when a carefully selected aspect is explored. This can be illuminated through the breathing, which of course is always present. The book ends with *sof davar* (final word).

The Theme's Focus – *D'mut atzmenu, Milulit, and Hafshata*

To develop The Third Path, I begin from how three distinct words can function as keys to central aspects of the Feldenkrais approach. They are central and are described in the preface and in three different chapters. I will problematize the chapters' Hebrew titles and the words that, in the English translation, were carelessly omitted. In doing so, the possibility of an innovative understanding was closed off, where the meaning could instead have taken entirely new directions.

Since the entire approach that *d'mut atzmenu*, *milulit*, and *hafshata* represent is part of what is uniquely human, this also becomes an attempt to show why the method functions as it does – how the brain's functions can be addressed through a systematic form of interaction. This is most easily done without replacing and misinterpreting the evident difference between *milulit* and *hafshata* as a single common word – “abstraction”.

***Dimuy* and *D'mut* – same root, entirely different function**

I began studying the English ATM book in 1980 and was deeply influenced by the chapter on self-image. As a teacher, it has been somewhat difficult to explain what the words actually mean. They point to something other than what one would normally assume. For all these years, I have known that self-image is central in the pedagogy, that it is about changing one's self-image – and in that I have thought *dimuy atzmi*. It is only recently that I realized that Feldenkrais, in his book, instead uses another word from the same root – *d'mut*. That insight was the starting point for The Third Path.

Dimuy atzmi has a typical function that denotes an inner image, a representation, and is translated as: self-image, inner image, and inner picture. *Dimuy* is something we carry within us as an image, an internal “as if.” Self-image in this sense belongs to the representational, not to the lived.

D'mut atzmi has a function that denotes form or gestalt in what is lived and active, and is translated as: likeness, form, or gestalt. It is how something actually happens – how we are in what is taking place. It is lived likeness, not imagined.

In summary:

Inner representation is what is imagined, what is carried as an internal image – an “as if,” a projected likeness.

Lived, non-representational form is what occurs without being represented – an actual form, an actual likeness, not as an image but as effect.

This distinction becomes clear already in the foreword to the book, where Feldenkrais chooses to begin with *ha-d'mut shel atzmenu*.

The foreword begins with *D'mut atzmenu* – not an image, not a symbol

I will cite the first three sentences of the foreword, followed by a closing sentence that points to possibilities – for yes, everything.

Feldenkrais opens the book with the sentence: “*Anu po'alim l'fi ha-d'mut shel atzmenu*”, and already here the translator's dilemma begins – both in the transfer from Hebrew into another language, and in the understanding of why Feldenkrais chooses these specific words.

The English version reads: “*we act in accordance with our self-image.*”

The Swedish version is entirely different: “*vår självuppfattning bestämmer vårt beteende*” (“our self-perception determines our behavior”).

The first part of the sentence is simple: *Anu po'alim l'fi* literally means “we act according to” – as in the English book. But the central phrase, *ha-d'mut shel atzmenu*, is neither unambiguous in its basic sense nor in translation. There is reason to problematize it.

To understand these words in context, I refer to the immediate continuation of the foreword. Feldenkrais writes:

“I eat, walk, speak, think, see, love, etc. – as I feel in the state I am in when I do these actions. This *ha-d'mut shel atzmenu* comes to us partly from inheritance, partly from upbringing, and partly from *chinukh ha-atzmi*, the self-initiated learning that originates from myself. (Note: *atzmi* appears again).”

And he ends the foreword with:

“In this book we have explored the beginning of the path in a comprehensive and thorough manner, so that many readers will be able to continue on their own.”

To penetrate the different understandings of *ha-d'mut shel atzmenu*, I begin from the end – with *atzmenu*. Its root or basic form is *etzem*, which means self, core, substance, essence – and literally, bone. *Atzmenu* means “ourselves” / “we ourselves.” I find the various meanings of the root relevant in the context of The Third Path.

D'mut is derived from the verb *damah* – “to be like / to liken.” *Ha-d'mut shel atzmenu* becomes the likeness, form, or gestalt that belongs to ourselves.

Anu po'alim l'fi ha-d'mut shel atzmenu translates as: we act in accordance with the likeness, form, or gestalt that belongs to ourselves.

