

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Trail of Tears



The archetype of Chiron, the wounded healer, permeates this book, as many healers come to work on their own deep soul trauma, following the shamanic path of learning by direct experience. Rasha, a beautiful, soulful bodyworker in her midfifties, had already done extensive therapy to heal the wounds of an emotionally and physically violent childhood. She pulled her life together and started a long-distance relationship with a highly spiritual, full-blooded Navajo man named Don. As the gift of the deep love connection between them blossomed, Rasha's past life pain surfaced in a way that was impossible to ignore.

Several days before Don would visit, her eyes became itchy, red, and swollen—as if she had been beaten. At first these symptoms cleared before Don actually arrived, but later the eye redness persisted into his visit, and then got worse after he left. Concurrently, Rasha got flashbacks of walking the Trail of Tears as a Native American woman in a past life, being stripped of her home and land and forced to march a thousand miles to relocate in Oklahoma. She recognized the soul essence of her husband in that life as the same soul essence in her new partner, Don, whose presence triggered this buried memory. Don had been displaced in this lifetime too, being ripped from his home at age six and sent to school far away in an attempt to break his ties with Native American customs.

The Trail of Tears is one of the black marks on the soul of our nation. A chapter of American history left out of most textbooks, this wound affects us

all, whether our skin is red, brown, yellow, black, or white. Telling the story is essential to healing the wound.

This terrible event occurred because early settlers wanted land to grow cotton and coveted the land of the prosperous Cherokee nation, which numbered approximately 17,000 in and around the state of Georgia. At that time, nobody thought that the United States would ever extend west of the Mississippi. On May 28, 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed into law a U.S. policy called the Indian Removal Act, which sought to relocate all Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River to land west of the Mississippi. After much political interaction and scandal, the federal government forced the Cherokees to leave their land and march all the way to Oklahoma in groups of around eight hundred on what has become known as the “Trail of Tears,” a harsh journey that took the lives of approximately four thousand Native Americans.

Our country was founded on the premise “that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” But these rights were applied only to the European settlers, not to the slaves or the indigenous people.

Rasha’s Vision

In her current life, Rasha had a vision of being invited into a tipi. Inside was a circle of white stones, with a fire in the center containing more white stones. A Cherokee chief handed her a stick with a white stone attached and asked, “Will you be a leader now?” Rasha knew she had to take this hammer and break the white stones in the fire. The chief then asked, “Will you now speak for my people?”

She answered, “Yes, I will.”

The same sequence was repeated with chiefs from four additional tribes.

Next, the vision broke into a scene of natives with knives, tomahawks, and spears charging from the forest into an open area of land where a row of kneeling bluecoats with long guns fired at them. Then a row of standing

bluecoats fired. Natives dropped right and left. Their consciousness was so perplexed at being killed without the test of strength and bravery involved in hand-to-hand combat that they could not move into the Light after death, and their souls remained earthbound.

What follows is Rasha speaking now for the Cherokee nation in that lifetime.

Rasha Telling Her Story

As hearts pour forth their carousel of hurts, one begins to see the Divine threads of meaning. And as we journey through timelessness, the wound that limits this Life unfolds before us as if the Heart sees all...as now. By Grace, I share this with you. This is a Soul Story told by My Heart.

—Rasha

“For the fourth month now, I awaken to swollen, red, and itching eyes. My eyelids are so inflamed that they crack and peel. Wrinkles form from each night’s swelling. My physician tells me nothing is really wrong and that the problem may be an allergy. Then, without an injury, my back begins to ache intensely, with pain ripping up my spine with every movement. Kundalini is coming—consciousness of a deep story rising within me. As I look within, my breath and heart are caught in agony as I witness flashbacks of a native woman walking the Trail of Tears in great grief and pain.

“I had experienced awareness of my ‘Self’ in past lives before this, as an Egyptian, Phoenician, Roman, Jew, Native American, African, and Tibetan. But the heartfelt experience of seeing those lives had no physical or emotional pain attached.”

When the Soul demands evolution, one must trust you are up to the task, and that the way will be provided. Awakening is not an invitation to a curiosity, but rather a breaking through of Divine Mind, inspired and invited by Love.

—Rasha

“Don’s love is awakening my heart to heal. As I stare into his face, I know that he is deeply important to my soul’s history. As I feel life flowing to me through his eyes, my heart hears the echoes from the sound of our love in a different lifetime. Each day I grow stronger until, finally, the love we live together is enough to heal the wounds stored in my soul from other lives.”

