

Chapter 1

Sigmund Freud and the Rebbe Rashab

By 1903 Sigmund Freud was evolving from a neurologist to a psychoanalyst. This term had been proposed by Freud several years beforehand. It denotes an expert in matters of the mind who aims to alleviate emotional and physical distress through psychological means. But Freud's transformation was by no means straightforward. For years he explored physical treatments for the relief of physical and emotional illness. One of these was the use of cocaine as a stimulant and cure for morphine addiction. In fact, Freud narrowly escaped becoming famous for discovering the analgesic and anesthetic properties of coca. He was very upset that he had missed a chance for professional recognition and advancement. However, such a success could have undermined his emerging focus on psychological processes.

Freud wavered between his identity as a rational scientist and his explorations of subjective worlds: dreams, free associations and kindred eruptions of the unconscious. He was not the first to note the power of unconscious impulses. Towards the late nineteenth century writers like Carl Gustav Carus declaimed: "The key to the knowledge of the nature of conscious life of the soul lies in the realm of the unconscious," and the prominent psychiatrist, Henry Maudsley, insisted that: "..... the most important part of mental action was unconscious mental activity."

Freud was the first to systematically investigate the hidden basements and sub basements of the mind. He showed how they are built, what they contain and how they affect ordinary thoughts and behavior. Initially Freud turned to hypnosis as a means of delving into these psychic recesses. He had some success with helping people to part with their disturbing symptoms through the power of suggestion. He would put a person into a trance and direct him to relinquish whatever was bothering him when he woke up. He quickly realized, however, that there were many people who were not amenable to hypnosis. Even in those who were, he found he could achieve the same results by ferreting out the onset of their troubles and by allowing them to talk freely about their experiences.

'Anna O' was 'the germ cell for the whole of psychoanalysis,' according to Joseph Breuer, Freud's older colleague, collaborator and co-author of his first major book, **Studies on Hysteria**, published in 1895. 'Anna,' whose actual name was Bertha Pappenheim, came from a wealthy, Jewish, bourgeois family. Freud remarked that she was a young woman of exceptional cultivation and talents, charitable and clever. She had consulted Breuer some years beforehand after the death of her father, a man whom she dearly loved and to whom she was devoted during his final illness. Subsequently 'Anna' became increasingly weak, anorexic and paralytic. Among the many alarming

symptoms, she alternated lethargy and excitement, 'saw' skeletons and black snakes, and manifested two different personalities, one charming, the other unruly. Breuer visited her every evening. He encouraged her to talk freely about anything and everything. When she did, he found that her terrors diminished. She described this process as 'the talking cure' or 'chimney sweeping.' We might say this that was her way of slaying demons and getting rid of emotional debris.

Then, during the particularly hot spring of 1882, 'Anna' found that she could not drink water, even though she was very thirsty. Breuer helped her enter a hypnotic state during which she recalled an incident when her English companion allowed her dog to drink out of a glass. Along with the memory, 'Anna' re-experienced the tremendous disgust she had felt at the time. The result of this emotional catharsis, as Breuer put it, was that her hydrophobia disappeared. He repeated this again and again with her other symptoms. They too dissolved. Breuer thought he had found an antidote for mental disturbance -- the release of hidden emotions. He pronounced 'Anna' cured. Unfortunately this was not to be. She suffered many relapses, some no doubt brought about by his sudden rejection of her once he realized that she was sexually attracted to him and wanted to have his baby. Breuer could not tolerate his attraction, indeed love, for her. In any case his wife had become increasingly irritated at the time he spent with her and clearly conveyed this to him.

Freud saw the sexual interplay between them. Breuer was uncertain. Sometimes he agreed that sexual conflicts lay behind mental disturbance, and other times he dismissed the notion. Perhaps a further reason for backing away from 'Anna' was that her real name, Bertha, was the same as his mother's. These differences resulted in a bitter conflict between Freud and Breuer and a rupture in their relations. As for Bertha Pappenheim, aka 'Anna O,' she became a distinguished social worker and feminist. The German government has issued a postage stamp in her honor.