The question, then, is: what does Feldenkrais mean by choosing this elusive word?

Perhaps *d'mut* is familiar from the biblical verse on the creation of humankind in Genesis 1:26: *Na'aseh adam b'tzalmenu kid'mutenu / Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*

Feldenkrais begins the foreword with *ha-d'mut shel atzmenu* – the likeness, form, or gestalt that belongs to ourselves. It is not a symbol, not an image, not an idea. It is a concrete beginning.

In Jewish usage, *d'mut* is not an image severed from its origin, but a likeness in connection with it. It is bound to what is one's own, through *shel atzmenu* – of ourselves, belonging to ourselves – and thereby anchored in the lived.

What we act within is the brain-based organization that determines how thought, feeling, sensation, and movement co-act in action. This organization is: concrete, lived, non-representational

D'mut atzmenu is not a depiction, but the organization itself of how we are in what takes place. It is from this lived likeness – not from an image or idea – that our ability to make distinctions, perceive direction, and change emerges.

In that sense, lived likeness becomes the essence from which an action arises. Not what is done. Not who does it. But how.

And it is this how that carries recognition, ethics, and the possibility of change. We act in accordance with our own determined organization – a lived whole from which action arises.

The Four Components of Action Already in the First Chapter

In the second paragraph of the first chapter, Feldenkrais formulates a defining proposition that also functions as a principle in his method.

He writes:

“Our *d'mut* is composed of four different parts that all participate in every action: movement, sensation, feeling, and thought. These are four components of every activity. The quantitative and qualitative relationship between each component in a given action is different, just as the humans who carry out the action are different, but each component participates, to a greater or lesser degree, in every action.”

He states that every action consists of four components. In doing so, a structural foundation is provided that not only describes the composition of action but also establishes an order upon which all reasoning and practices of the method rest.

When The Translation Alters the Meaning of the Title

The book is explicitly written to lay out the principles of Feldenkrais' method and its means. The titles are therefore not ornaments but bearing parts of the structure. They are so important that each paragraph has its own title — I count 230. They point to direction and function, and every shift in translation affects the understanding of the principles as a whole. When the title is altered, the reader's map of the method is altered too. Two titles in particular have caught my attention.

The title of the third chapter has, in the original, the Hebrew title *Bameh Lehatchil u'Madu'a*, rendered in English as *With What to Begin, and Why*. In the English book, this has been altered to *Where to Begin and How*.

The difference between the two formulations is crucial. What/Why directs attention toward content and motive: first, that there is a distinct content that will be treated in the chapter's 17 paragraphs, and why it is essential. Here, *Why* does not mean a practical follow-up question, but the principled motivation for the method's structure — why it is the Path it is. The chapter develops this by showing why movement is chosen as the tool for learning.

When the title instead becomes *Where/How*, the emphasis shifts to place and method. The focus moves from intention and structure to orientation and technique. This means the reader is led toward execution before the intention itself has become

visible. The shift is therefore not only linguistic but alters the chapter's entry point and the direction given to understanding and learning.

The title of the fourth chapter has, in the original, the Hebrew title *Hamiivneh v'Sgulot Pe'iluto*, which in English is translated as *The Structure and Virtues of Its Functioning*. The translation in the English book is simply *Structure and Function*.

The title does not refer to “function” as a fixed capacity or a static role. It refers to *functioning* — the ongoing activity, the way in which the system operates in a living process. In Hebrew, this is expressed with the word *pe'iluto*, which refers precisely to the activity of the brain, its mode of operating, its continuous plasticity.

The chapter addresses the structure in a dynamic process and the virtues that emerge in the functioning itself.

Feldenkrais uses the word *segula* to mark something particular: not moral virtue, but an inherent, exceptional virtue. Therefore, *segula* is best translated as *virtue*, because it points to a quality and virtue that already exists in the human — not as a value, but as a given within a context built on control and awareness. The chapter shows that the method is not a collection of techniques, but a Path of developing and making this unique capacity available.