The hurt that reins in the power and beauty of our present life waits until we have the strength and compassion to heal our wounds through embracing and allowing all that we are.

—Rasha

“My native woman remembers the soldiers coming into our settlement to gather us as if they are herding cattle. We have homes similar to the English—some better, some not. But more beautiful than our homes is the element of belonging—to the land, to the water, to all beings, to each other, and to our God, Great Spirit. We exude the strength and peace that come from satisfaction with our lives and ourselves. We know that our land and our God take care of us. God is present wherever we look. We trust our brothers and the hand of Great Spirit to take care of us. Until you took us from our homes, I did not understand that you settlers did not feel these things about your brothers and your God.

“I am walking along the dirt paths that connect our homes when the soldiers ride in. My long hair is braided to the side, and I am lucky to have my light leathers on my feet, as winter has not yet come. The noisy armed white soldiers on horseback order everyone out of their homes and into the walkways.

“My husband is gone, and I search everywhere for him. The soldiers drive us out of the settlement, with the children crying, the elders very confused, and everyone frightened. I keep praying for my husband to be with me. Did he get away? Did he find out what was going to happen and escape? Does he have a plan to save me later?

“They march us out of sight of our homes and then bark out, ‘The government of Andrew Jackson orders you off your land, which is hereby

confiscated by federal and state offices for redistribution to citizens of the American government.' Our homes and our belongings will be taken by others or destroyed. Food will be hunted along the way. If we resist, we will be killed.

"Insult and anger flood my being as we are ripped from our homes and the Spirit friends who have supported our lives on our land. You will deny me food, water, and warmth because the God in my body is not a God that warms yours? One day we are a people, prospering and safe in the home next to yours, sharing heart and hand with your very lives. This day, we are treated as animals!

"Getting to the new land takes months. Most of the rations and blankets we were promised were given or sold to whites. We meet other natives that have been allowed to bring some belongings, but my people were taken too quickly to gather anything.

"I watch the heartbreak as hope drains from our eyes. We march in anger, grief, hunger, illness, loss, injury, shame, fear, and pain. Many die along this march, and many lose God along the way.

"I leave my father, weary and worn, sitting against a tree because he can walk no more. I pray he will die in its embrace. We do not stop for sickness, hunger, or death. We only stop when the soldiers order us to. Mothers carry their dying and dead babies and children, sometimes for days. They cannot bear to leave them in unknown land. What would happen to their spirits? How would Great Spirit and their ancestors find them? Finally, exhausted and spent in grief, as rest comes to the walkers, we try to dig a hole for the dead, pray, and cover them.

"When the wailing stops, the silence is deafening. We pass piles of charred remains of natives. Maybe they got a disease. If water is nearby, they lay our sick or dying bodies in the current to be carried away by the rivers and streams. Sometimes we see only bones, from someone who fell behind and was attacked by animals. We are always afraid to be at the end of the line. Food is scarce, and sometimes we have nothing to eat or drink for a long time. Our feet are cut open by the rocks. The big gash on my right foot

cannot heal, and my arms and my back are sore from carrying others who are hurt worse than me.

“My eyes have searched through every face of the hundreds in our group for my husband. Oh God, I miss him so much. I need him to care for me and to remind me that I am good, loved, still important, and that I have done nothing to deserve this punishment!

“As Rasha, every morning I awaken to swollen, red eyes as this native woman shows me something more of her brothers and sisters shuffling along this walk, bent in loss. Each time, her heartbreak brings me to tears.

“In a shamanic healing ceremony, tears pour out, and my back screams in pain as I cry for her, for my brothers and sisters on The Walk, and for myself. You see, we couldn’t cry then. We couldn’t stop to feel or honor each other or our dying. By the time we got to the new land, we had lost the life in our hearts. The back of our culture was broken. Tears pour out as I remember placing my father against that tree. My back screams in pain as I cry for him and for myself.

“As my native woman tells her story, and I feel the feelings we could not express then, the chains that had bound her spirit to the earth are released, and she crosses into the next world.

“But after two days of my eyes and my back beginning to heal, my lower back grabs me in pain that makes every position hurt. The chiropractor says nothing is injured. Desperate to find help, I go to other healers. The native woman comes forward again in one of these sessions, talking about how hard life was in Oklahoma:

‘We have no food or shelter when we arrive, and in the chaos, our people are fighting each other to survive. We have lost honor and pride. We do not have the concept of an individual relationship with God that could be different for each of us. Great Spirit is a tribal god who belongs to us all the same. Worse than losing our homes and our power is losing our connection to Great Spirit.’