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It is said that behind every famous therapist there lies a famous patient. For Freud this was certainly true. Although it might be better to use the word 'subject' or 'person,' for many of the people who contributed to his clinical practice and ideas were friends, colleagues or even close relatives. These included his daughter, Anna; his son, Martin; Irma (Emma Eckstein?, more likely Anna Hammerschlag, the daughter of his Hebrew teacher; Emmy von N. (Fanny Moser, at the time the richest widow in Europe); Frau Cäcilie M. (Anna von Lieben); Dora (Ida Bauer); Elisabeth von R. (Ilona Weis); Katharina (Aurelia Kronich, a peasant girl); Miss Lucy R (an English governess); Little

Hans (Herbert Graf); Rat Man (Ernst Lanzer); Enos Fingy (Joshua Wild) and the Wolf Man (Sergei Prankejeff). Other notables included the conductor Bruno Walter, the composer, Gustav Mahler, the poet, H. D. and Princess Marie Bonaparte.

But the most notable man Freud 'treated' was himself. And the work which most reflected his self analysis was **The Interpretation of Dreams**, first published in November 1899. Really it was Freud's autobiography, for so many of the dreams and dream processes he discussed were his own. Freud said the book had a powerful "subjective meaning" and saw it as "a piece of my self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death, that is, the most significant event, the most decisive loss, of a man's life." Essentially Freud applied what he learned from 'Anna O' and his other patients to himself, a method of systematic introspection and acute observation of the resistances that arose when he looked into himself. He then extended this procedure from his waking life to his dream worlds and back. In this way he saw how the unconscious mind acts, for example, through condensation (combining several thoughts and symbols into one), displacement (redirecting thoughts and feelings away from their intended recipient, repression (of forbidden desires), and dramatization (mental theater). He also observed other operations all of which served to conceal overwhelming conflicts about sex and death.

Like a master novelist, Freud compared the elucidation of dreams to a 'guided tour' of the self. In a letter he wrote to his close friend and confidant, Wilhelm Fliess, he observed, "The whole is laid out like the fantasy of a promenade. At the beginning, (there are) the dark forest of authors (who do not see the trees), hopeless, rich in wrong tracks. Then a concealed narrow pass through which I lead the reader -- my model dream with its peculiarities, details, indiscretions, bad jokes -- and then suddenly the summit and the view and the question: Please, where do you want me to go now?"

Freud saw **The Interpretation of Dreams** as his "own dung-heap, (his) own seedling and a nova species mihi (sic!)." Not surprisingly he was full of conflict about what to include, or leave out. ".....if I were to report my own dreams, it inevitably followed that I should have to reveal to the public gaze more of the intimacies of mental life than I liked, or than is normally necessary for any writer who is a man of science, and not a poet." But he also acknowledged that the temptation to conceal certain embarrassing bits was very strong and that he 'took the edge of some indiscretions by omission and substitutes." No doubt a lot of what he secreted away were his own sexual fantasies and death wishes. Nevertheless, he was skillfully able to uncover them in others, so much so, that he became world famous, many would say notorious, for describing a particular constellation of murderous and erotic feelings known as the 'Oedipus complex.' This referred to the wish of a

maturing boy to kill his father and marry his mother. The counterpart in maturing girls is the “Electra complex,” the wish of a girl to kill off her mother and marry her father. Both terms come from Greek mythology, a subject with which Freud was very familiar. He asserted that these highly emotive constellations not only occupied much of dream life, but also a large portion of people’s unspoken thoughts and feelings.

Freud elucidated what happens inside a person’s black box, that is, his or her private, subjective space. This is something that his adversaries claimed was impossible. They insisted that all one can know about other people is how they speak and act, because only these events can be verified by external observation. Freud demonstrated that this was not the case, that people contain an intense, dynamic, complicated inner domain which they are constantly trying to share with others. In so doing he wrote with the flourish of a novelist and poet, but also systematically with the discipline of a scientist.

Initially Freud gained renown as an anatomist, being the first person to dissect the testicles of an eel. Subsequently, he devised a new method for staining sections of the brain, elucidated the structure of the medula oblongata (back part of the brain to do with breathing and circulation) and made major contributions in neurology, particularly to do with aphasia, the inability to use or understand words. His book, **On Aphasia**, (ed. 1953) remains a seminal study of the condition.

