

Moshe Feldenkrais – Description and History
By Thomas Hanna

In August, 1977 Moshé Feldenkrais brought to a close the first American training program he had offered in his technique of Functional Integration. The training had taken place during three successive summers within the facilities of Lone Mountain College, whose Gothic, fog-enshrouded bulk gazed down from its hill onto the city of San Francisco.

There were 65 persons in the class, most of them from the U.S.A. or Canada and a few from Israel. It was the first training program Feldenkrais had offered outside of Israel, where in 1969 he had given a course to 14 of his countrymen in Tel Aviv.

The training had been intense, and the student response was enthusiastic. After each summer's two-month session, students would practice what they had learned of the rudiments of Functional Integration, working on the bodies of volunteer clients with the gentle manipulations taught by the master, hoping they might accomplish the same miraculous body transformations they had seen Feldenkrais achieve.

During the last day of the training a most surprising question was asked, and the answer given was just as surprising. In the course of the final class hour one student summoned up his courage and hesitantly asked, "Moshé, would you tell us in a few simple words what is Functional Integration?" Even though three years of training and discussion had gone by, no one laughed at the question. Instead, there was a heavy silence, making it clear that this was, somehow, a question still on everyone's mind even in these closing moments of learning.

Feldenkrais, who was a master of the baleful glare, fixed his gaze on the questioner and, after a long moment, snorted in impatience. He bade one of the students, a long, ungainly fellow, to stand up and come over to him. The master, standing a head shorter than the student, looked up at the young man's chest, shoulders and head, then lifted his hands and, very much like a sculptor, began molding these body parts like so much putty. The hands adroitly moved up and down, touching the back of the pelvis, then the sternum, then the lower border of the ribcage, then the back of the head, then the upper back, then the upper abdomen. As he made these movements the student's posture magically began to change. Before everyone's eyes he grew visibly taller, straighter, more manly. After two minutes of these soft, deft movements of his hands, Feldenkrais stepped back and looked upward at a transformed body which now stood in what could best be described as a heroic posture. The young man looked positively dazzling. Then Feldenkrais turned back to his questioner and, almost shouting, replied, "That's Functional Integration!"

If it was extraordinary that, after three years of training, such a question could be asked, it was equally extraordinary that Feldenkrais answered the question not with "a few simple words" but with a silent demonstration. In that question and answer lurked the mystery and evanescence of the Feldenkrais system and yet the clue to its genius: in saying nothing, Feldenkrais had said everything about Functional Integration.

What kind of a system is it that cannot be defined by words? If it cannot be verbally pinpointed and precisely defined, how can it be a system? By definition, a system is rational, coherent and precisely articulated, otherwise its systemic interlocking would fall asunder. Thus, one can sympathize with the student who asked the question: If you have devised a system, then why not give us a simple definition of its nature? This was not a thoughtless

question. To the contrary, it was highly intelligent, and it reflected a baffled state of mind earnestly requesting enlightenment.

Moshé Feldenkrais died on July 2, 1984. In the wake of his passing he left a heritage of enormous human benefit. But if we are to understand the nature of this heritage it is essential to recognize that in the incident of his giving a demonstration rather than a verbal definition of his system, Feldenkrais gave the only possible answer to the question, "What is Functional Integration?"

Some kind of answer to this question is needed for the simple reason that Feldenkrais unlocked a secret in human nature that constitutes a major advance in our understanding of human health and of the educability of human flesh. In a manner that had become almost perfunctory, Feldenkrais travelled about the world over 30 years demonstrating that "miraculous" transformations in the human body were possible. Wherever he went, the lame began to walk, the dumb began to speak, the paralyzed began to move, the afflicted began to lose their chronic pain and the stiff and clumsy became supple and coordinated.

These perfunctory miracles were not some form of "bodywork"-Feldenkrais was not working on the human "body"; rather, he was deftly addressing the human brain and human awareness. Nor were these transformations some form of advancement in medicine, because Feldenkrais was neither chemically nor surgically manipulating the body; rather, he was addressing something nonexistent in medicine: human consciousness. Nor were these transformations some form of physical education; rather, he was not training the external behavior of the body but its internal sensibility and awareness of control.