Returning Leads Forward

The method can be understood as a conscious reclaiming of something inherited and innate and — to quote Feldenkrais — of human qualities that have become subject to alienation, a state of estrangement. There is a difference between speaking and reading. The latter is a skill involving letters and sentence structure according to certain principles that are agreed upon and differ between languages. The infant needs no model, instruction, or principles for its development — learning already exists in the virtues of the brain. The intention of survival is not that this should lie dormant.

Is the method, then, a resumption — or perhaps an awakening? That there is a gap that must be bridged belongs to the transition from the infant's learning to the adult's ATM lessons. Language, fears, habits and obstructive patterns may stand in the way, but when used in accordance with “the principles of Feldenkrais' method and its means,” with insight, knowledge, and responsiveness, the inherited virtues become available once again. The intention of this text is to strengthen the student's listening insight from the perspective of The Third Path.

Abstraction, *milulit*, *hafshata*, and the uniquely human capacity

In the Western understanding, the word *abstraction* means that one, for example, sees several individual horses — each with its own color, size, age, and particular features — and then removes these individual differences until only what all horses have in common remains.

What is left is not a living horse but a concept — an abstraction of what all horses have in common. In this context, what is concrete, and present becomes something general and distant. The abstraction applies to a group of horses, but it does not represent any individual horse. It is a generalized concept about a group, not the animal itself.

In the Hebrew understanding, the word *milulit* means literal expression — what occurs in the form of words, as linguistic expression. Feldenkrais was aware of how easily misunderstandings could arise in the mediation of language. When he uses *milulit*, he makes it clear that distinctions and separations may be expressed in speech and writing, but that they belong only to the form of language itself. *Milulit* is thus not an idea or a principle, but a designation in its most concrete and literal sense.

In the Western understanding, the result is something general and distant, a conceptual unit separated from what is simultaneous and present. In the Hebrew understanding, the result is instead the literal: the separation is linguistic, not real. The difference is decisive.

Abstraction leads away from the concrete toward a higher idea or general principle, whereas *milulit* marks that the distinction exists only in the expression of language. By equating *milulit* with “abstraction,” this precision is lost, and the text appears to speak of ideas rather than of the internal order of language itself.

In the Hebrew understanding, *hafshata* refers to something becoming discernible — fully present in its own form, with all the traits and details that belong to it. *Hafshata* is not something in itself, but a uniquely human *segula* / virtue — it appears when something is removed, and a different order can be perceived. What is removed is not variation, but what distorts or obscures the clarity of the form. What remains is not an abstract concept, but the actual form — more distinctly present in itself. What was initially unclear now becomes available and usable — without leaving the tangible, the concrete real.

This is the starting point for understanding how *hafshata* and *segula* interact — a uniquely human trait, which appears in its own function: not by rising above the concrete, but by becoming visible within it.

To believe — as many in the English-speaking teaching community do — that this concerns archaic Hebrew, reveals a lack of understanding of how precisely Feldenkrais chooses his words based on a millennia-long usage of the meanings in *d'mut atzmenu*, *milulit*, and *hafshata*.

No names mentioned, none forgotten.

***Milulit* – The Form of Literal Expression**

The word *milulit* appears in the heading of the fourth paragraph in Chapter 3. As previously mentioned, the entire chapter addresses the question *With What to Begin, and Why*. The paragraph's title reads: *ha'hafrada bein ha'merkavim hi milulit bilvad*

– “the separation between the components is *milulit* only.”

The English translation renders this: “talking about separate components is an abstraction”

But *milulit* is not abstraction. It is literal. A more accurate rendering would therefore be: “*The separation between the four components is merely literal.*”

Differences exist only in the words, in their linguistic form – not in the action, and not in the deliberate structural principles of the method.

The title of the paragraph refers to Feldenkrais’ definition of action (*pe’ula*) as comprising four inseparable components. This definition is first described in the opening chapter on *d’mut atzmenu*. In Chapter 3, they reappear in a different order – sensation, feeling, thought, movement – and this is no accident. Thought now stands in third place, rather than first.

Milulit, then, indicates something literal. It shows that any distinction between components exists only in speech, not in awareness itself. The instruction is practical: even if one component is mentioned in language, the other three are always present – *in-dividuum*. A human being is a composite whole.