These undertakings arose within the context of nineteenth century science which emphasized measurement and verification. Not surprisingly, Freud, the natural scientist, looked for palpable facts to support his developing theories. By the spring of 1895 he was consumed by a new undertaking, to elaborate a ‘Psychology for Neurologists,’ which he eventually called, ‘The Project.’ In it Freud tried to describe mental functioning in the language of classical physics and cerebral physiology. He foresaw the time when psychological functions could be described by “the amounts of energy and their distribution (or ‘discharge’) in the mental apparatus.” In other words he aimed “to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specifiable material particles, thus making those processes perspicuous [i.e. lucid] and free from contradiction.”

To begin, Freud was elated with the manuscript, but he quickly decided it was a non-starter. It didn’t explain what he hoped to know in objective terms. Even so this thinking permeated his formulations (such as the build up and release of sexual energies). He never gave up the idea that psychological functions might have a material basis.

Above all Freud was ambitious. He lobbied prominent colleagues and journalists to have his books reviewed. He continually pressed influential friends and patients to intervene with the Austrian Ministry of Education to have his status upgraded, first to Privatdozent (lecturer), then professor extraordinary (associate professor) and finally, twenty years later, professor ordinarius (full professor). Apparently the price of his first professorship was a valuable painting given from the family of Frau Marie Ferstel, a patient and wife of a diplomat, to the Minister of Education.

These efforts were consistent with Freud's relentless determination to 'spread the gospel' about his work and theories. He once confessed to Fleiss, at that time a confidant, "I am actually not at all a man of science, not an observer, not an experimenter, not a thinker. I am by temperament nothing but a conquistador, an adventurer.....with all the inquisitiveness, daring and tenacity characteristic of such a man" The resistances he encountered had to do with his theories of sexuality, which the Viennese found shocking, and anti-semitism.

At the turn of the century Vienna was a world center for Jew hatred led by its populist mayor, Karl Lueger. He proposed, for example, that all Jews should be crammed into ships and sunk without a trace. Almost certainly Freud was passed over for academic appointments due to his Jewish background. In the circumstances one might have expected Freud to convert to Christianity in order to further his ambitions as many of his associates had done.

Yet Freud strongly retained his Jewish identity. He insisted, "My parents were Jews and I too have remained a Jew." Among his heroes were Joseph, the dream interpreter, the son of Jacob, and Moses, who led his people into the Promised Land. As if to emphasize these attachments, he refused to accept royalties from any of his works that were translated into Yiddish or Hebrew. Yet, at other times, he went to great lengths to hide his Jewish knowledge and to avoid religious observance.

Freud's mother, Amelie [Nathanson], came from Galicia, the northwestern part of the Ukraine, and a center of Jewish mysticism. Among her ancestors there were rabbis and rabbinical scholars. Amelie was a beauty when, at the age of nineteen, she married Freud's father, Jacob, who also had come from Galicia. By then he was a middle aged man with two grown boys by his first wife, Sally.

Freud was their first son and was born on the sixth of May 1856. At the

same time he was named Shlomo (in German, Sigismund, later shortened to Sigmund) after his father's father who had died six weeks previously. Thus, Freud was born into a house in mourning. This was a major factor in his life, and especially, in his relationship with his father which varied from affection to hostility. Surely, this ambivalence reflected Jacob's uncertainty towards his own father, Shlomo, and the clash with the Hassidic culture of his childhood.