“I yearn desperately for the presence and protection of my husband, wondering why he does not come get me. I am angry with him for not being

in Oklahoma with us, and yet I love him so deeply, I can't let go. I go through the motions of burying my people, body after body, chanting the death chants like a zombie—not feeling, not really present anymore.

“As the tears finally recede, the pain in my back is nearly gone, but my eyes are still feverishly red.”

Domestic Violence

Rasha continues:

“My next healing session focuses on traumatic memories from my present lifetime. Before my birth, my mother had been desperately trying to get away from her abusive husband. My inner sense of knowing tells me that she fell in love with another man and was hoping he would help her out of an impossible situation. My mother conceived me by this other man. After my birth, she placed me in an orphanage and fled with my older siblings. But eventually her husband found her and dragged her back. At age two, I went from the loving hands of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus into a home filled with violence as my mother was forced back to the abusive man I was told was my father.

“I could not understand why everyone hated me so much. I did not know I was secretly an illegitimate child. I felt like I was a ‘hate sponge,’ absorbing virulent negativity from the bizarre craziness in my violent home. More than once, I was attacked by family members and injured so badly that I went out of body. I remember dying, going through a tunnel, and wanting to stay in that peace and light. But I kept hearing, ‘Dear Rasha, you are not done yet. It is not your time. You have to go back.’

“Since I did not want to return, not all of me came back! Part of me split off. Like the Cherokees being taken from their homeland, the part of me that had been loved and cradled in God and safe community vanished when I was exiled from the orphanage. My personality split, and a two-year-old part of me built a protective wall around herself that I could not get through.

“Once again, my eyes are so red that I have to cancel my clients.”

Tunnel

Lying on a massage table in another healing session, Rasha experiences the following:

“I feel a gray, deadening wedge cut through my brain, reexperiencing the process of dissociation. Still lying on the table after the session has ended, I feel my mother sitting down where my bodyworker had been. Mom cups her hands underneath my head, holding me and gently saying, ‘You see, Rasha, no one really dies. Death is only the experience of resistance and shutting down to life. Our consciousness does not experience death, but simply leaves this body and moves on.’ I feel the love she offers me as she speaks these words. (My mom passed on nearly ten years ago.)”

Soul Detective Session

Rasha reports:

“My eyes are still red, but having taken another step toward healing, I next call Barbara Stone, my dear mentor, friend, colleague, and therapist. Tears well up as every cell in my body screams in rage and horror. As Dr. Stone leads me through energy healing techniques, my native woman reveals that her name is Maria Rosa, and her husband is called John.”

Just as Rasha dissociated in this lifetime when her childhood trauma was more than she could bear, Maria Rosa also split into two parts. When pain is greater than the nervous system can handle, a person has two choices: insanity or dissociation. The agony from the loss of her mate and the devastation of her people was so great that Maria Rosa could not bear its load. Of the two options available to her, she chose the healthier one—dissociation. Her personality divided into two parts: Maria and Maria Rosa. A wedge went through her brain, and a wall went up around the pain in her heart. The rest of her just went through the motions of living.

But when the personality has split, only the part of the person conscious at the moment of death has the opportunity to cross into the next world. The other parts are left behind, trapped by the barriers of their suffering. In this

native woman's case, both parts of her—Maria and Maria Rosa—remained earthbound when she died. In a previous session, Rasha had found the core personality of that life, Maria Rosa, and had helped her to cross over to the Light. Half the job was done, but the native woman's other part, Maria, was still earthbound, chained by the pain of her people. Deep down was the fear that she would never see her husband again, and over that fear was a layer of rage, held in place by shame and heartbreak.

As we treated these layers of emotional disturbance with customized meridian tapping sequences, Maria calmed down. As we tapped for the fear that she would never see John again, we added the affirmation, "I know he will find me again, even though it will be in our next life. I know I will see him again, because he found me in 2006!"

Once Maria cleared her trauma, I asked whether she was ready to move into the Light. A very blank feeling came up, and I realized I had made the wrong therapeutic move. Maria was deeply bonded to her people, the Cherokee Nation, and many of them were still earthbound—unfinished business. Here, Rasha resumes telling her story.