In the broadest sense, the heritage of Feldenkrais is in the domain of human education. In the more specific sense of its practical application, the heritage of Feldenkrais is in the area of somatic education: namely, the human ability to learn and transform one's entire living process-physiologically, psychologically, emotionally and consciously. And the genius of his discoveries is directly related to the irreducibly non-verbal nature of the system he discovered. Functional Integration is, finally, no more reducible to verbal explication than is Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or Picasso's Guernica or Nijinsky's dancing of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faun."

To understand why this is the case, one need only glance back over the pathways Feldenkrais travelled on his way to these somatic discoveries. Born in Russia of well-educated, middle-class parents he began his travels early by making the startling decision, at the age of 15, to leave his parents and literally walk to the land of Palestine. But before leaving he learned something that strongly colored all of his subsequent experiences. While visiting a neighboring Russian town where his grandparents originated, he discovered in the local synagogue that his grandfather was revered there as a tsaddik, a Jewish holyman. A flame burned constantly in memoriam to the grandfather's saintliness. With sentiments as powerfully identified with his unknown grandfather as rebelliously disidentified with his known father, Feldenkrais trekked to the Holy Land, beginning his life there as a common laborer, later becoming a surveyor, a discipline centering on gravity, vertical plumb lines, and horizontality. After working at this for 5 years, he made the decision to complete his education by enrolling in Gymnasium (advanced high school).

Not only was he much older than his fellow collegians, but Feldenkrais was precocious in the maturity of his concerns. Beyond the immediate focus of the Gymnasium curriculum, his interests ranged into the areas of psychology, education, and the more vigorous field of Jiu-Jitsu. Jiu-Jitsu became a special passion for the powerfully-built ex-construction worker. He soon became teacher of this Japanese art of self-defense for the Haganah (the Palestinian defense league), and this became the subject of his first book: *Jiu-Jitsu and Self-Defense*, published in Tel Aviv, 1929.

His interests in Jiu-Jitsu (and later, after meeting Kano, in Judo) provided life-long focus of his thinking, as did his initial concerns with psychology which centered around the self-improvement philosophy of Emile Coué. After completing the manuscript on Jiu-Jitsu, the ambitious young author began a second book: a translation and commentary of Coué's famous book on auto-suggestion which was published as was the first book-in Hebrew in 1930.

The frenzied academic and writing activities of this time were supported partly by teaching self-defense and partly by hiring out as a tutor to recalcitrant young learners of wealthy families. Feldenkrais took pride in his success in helping children with learning blocks to take interest in education without forcing them to do so against their wills. This early pedagogical attitude directly tied into the philosophy of Jiu-Jitsu never to go directly against the resistance of the opponent but to use the adversary's own strength to control him as you wish. Even though this idea was not yet refined, it was the budding of a theme that was to become central to all of Feldenkrais' later thinking in somatic education: never go against the mechanisms of another human's resistance but, rather, work with it positively in order to help that person improve.

Not surprisingly this spectacular collegiate career earned him the scholarship support for advanced university work in Europe. The call of France was already strong, and he chose to study mechanical and electrical engineering at the University of Paris. In 1933 he graduated first in his class with the certificate of Ingenieur-Diplome E.T.P., and that same year became a research associate of Frédéric Joliot-Curie in the famous Radium Laboratory where Madame Curie had done her work. Their research work at that time centered on nuclear fission, and Feldenkrais' initial role was in constructing high tension apparatus, notably a Van-de-Graaf electro-static generator. Frédéric and Irène Joliot-Curie received the Nobel prize in 1935 for their achievements in synthesizing new radioactive elements.

It was a matter of course for Feldenkrais to then enter the Faculty of Science of the Sorbonne to work toward his doctorate degree while he continued his longtime association with the laboratory's work in high energy physics. But he had not forgotten his other passion: the martial arts. In Paris he both taught Jiu-Jitsu and continued to write about it. His first French publication, *La Defense du Faible Contre l'agresseur*, 1932, became a popular classic that went through over 70 reprintings.