Hassidism, a mystical and religious renewal movement, began in the 18th century in the Ukraine and Southern Poland and, within a few generations, it spread to other parts of Eastern Europe (Poland, Rumania, Hungary). Hassidic teachings are rooted in the esoteric or concealed dimension of Judaism, specifically the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, as expounded by Rabbi Isaac Luria (the ARI) about five hundred years ago. The Hassidic movement itself was founded by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, known as the Baal Shem Tov (Master of the good Name) two hundred years later. He revolutionized Judaism by reintroducing the powerful imagery of Lurianic Kabbalah in conjunction with an everyday language that could reach the most uneducated person. The Baal Shem Tov emphasized a direct, heartfelt relationship with God that touched every aspect of life through prayer, study of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) and inner contemplation. His followers were known as Hassidim, Hebrew for the 'pious ones.' The opposing group of religious Jews who did not accept this direction were known as *Mitnagdim*, which is the Hebrew for 'opponents'. The *mitnagdim* practiced a dry, scholastic, 'establishment' Judaism and looked upon their Hassidic brethren as heretics. They often instigated pitched battles which resulted in many injuries and fatalities. At the least the *mitnagdim* (opponents) would denounce their fellow Jews to the police as traitors, whereupon they could be jailed and tortured.

By the 1800's a third force, the *Haskalah* or 'enlightenment' arose in Germany, Austria and other areas with large Jewish populations like Galicia. Its followers called themselves *maskilim* ('enlightened ones') and encouraged their compatriots to give up the yoke of religious practice and immerse themselves in the secular world. Many Jews saw this as a small price to pay for overcoming the hatred of the gentile world and gaining professional advancement. These three groups feared and vehemently opposed each other.

Even before Sigmund was born, the Freud family was caught up in this struggle. His father, Jacob, his grandfather, Shlomo, and his great grandfather, Ephraim, were all Hassidim. But around the age of thirteen, at the time of his Bar Mitzvah, Jacob, began to break away from religious strictures by traveling widely and learning the ways of the non-Jewish world. Unusually for a man with his background, Jacob had three marriages. Sally died in 1852. Presumably his second wife, Rebecca, had also died, although almost nothing is known about her. By 1855 he married Amalie, a striking young woman who

was half his age. A year later Sigmund was born. This was not an altogether happy occasion, for the baby entered an ambience of death and depression. In these circumstances, it would not be surprising if the love and rejection that Jacob harbored towards his father, was subsequently redirected to his son, who carried the same name. He was clearly 'a replacement child,' that is, a template for a future pattern of relationships based on his namesake.

In 1860, around the same time that Sigmund entered the world, a son was born to Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch. The child was named Shalom Dov Ber, after his great grandfather, and was destined to become one of the most distinguished leaders of Lubavitch Hassidim. Lubavitch refers to the town in White Russia (Belarus) where the followers of their founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman (The 'Alter Rebbe') settled. Through his writings, and, in particular, **The Tanya** [Teachings] (ed. 1973) which was first published in 1796, the 'Alter Rebbe' expounded a form of Hassidic thought and action which is both highly intellectual and deeply heart felt. It focuses on the inner spiritual life of a person and attempts to serve as a guide by which the reader can overcome the divisions in himself between righteous thoughts and wicked temptations. The book also seeks to present the essential insights of Jewish mysticism to a general audience.

Lubavitch Hassidim are also known by the term *ChaBaD*. This refers to the first letters of the Hebrew words, *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*, or, Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge. According to the Kabbalah these attributes represent the higher or most profound emanations of God. Many Hassidim dwell on these characteristics as a means of spiritual contemplation.

Initially the leaders of Chabad, and other Hassidic communities, were disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and then disciples of disciples. They were respected as *Tzaddikim* ('the righteous ones'), and also by the title, 'Rebbe.' A Rebbe is far more than a rabbi. The latter is a person who is knowledgeable about Jewish laws and practices. The Rebbe, on the other hand, not only possesses such revealed knowledge, but is also an expert on the inner essence of life, the concealed knowledge. This is exemplified in the basic text of Kabbalah, **The Zohar** [The Book of Illumination] (ed. 1931) as well as in other mystical texts. The Rebbe is often described as a person touched by God, someone who possesses immense powers to sustain the lives of his followers, his Hassidim, on earthly and spiritual planes. The Hassidim, in turn, feel dependent on their Rebbe for guidance and help in accessing Divine grace about all matters -- spiritual and mundane.

A Rebbe may share some qualities with a psychoanalyst. Both are experts about human nature as well as esoteric matters. For the Rebbe this includes spiritual or supra-conscious realms, while for the psychoanalyst this includes inner reality, or the unconscious. And both encourage intense real

and transference relationships among their adherents.