That *milulit* is placed at the beginning of the chapter is crucial. It marks that the separation pertains to language, not to the realm of action. That frame is then developed over the next ten pages. In contrast stands the often-repeated statement: *ha-derekh ha-ya’ila yoter hi tiqqun ha-tenu’a* – “The more effective Path is *tikkun ha-tenu’a*. In this chapter, Feldenkrais discusses how he understands movement as the concrete level of action. *Milulit* concerns the literal level of language.

Many like to describe Feldenkrais as a movement method. From the perspective of *milulit*, it is just as much a method of feeling

Hafshata – The Uniquely Human

The word *hafshata* carries the meaning of something being pulled away. It means that what is non-essential is removed so that the essential may appear: a concrete clarification.

What is perplexing is that the English translation has completely overlooked the central word of Chapter 4, where Feldenkrais deliberately uses the biblical word *segula* in plural to point to different qualities of the brain. The closest equivalent in the English translation is *virtue*. *Segula* is not a moral virtue but a particular quality, something inherent and exceptional. The plural form refers to original qualities present in the structure and functionality of a human brain.

Chapter 4 opens with the title: *Ha-hafshata – segulato ha-bil’adit shel ha-adam* – *the exclusive virtue / segula of man*. Feldenkrais here marks that *hafshata* makes the human a unique species among all other animals. With biological precision, he asserts that the human possesses a quality that makes this withdrawal simple and possible.

After this initial statement, he returns once more in the book's text to the four components. But the order is now changed: movement, sensation, feeling, and thought. That thought comes last shows that it is not thought that leads, but that it follows what *hafshata* has already made possible.

In the English translation, this is rendered as “abstraction is exclusively human.” But here occurs the shift I point to: *hafshata* is not abstraction in the Western sense.

Feldenkrais exemplifies with harmony theory in music, space geometry, group theory, and probability theory – fields in which humans have used *hafshata* to let form emerge. It is not about creating concepts above reality, but about removing what disturbs, so that various functional forms can become visible.

In the Feldenkraisian sense, *hafshata* is a functional withdrawal of what parasitizes on the action. It is a reorganization: what is unnecessary ceases, and the form becomes free to appear. But the same quality also includes the brain's plasticity – the ability to reshape and re-form the organization. *Hafshata* thus means both simplification and creation – withdrawing what is unnecessary while at the same time allowing new patterns to arise in the learning itself.

Hafshata occurs in simultaneity. Digitally. It is not a linear, abstract, analog order like language – first one thing, then another, then a third. First a body part, then an emotion or feeling, then another body part, then tonus, and so on. The form becomes accessible in the same act – in simultaneity, everywhere.

It is not *of* something, but *with* something. Where abstraction seeks the general, *hafshata* lets the specific appear – for the unique situation.

To say *hafshata*, therefore, is not to use a metaphor, but to name a structural precondition.

***Hafshata* as the Functional Precondition of Feldenkrais Pedagogy**

- *Hafshata* is not a variant of abstraction, but a functional reorganization of action.
- It operates simultaneously in movement, sensation, feeling, and thought.
- Whereas abstraction seeks the general, *hafshata* allows the particular to emerge.
- To name *hafshata* is to designate a structural precondition for the method's efficacy.

Milulit states the conditions of form in language, *hafshata* in action. They operate within the same direction.

The Third Path

Reading *milulit*, *hafshata*, and Chapter 5 *la'an* — where to? (English translation: the direction of progress!) together reveals not only a series of mistranslations, but points toward an order different from Western dualism.

In the Western tradition, concept and experience, language and action, theory and practice are divided. With Feldenkrais, it is the opposite: *milulit* (literal), *hafshata*

(withdrawal), and the open question *la'an* (where to?) are three forms of the same configuration.

To this are added the four components – thought, feeling, sensation, and movement – which continuously shift places among themselves. None of them is fixed, and none is superior to the others. It is in this shifting that the whole becomes visible.

When a person walks out through a door, it is not one part that exits, but the whole person. And she walks out on her own path.

Here emerges an understanding of the human being as indivisible. Not a sum of parts, not a dichotomy between language and action or body and soul/psyche, but a continuous redistribution in which direction and meaning are formed in the very act of shifting.

The Third Path thus emerges as a clear departure from Western dualism. It maintains the indivisibility of the individual and shows how the whole becomes visible through what actually takes place.

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