Feldenkrais' fascination with the martial arts underwent a further refinement after his meeting with Dr. Jigoro Kano, the founder of the sport of Judo, a sophisticated reformulation of the more combative, older discipline of Jiu-Jitsu. Kano came to Paris to give a lecture at the Japanese embassy. Feldenkrais was in the audience and at the close of the lecture began to ask some practical questions about the new sport. To give a fuller answer Kano, then an elderly man, invited Feldenkrais to the front of the hall to demonstrate. Given his prowess in Jiu-Jitsu Feldenkrais attempted to be careful not to

injure Kano, only to find himself suddenly thrown on his back. Subsequent attempts not to be careful met with the same fate. The defeated physicist gained sudden respect for Kano and Judo, became Kano's friend and subsequently, in 1936, was the first European to become a black belt judoka. Already in 1934 he had founded the Jiu-Jitsu Club de France, an organization that soon spread its chapters all over the country.

It is worth noting that the Judo developed by Kano is an art of self-defense rather than aggression and relies on skill and agility. There is no concern to knock out the opponent but rather to immobilize him by exploiting his weak points and imbalances. The goal is to do this with a minimal expenditure of energy and maximal efficiency. These goals of reducing entropy to the lowest possible level could not help but appeal to a physicist who worked daily to minimize the effects of the second law of thermodynamics.

But the enviable career of being a scientific-athletic celebrity in Paris came to a crushing halt with the German invasion of France. As the Nazi army headed in from the east and north, the 36 year old physicist headed out to the west, taking refuge in Great Britain and working with the British Admiralty both in England and Scotland. The work dealt with anti-submarine warfare and Feldenkrais was involved in the invention of the first sonar detection devices.

The writings on the martial arts continued-this time in English (at this point Feldenkrais had fluent command of English, French, Hebrew and Russian with a fair knowledge of German). Three successive volumes on Judo were published, some still in print after 40 years. In addition he began to teach exercise classes, specifically designed to train Judo students. It was his experiments in applying Judo concepts to the learning of movement, combined with his thorough knowledge of mechanics that was at the origin of his famous "Feldenkrais Exercises," later termed Awareness Through Movement Exercises. How to teach efficient movement became another focal point of Feldenkrais' speculations.

The explorations of psychology, particularly psychoanalysis in which he was engaged for a time as an analysand, continued during the war years, but now expanded into the study of anatomy and neurophysiology. Two other significant learnings during this time were his interest in the work of F. Matthias Alexander, deviser of the Alexander Technique (no relation to the Danish founder of Eutonia, Gerda Alexander) and in the philosophy of Gurdieff. It was Alexander who was the first to show that body posture was not fixed but could be permanently changed and improved by a specific set of practices. It was Gurdieff who, among many other things, argued that personal development was a life-long process of continual change and improvement of self-awareness in body as well as spirit.

In 1949 Feldenkrais published a cumbersome but highly provocative book, *Body and Mature Behavior*. Its sub-title summed up the turgid mix of interests he had pursued since his 20's with the eclectic statement: "A Study of Anxiety, Sex, Gravitation, and Learning." There it all was: psychotherapy, Freud, physics, and self-education. Although its ambitious proposals are scientifically advanced without being concretely documented in any detail, *Body and Mature Behavior* remains the best single source for sampling the complex concerns of Feldenkrais' thinking. The lack of concrete documentation was not a fault of the book, but an example of how concrete examples are better shown than described in "a few simple words."

Central to the book is the somatic insight that the psychological phenomenon of fear and anxiety is grounded in the unconditioned reflex fear of falling, an autonomic reaction

triggered by excitation of the vestibular-auditory system, conducted by the VIIIth cranial nerve and causing a contraction of all flexor muscles and a simultaneous inhibition of all anti-gravity muscles.

This being an unconditioned, neonatal reflex, Feldenkrais challenges the entire field of psychotherapy-and particularly psychoanalysis-by arguing that all other fears and feelings of anxiety arise as conditioned, learned responses involving the inborn fear of falling. Inasmuch as Freud had claimed that anxiety is the central problem of neurosis, Feldenkrais contended, in addition, that all neuroses are created by a successive series of conditionings based upon the unconditioned fear of falling. Therefore, any and all psychotherapeutic treatment that fails to extinguish these learned responses of muscular habit will fail to remove the neurosis.

The nearest approach to this viewpoint was that of Wilhelm Reich, who contended that orgasmic impotency was at the seat of anxiety-essentially a somaticization of Freud's position. Feldenkrais, in *Body and Mature Behavior*, takes this viewpoint far beyond the doctrinaire position of Reich, establishing the origin of anxiety in a universally recognized physiological mechanism of the human species.