The father of Shalom Dov Ber, Rav Shmuel, was the fourth leader of a large community of Chabad Hassidim and was known as the Rebbe Maharash. (our teacher Rabbi Shmuel). He was very much a 'political Rebbe,' traveling extensively to combat the anti-Jewish pogroms that occurred throughout Russia and other parts of Europe too. At one point, and at great danger to himself, he personally reprimanded the Russian Minister of the Interior for reneging on his promise to suppress anti-semitic outbreaks. In all this he was aided by a great intellect and capacity to speak several languages. Unusually, he urged his followers to study the Kabbalah as a basic prerequisite for understanding their own humanity. He also had a good sense of humor. Among his memorable sayings, he exclaimed, "You cannot fool God; you cannot fool others either. The only one you can fool is yourself. And to fool a fool is no great achievement."

Rav Shmuel died at the early age of forty eight and was eventually succeeded in 1883 by his second son, Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn (known by the acronym Rashab). Even before he became Rebbe, it was clear that the Rashab possessed profound spiritual powers including the capacity to access paranormal states in himself and others. Moreover, he was a prodigious scholar and a great organizer. Known informally as the "Rambam (Maimonides) of Chabad Hassidism," he wrote and delivered over two thousand Hassidic discourses (*ma'amarim*) over his thirty eight years as Rebbe. Some of these discourses literally took years to deliver, during which time he comprehensively covered the most abstruse Kabbalistic concepts. They were subsequently published as an encyclopedic set of twenty nine books, **Sefer HaMa'amarim**. (1985+) And these are only a few of his many works on Hassidic thought.

A second major aspect of his activities had to do with outreach to forgotten or hidden Jews. The first group he focussed on were the Mountain Jews or *Berg Yidden* in the Caucasus between the Black and Caspian seas. He set emissaries to reintroduce them to Jewish life and learning. This undertaking catalyzed outreach activities which have grown to be one of the most successful Lubavitch projects. As of January 2012 there are over 3,300 Chabad - Lubavitch facilities in more than seventy five countries, a figure which continues to grow each month. In so doing, the Rashab compared the Hassid to a lamplighter, who walked the streets to kindle the sparks of Jewish consciousness in even the most remote person or place.

Thirdly, the Rashab was instrumental in establishing a new kind of yeshiva or school of Jewish learning where the students did not only learn Talmud (Jewish civil and religious laws), but also the mystical teachings of

Chabad Hassidism. This yeshiva was called *Tomchei Temimim*. Literally it means, 'those who support the complete ones.' This phrase refers to students whose training emphasizes prayer and contemplation, itself another Chabad innovation.

And if all these activities were not enough, the Rashab followed in the tradition of his father in fighting for Jews who continued to be oppressed by the czarist and other governments. One might expect such a man to be large, robust and with the strength of a lumberjack. In fact, his followers have described the Rashab as physically weak and frail. This was a condition exacerbated, no doubt, because he took on the burden of communal leadership at a very early age. Indeed, the Rashab was renown for his devotion to self-sacrifice and striving for the truth, for working long hours in study, teaching and for service to his Hassidim.

But by the year 1902 his wife and others recognized that the Rashab was suffering from a severe malaise. He continually compared himself to his distinguished grandfather (the 3rd Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, also known as the Tzemach Tzedek (meaning 'Righteous Offspring') and his father, the Maharash. In spite of his erudition and accomplishments as a Rebbe, he felt that he was nothing and had accomplished nothing in relation to his father and grandfather. He would often remark, "Where am I? Where do I turn? (i.e. What have I accomplished?) What should I say? Here I have to go in the path of our Rebbe."

At that time the Rashab was under great pressure both internally and externally. The outside pressures were related to a slew of social and political events that were impinging on his activities. By the turn of the century the Lubavitch movement had been under threat from other Jews as well as from the Russian Government and the Czarist police. In addition to the vehement enmity of the *Mitnagdim*, religious Jews opposed to Hassidism, Lubavitch was also threatened by the *Maskilim*, militantly secular Jews who tried to spread modern European culture and secular knowledge. Both groups regularly informed on the Lubavitcher Hassidim to the Czarist police. The Rashab and his son had been arrested and gaoled on several occasions. In addition, the secularists brought about temporary closures of the Yeshiva in Lubavitch and were proponents of the emerging Zionist movement which attempted to replace religion with nationalism.

As to the internal pressures: 1902 was the 20th anniversary of his father's death and his ascension to the mantle of leadership. His son, Yosef Yitzchak, referred to his father as being very upset and low in spirits. Around this period, the Rashab repeatedly complained to his family that he was unable to study, that he was unworthy, and that he was deficient in his emotional attributes. By this the Rebbe meant that his love for his fellow man, and that his love and fear of God, were not as they should be. He was

overheard to cry out, "How can I apply myself to my Hassidim, if (my) Hassidim don't recognize me?" He added, "I have other ways. But I don't want to use them." Here the Rebbe was referring to his possession of miraculous powers and his reluctance to deploy them.

It was at this point that the Rashab proposed to travel to Vienna to seek help for himself with the renowned specialist, Professor Sigmund Freud. This was a journey which he considered to be the equivalent of going into exile for the purpose of self-refinement or self-purification. He asked his son, Yosef Yitzhak (who was destined to become the 6th Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rayatz), to accompany him. At first his son hesitated to agree. He himself was immersed in learning and didn't want to interrupt his studies. But the Rashab promised that if Yosef Yitzhak accompanied him to Vienna, he would reveal to him mysteries that he might never otherwise encounter, nor understand.

The Rashab had a number of meetings with Freud during the months of January through April 1903. As far as I was able to ascertain, Yosef Yitzhak accompanied his father to the first and possibly several of these occasions. The information about what took place is based on the diaries, *R'Shimos*, (1997) of the last Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson and the writings of the Rashab and his son, the Rayatz.

I have also tried to confirm this encounter from Freud's perspective. According to Michael Molnar, The Freud Museum, London and Marvin Krantz, the Sigmund Freud Archives, the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., there exists patient documentation for the period 1899, and before; and 1910, and afterwards; but there does not exist any patient documentation for the entire period, 1900-1909. Considering Freud's overt disdain for organized religion, it is possible that he or some of his followers decided to suppress his discussions with the Rashab in order to conceal his interest in and knowledge of Judaism.

When they first met, Freud asked the Rashab to give an exact account of his daily activities, including the number of hours he worked and how his day was arranged. He was also curious about the nature of Hassidus, what kind of discipline it involved. After detailing his daily routine the Rashab replied:

"The discipline of Hassidus requires that the head explains to the heart what the person should want, and that the heart [should] implement in the person's life that which the head understands."

Freud had further questions. He asked:

"How do you accomplish this? Are not the head and the heart two continents that are completely separated? Does not a great sea divide them?"

In their exchange, the Rashab focused on this issue:

“The task is to build a bridge that will span these two continents, or at least to connect them with telephone lines and electric wires so that the light of the mind, the light of the brain, should reach the heart as well. [Moreover} I must point out that for Hassidim from birth, the matter of the mind, and the matter of the heart, is fit for study and for *avodah*.”

In Hassidic thought the word *avodah* usually means religious practice or service. But in this instance, the Rashab means the process of self-refinement, both in terms of intellect and emotions. I am not referring to a mundane sense of intellect, rational thought or scientific discipline, rather to thoughts that exist on the highest levels of spirituality. Similarly, with feelings, they should not be in conflict with a divinely inspired intellect, but complement it.

It is possible, given the maelstrom of conflicting political and religious currents that flowed in and around the Rashab, that he felt ‘pulled down’ from the inner unity he had previously achieved. If so, his despondency could be considered to be an ‘occupational hazard’ of his position. In other words, it was not a symptom of illness, rather of greatness.

After more discussions between Freud and the Rashab, his son recalls that Freud came to the following conclusion.

“The head grasps what the heart is unable to contain, and the heart cannot tolerate.”