Expressed in clinical terms, Reich claimed that any neurotic has a sexual dysfunction. Feldenkrais claimed something much broader: that any neurotic is, ipso facto, a person whose flexor muscles are habitually contracted, tightening the abdominal muscles and, thus, restricting the breathing and digestive functions and by extension, causing nausea, giddiness, and the felt state of anxiety. Shallow breathing and a tight chest and stomach are, according to Feldenkrais, a universal accompaniment to the experience of anxiety-indeed, this condition is the physiological foundation of the sensory content of that condition. Orgasmic impotency due to pelvic rigidity is only one of many physiological dysfunctions that arise from this flexor reflex.

But the concern of *Body and Mature Behavior* was not to be a critique of the theory and practice of psychoanalysis-Freud's thinking was a foil for the more general purpose of expounding an educational program for correcting human malfunctioning that focused on teaching and learning rather than disease and cure. The question of anxiety and neurosis provided a point of departure from which these perennial human problems could be seen as far more than psychological problems: as general problems of maladaptive behavior which rested on an undeniably somatic foundation. Beneath the concerns of psychotherapy was a broader and deeper context of physiological learning and adaptation. Once one could see this larger context it became obvious that neurotic malfunctioning could not be effectively changed by merely making the unconscious conscious but only by changing the physiological habitus that is the substructure of the unconscious depths of human behavior.

Forty years before neurophysiological scientists such as Nobel laureate Roger Sperry proclaimed it, Feldenkrais held that the main output of brain function was motor activity: the nervous system is an agency for acting. And outside of the internal actions of ordering the proper endocrinological balance, the brain's actions in the world are all muscular. Within his own body, in observing the personalities and body patterns of his students and in synthesizing the complex scientific information he had acquired, he lucidly saw that motor activity is at the center of all human activity and that learned habits of motor activity are the root and origin of emotional instability and behavioral disorders.

This broader context is a somatic context. And it leads to the proposal that the re-education of muscular and postural habits is the only thorough way of improving the entire psycho-physiological organism. "Treatment" alone is not enough; psychoanalysis skims superficially over the physiological depths underlying verbal behavior. Muscular re-education is the proper starting point; indeed, once the muscular habits of the anxiety pattern are modified, most people have no need of psychotherapy. But if they do desire it, then they are now prepared to profit from it optimally. However, most persons, Feldenkrais observed, can take over the development of their own lives quite adequately, once the "edge of anxiety" has been dissolved by the dissolution of uncontrollable muscular tensions.

By the way, one can see how much Feldenkrais remains on the side of his early mentor, Coué, in evaluating Freud's position. Whereas Freud placed great confidence in the power of consciousness, believing that once unconscious desires were made conscious, one then had the ability to consciously dismiss them, Coué held the reverse: that the unconscious realm had the power to transform the realm of conscious behavior, so that suggestions made to the unconscious would modify one's overt behavioral habits. Recent research in "Twilight Learning" by Thomas Budzynski and others such as Lozanov support the validity of Coué's position.

We can view this contrast in another manner. Wilhelm Reich's innovation was to somaticize Freud, which led him to the genitalia. Moshé Feldenkrais' innovation was to somaticize Coué, which led him to the brain and the entire motorium and sensorium. Humanly, the difference is between the part and the whole, the peripheral and the central. Thus, the theory of somatic education was spelled out in *Body and Mature Behavior* and a program of practice was proposed but not spelled out in concrete detail. What was generally proposed was for somatic education to be done in groups. Feldenkrais envisioned the possibility of classes where large numbers of persons relearned efficient and balanced control of their movement patterns, thus blunting the edge of anxiety and rendering them more competent as individuals. This was not, however, a proposal of something that might be done; it was what he was already doing in London at that time. In teaching his movement classes, which were inspired by the philosophy of Judo, he had discovered these same psychological and emotional transformations he was writing about. He knew these things were possible because he was doing them. And was doing them in two ways: by leading groups of people through movement patterns via verbal instruction and, on occasion, stopping and showing them by holding their arms in certain positions, by helping them glide through certain leg movements, by assisting them in pivoting, by showing them how to react, respond and rebound from contact with others, with the floor and with other objects.

But learners-because they are still learners-are stiff, uncoordinated, slow in reaction. And Feldenkrais had to teach them how to overcome these movement limitations. One of the most effective ways of teaching came directly from Kano's refinement of the martial arts tradition: when a student was blocked or unconsciously resistant to freely performing certain movements, Feldenkrais never attempted to force him to consciously overcome his unconscious resistance. Instead, he would, himself, go along with the holding pattern, moving the student's body into the same pattern of resistance that the student habitually performed. As soon as he himself carried the student's passive motion into the programmed point of learned resistance, the student discovered that he somehow became

voluntarily free to control the formerly programmed pattern of muscular contraction. Feldenkrais, by using his own muscular power to move the student's relaxed body into extreme expressions of the student's resistance pattern, discovered that the program of muscular resistance was released, leaving the muscles free again. Being shown the habitual pattern while passive, the student became sensorily aware of the pattern which he normally performed unconsciously.

Feldenkrais knew very well that this muscular release was not a local event in the muscular fibers but a higher event in the central nervous system. The program of muscular resistance was not "fixed" in the brain; it was a learned response that could be quickly unlearned. By using his own muscular effort rather than the student's to perform the movement, the student's cortex was freed to become aware of the movement: this technique allowed the student to become a spectator of his own movement rather than a performer. This is the technique of what I would term kinetic mirroring, a technique distilled from an oriental theory of non-violence and applied directly to neurological re-education.

Kinetic mirroring, as a way of actively going with a pattern of muscular resistance is a basic technique of the Feldenkrais method of Functional Integration just as it is a basic technique of Judo. What Feldenkrais had discovered was that an ancient oriental insight, formerly shrouded in mystery, was an unheralded neurological principle, applicable to resolving some of the most intractable problems in human behavior.

But this discovery was made by a physicist, 1) aware of gravity, 2) aware of the laws of thermodynamics, 3) aware of the ways in which electrical systems function, 4) aware of how to build the most complex electronic apparatus and, most of all, 5) acutely aware of himself through his years of training in Jiu-Jitsu and Judo. So it is not at all surprising that Feldenkrais would distill the somatic educational techniques of his group teachings (later called Awareness Through Movement) into an almost magically transformatory way of working directly with individuals (later called Functional Integration).

Accordingly, (1) he had his pupil sit down or lie down so that the brain's learned muscular responses to gravity were put into suspension, thus reducing the overall neurological excitation in the brain. This suspension of anti-gravity reflexes and learned responses left the brain clearer for the task of learning.

Then (2) by kinetic mirroring and other proprioceptive techniques, he induced the sensorimotor system to learn a more balanced tonus and less resistance in movement so that the overall friction and energy loss of the pupil's organic system was reduced. In this way the second law of thermodynamics was directly countered by reducing the entropy of the pupil's bodily system, thus increasing the body's efficiency in energy conservation while its work was performed.

While he gave the pupil this proprioceptive lesson, he kept resolutely in mind (3) all that he had learned of electronic systems and circuits and feedback mechanisms and damping effects and augmenting effects and all the things involved in systemic operations. Norbert Wiener had hardly invented the concept of cybernetics when Feldenkrais was simultaneously in London programming human neural systems to be self-correcting and self-directing. Feldenkrais was the first somatic cyberneticist.

And the thinking of a cyberneticist was complemented (4) by the skillful hands and engineering cunning of a man who had spent years constructing high tension electronic apparatus. The hands of the teacher instructing his pupil in the pathways of more efficient

functioning, were the same hands that, earlier, were constructing the Van de Graaf generator circuitry for the efficient smashing of atoms into particles.

And (5) this extraordinary teacher used touch and movement as the means of instructing his pupil, guided finally by his awareness of the exact sense of movement which he had taught his sensorimotor system through his years of intense martial arts training.

On all five levels what Feldenkrais brought together in his heritage of Functional Integration and Awareness Through Movement was a coalescence of objective and subjective evidence that, to him, was dazzling in its self-evidence. So many truths converged toward the same integral confirmation that, once he perceived it, he was forever afterward astonished that everyone else did not see its self-evidence.

The coalescence of these five levels brought into focus an extraordinary collection of insights and skills which make of Functional Integration a discipline that is formidable in its complexity. It is not easily mastered: to effectively comprehend and practice such a system requires a sophistication of knowledge and abilities that is at least at the level of traditional medical training.