The word Freud used, in German /Yiddish, was *fartrought*, which means to carry or to bear (German: *fertragen*, to endure). or to hold or contain. So the diagnosis can also be translated as, “The head grasps what the heart cannot carry/bear,” or “The head grasps what which the heart cannot contain/endure.”

The Rashab’s son, Josef Yitzhak, has himself offered another perspective on Freud’s analysis:

“The head comprehends what the heart cannot bear to hear, and the heart cannot assimilate what your mind comprehends.”

The implication here is that the Rashab was upset to hear certain things and needed to find a way to obtain relief from an overwhelming despondency. These feelings moved him to seek relief from Freud.

Freud recommended that the Rebbe should try to avoid sources of

tension and to change his venue. Maybe Freud remembered the famous Rabbinic dictum from his childhood: "Change one's place to change one's fate." (Talmud Rosh HaShaNah 16b) Freud obviously intended that the Rebbe should distance himself from the causes of his gloom and doom. This advice is consistent with the recommendations that Freud made to Bruno Walter around 1904. At the time Walter was Gustav Mahler's young assistant conductor at the Vienna Court Opera. Suddenly Walter was afflicted with a paralysis of the right arm, for which he was advised to consult Sigmund Freud. After seeing him, Freud told him to go for a holiday in Sicily. Nevertheless, the paralysis persisted. Freud then told his patient to forget about the problem and to resume conducting. When Walter remonstrated that this would not do, Freud replied, "I will take that responsibility upon myself," whereupon Walter reestablished his career.

Following Freud's instructions, the Rashab began to take long walks. He also visited many different synagogues and met a variety of people, many of whom did not know who he really was. During this time his son recollects a fascinating aside. The Rebbe always regretted that his father, the Maharash, did not spend time with him telling stories of his predecessors and other Tzaddikim (righteous men). But while he was in Vienna, the Rebbe began to have dreams in which his father appeared and told him Hassidic stories. During the long walks that Freud had advised, he, in turn, related these stories to his son, Josef Yitzchak, who accompanied him.

Freud also directed that the Rashab should 'be in good surroundings where others could learn from him and tell him how much they appreciated his scholarship, so that his spirits will lift.' He emphasized that Hassidim should try to elevate the spirit of the Rashab by studying intensely and by delving more deeply into his writings. Moreover, and this is an essential point, he said that his students (*talmidim*) should inform the Rebbe that they have done so. Then, (akin to what he instructed Bruno Walter), he would be prepared to 'give over' more of his teachings.

Freud was quite perceptive in his analysis of the Rashab's distress at the situation back home in Russia. *Tomchai Temimim*, the Yeshiva he founded, was temporarily closed because Jewish informers, likely *mitnagdim*, had gone to the Czarist police and spread malicious rumors about the place. His son, who was in Vienna accompanying him, had been in prison in 1902, also because of spurious information given to the police. In consideration, Freud cautioned his patient to spend time in Vienna, away from the volatile situation in Russia and away from Russian Jews -- some of whom may indeed have been informers.

A fascinating anecdote from the Rashab's diary notes sheds more light

on this difficulty. **42** For the festive Purim holiday feast, many of his adherents traveled to Vienna to be with the Rashab. They came from Russia, Poland and Hungary. In particular, the Russian Jews wanted to spend time alone with the Rebbe. But, aware of the scandalous ideas that some people had attributed to him, he refused. Then, about an hour later, the Rashab's assistant brought in a special delivery letter. His son opened the letter. It contained a report on the status of the *Tomchai Temimim Yeshiva* back in Russia. The document related that the Yeshiva was functioning very well and that the students were deeply engaged in learning. Consequently the Rashab felt better and agreed to see the Russian Jews. The vignette confirms what Freud told the Rebbe: that he needed to hear good news.

These accounts complete what we know of the exchanges between the Rashab and Freud. Obviously a lot more went on which was not relayed in his diaries, or from his son, the Rayatz, or from others. Maybe, one day, when the Freud archives are more available, further information may be forthcoming from Freud's side. That would be very useful in developing a fuller picture about what transpired.

Excerpted from the *The Hidden Freud: His Hassidic Roots*. (Karnac Books)
by Joseph Berke