The degree of sophistication embraced by Functional Integration is suggested by what its effective practice requires: thorough knowledge of anatomy and physiology, a precise three-dimensional understanding of kinesiology, a basic understanding of the central nervous system and its clear distinction of function from events in the peripheral nervous system, knowledge of developmental psychology and physiology, of the balancing system and the movement functions of the head, of visual functions, of the mechanics of the bi-pedal posture, of learning theory and reinforcement techniques, of how subjective awareness represents sensorimotor functions to itself, the distinction in awareness between proximal and distal bodily parts and the structure of resistance, the personal ability to balance and coordinate one's own movements and perceptions so as to be able delicately to mirror the learner's movements, the sense of how to use touch and movement instructively rather than correctively, the possession of a first-person awareness of kinesiology so as to feel and track a movement's direction with precise accuracy (this is a right hemispheric skill), knowing the art of focusing the learner's attention on proprioceptive process rather than external goals, and still much more.

It was mentioned earlier that Feldenkrais had devised a system that was non-verbal in the sense that music and other arts are non-verbal. In reviewing the pathways travelled by Feldenkrais on his way to these somatic discoveries it is obvious that the knowledge and abilities involved in this system are as much those of the right brain hemisphere as of the left. The ability to interpret and follow the shapes, patterns, and directions of proprioceptive input is a right hemispheric skill, in exactly the same manner that musicians and dancers develop this same skill. It is, of course, a skill that is almost totally ignored if not reviled in academic and scientific education, yet it is essential if one is to take advantage of the plasticity of the human soma.

There are large areas in the field of medicine where problems are both undiagnosable and untreatable, and there are other areas that are diagnosable but for which the prescribed treatment is scarcely helpful beyond preserving life. Academic and scientific education is deliberately left hemispheric; that is its pride and its glory. But what a left-hemispherically-trained practitioner perceives as undiagnosable and untreatable often becomes transparently diagnosable and treatable when perceived by a practitioner who has developed right hemispheric skills.

This is not to say that Functional Integration is an alternative form of medicine. It is not. Rather it is a new form of education based on the lucid, right hemispheric recognition of the plasticity of the human organism. Rather than competing with medicine, Functional Integration sheds a light on the medical tradition that throws into relief those areas that are undeniably appropriate for human improvement and those areas that almost Medieval in their inappropriateness.

An effective practitioner of Functional Integration is an illuminator of those traditionally shadowy areas of physical and psychiatric medicine where there is normally no hope or where one settles for less than improvement. It is improvement of function that is the chief effect of Functional Integration, and this occurs not as a form of "treatment" but as a form of education.

The right hemispheric quality of this system of educational improvement was constantly underscored by Feldenkrais in his analogy of Functional Integration to teaching someone to dance: you gently attempt to show the learner how to move, not forcing but suggesting flowing along with the apprentice until finally she begins to get the feel of it and soon the movement and coordination flows and she says, "Yes, I've got it! I can do it!"

In this instance the teacher is attuned to proprioceptive information that is processed via the right hemisphere. He has the image of a possibility of movement that he is trying to insinuate into the movement system of the learner. The dancing teacher, like the musician, has his awareness in tune with the flowing shape and rhythmicity of the movement. And his ability to recognize instantly shifts in movement, tip-offs of tension ahead, rushes and thickenings of harmony is precise, exact and instantaneous. right hemispheric functions are the same as those of the left hemisphere in terms of precision, exactitude, and instantaneity. And the rational, coherent and precisely articulated "system" upon which Functional Integration rests is the structure of the central nervous system and its sensorimotor functions, read with exactitude by the right hemisphere. Like the improvisatory dancer or musician the practitioner of Functional Integration tunes in on the rhythm and harmonic key of the learner's sensorimotor system, matching it, mirroring it, softly leading it into variations, differentiations and new harmonies and rhythms which are, in effect, the teaching of new neuronal patterns of movement.

In 1949 Feldenkrais left England, returning to Israel to take a position with the Ministry of Defense as Director of its Electronics Department. He continued developing and practicing Functional Integration and began teaching regular classes in Awareness Through Movement in Tel Aviv. His fame was soon established in Israel, especially as a solver of pathological conundrums that defied conventional wisdom and diagnostic skills. This success attracted the interest of Mia Segal, a lovely and highly talented young woman who was both a trained teacher of the Alexander Technique and a black belt Judoka. Segal began informal studies of Feldenkrais' system and became the first person allowed to assist him in his work. Eventually a small group of his most ardent admirers persuaded him to teach them his skills, which he did as a training that was as much right hemispheric as left.

In 1972 another book, Awareness Through Movement, appeared and became a popular publication in a number of languages. That same year Feldenkrais offered his first extensive workshop in the U.S.A.-a month-long series of his exercises at the Esalen Institute in California. He repeated this for Esalen in June 1973, when the present author first met him. When I witnessed his individual work with some severely handicapped

persons, I was struck by the oddity of a man in possession of revolutionary skills who was, at the age of 69, still relatively unknown.

Up until that time Feldenkrais had never given a name either to his group exercise system or his individual work. Having decided to write an article about his work for the American public, I asked him how I should refer to his system of individual work. He thought it over during the night and, with one ear turned in the direction of Ida Rolf's Structural Integration-just then becoming nationally famous-he informed me the next morning that he would name his system Functional Integration.

Fortunately I had become Director of a graduate school in San Francisco, the Humanistic Psychology Institute, founded earlier by Dr. Eleanor Criswell. Concerned that it was late in the day for a man of his extraordinary discoveries not yet to have taught his skills outside of Israel, I offered him the position of Visiting Professor at the Institute, beginning in 1975 his three-year training course at Lone Mountain College. It was about this time that he decided to name his exercise system after the title of his book, Awareness Through Movement, which contained a description of ten of these exercises. During his three years of teaching in San Francisco he became a national figure and happily was able a few years later to begin a second training course, which took place in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1980 and 1981.

It was after finishing this second year of training that in Zurich, Switzerland, in the early autumn of 1981, he was discovered to have a subdural hemorrhage which was immediately corrected surgically. Upon convalescence he returned to Israel and resumed work at his Nachmani Street offices. He did not, however, ever fully recover from the effects of the hemorrhage. A series of strokes followed which eventually reduced his enormous energy, finally-during the early months of 1984-leaving him bed-ridden. He was attended constantly by his wondrously loyal brother, Baruch, who was a Tel Aviv publisher. He passed away July in his Frug Street apartment after long weeks in an oxygen tent and being sustained by intravenous feeding.

The Feldenkrais heritage is enormous. Its complexity is such that it will take a long while to become absorbed into our educational and health care traditions. But its value is such that we can be assured this absorption will take place; it is inevitable. It will take time-time to become used to concepts and procedures that are not simply an addition to what is already known-a new wrinkle in the holistic movement. Functional Integration and Awareness Through Movement, as ways of transforming physiological functioning in individual and group context, is revolutionary in contrast to anything we now associate with holism-the term itself being a misnomer inasmuch as no one in the holistic health movement has any theory as to what the whole is.

A distinguished Australian physician, cardiologist and writer Dr. Bernard Lake, has made a close study of the work of Feldenkrais and observed that ...we have been seduced by the apparent glories of the mind and have come to regard the body as a drab appendage from an evolutionary past. But the emerging realisation is that the mind-body axis is a unit with equal potentiality for mutual interaction. The system developed by Moshé Feldenkrais, to which he gave the apt and pithy title, Functional Integration, has as much potential for understanding the mind-body relationship as Einstein's general theory of relativity had for physics. (Somatics, IV, 2, p. 13)

It takes time for a potential of this magnitude to be actualized. We can, thus, understand Feldenkrais' baleful glare and impatient snort at the request to describe Functional

Integration in a few simple words. Assimilation of a new paradigm is not simple. As more effective practitioners of Functional Integration begin to appear, as more people begin to be improved by their practice and as more people begin to witness these extraordinary somatic transformations, a new plateau of understanding will eventually be formed.

The thinking and practice of Moshé Feldenkrais was far in advance of his time. A broader and deeper understanding will gradually rise up to embrace that thinking and practice, making its insights as obvious as it was to Feldenkrais. All authentic revolutions are slow in realization. Feldenkrais will be a long time in his grave before his impatience will cease. §

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