"When Dr. Stone asks me if Maria's spirit is ready to pass, Maria wants to go, but with all the passion and longing of her spirit, she will not leave without her people! So she summons a grand Medicine Wheel and calls to the spirit guides of all of her people who are still earthbound, locked in the suffering of the Trail of Tears. We call Bear Spirit, Eagle Spirit, Snake Spirit, and all the other animal spirit guides to bring their people into this sacred circle. Maria stands in the center in a beautiful beaded buckskin dress as a shaman, with arms outstretched, calling the spirits of her people to go home together. One by one they come, until thousands are in the circle. In native dress, they dance and chant, drumming and fluting, moving round with each other in the sacred circle.

"But John is not there, as the invitation went only to those who had walked the Trail of Tears. When Dr. Stone inquired whether Maria would like to go find John, the answer was obvious! The longing in her soul for the man she loved immediately connected her with the essence of his spirit."

John's Story

“John had been approached by soldiers outside of our settlement and asked if he belonged there. He lied and told them that he was returning to his people a few miles away. The soldiers ordered him to go back to his home immediately. Sensing that trouble was brewing, John carefully left the area and hid out until the gathering of our tribes for The Walk was done. He had made friends with a white woman, who helped him during that time. In his heart, John knew that he did not have the strength to survive The Walk and would have died. He also knew Maria would not leave her people to stay in Georgia with him.

“As the years passed, John felt deep guilt around his choice, because his wife needed him so very much, and he needed his people. As he aged, this trespass tormented him. When he died in his early fifties, his guilt and remorse held his spirit earthbound.

“John begged Maria’s forgiveness for leaving. Seeing his suffering, Maria’s heart broke open in compassion, like the shattering of the white rock in the fire in her vision. She released her anger toward him. Maria realized that she would have lost her husband either way, whether he went on The Walk or not. She could not have gone on if John had died along the way. She realized that holding on to her husband’s memory had kept her alive, and she forgave him.

“Maria reached for John’s hand, and they walked back into the sacred circle together. As John entered, he lowered his head in shame for not choosing to walk with* his people. An elder placed his hand on John’s shoulder, comforting him, ‘Son, do not let this trouble you. We all lost our way, and we all lost ourselves in different ways. Forgive these things. We are returning and recovering our happiness, our belonging, our honor, and ourselves. We are no longer lost. We are going home!’

“With those words, a large spirit in Medicine Man clothing appeared in the circle. His enormous headdress had a wide cylindrical gray fur roll with

* To “walk with” means to journey with/to travel the path together with your loved ones, sharing heart, mind, and experience.

a large bullhorn coming out of each side. Wearing a quilled breast cover and brownish leather pants, he held a spear in his left hand and guided us with his right hand. When I told Dr. Stone that he was the crossing guide, she roared with laughter, knowing this was Archangel Michael in his native attire. Our people would never have trusted white skin with long, flowing white robes and feathery wings.

“Our spirits floated in alignment through some invisible channel until everyone in the circle had crossed, and the space was filled with peace. Welcome home, my people! We are restored.”

Correlation with Present Life

As both parts of Maria healed and went into the Light with their beloved John, a template was set for healing dissociation. Then Rasha needed to heal her dissociation from her radiant, loving inner child that had been walled off in this life.

In our second session together, a past life memory held by her dissociated inner child came to light. This little girl inside was pleading in terror, “Please don’t make me see this again!” I explained to the inner child part of Rasha that the reason she did not want to see what happened was because bad feelings were attached to the memory. I assured her we could take away those bad feelings with our TFT tapping game so that seeing what happened would not hurt anymore.

We used a distancing technique I learned from Fred Gallo, PhD, of putting whatever she did not want to see again into a box and then tapping on what was in that box. Muscle testing indicated that the root cause of the trauma in the box was a past life when Rasha’s soul had incarnated in India in 14 BC and had starved to death at the age of three. Though Rasha had no conscious memory of that life, we made a customized meridian tapping sequence to desensitize the sadness and trauma associated with the horror of starvation for this little girl. Something cleared.

Going Home

Coming back to the present life, Rasha recounted how she had yearned and begged to return home to the orphanage. Since she could not do that, an inner child part of Rasha split off and created an internal “home” with walls for protection from the distress of life on Earth. But she also locked a piece of her heart behind that barrier. Because her heart space could not be fully open, she had difficulty trusting in a deep love relationship with the man in her life.

As we worked to dismantle those inner walls, Rasha realized the depth of her ambivalence about staying alive. Part of her had “spiritual homesickness” and wanted to disincarnate and go back to heaven, to God. We used affirmations to release this ambivalence and to strengthen internal coherence with the statements, “I choose to be fully here now. All parts of me release our resistance to being here in a body.” Rasha noticed that even though her eyes were still red, some of the complexity around the issue was gone, and fear dissipated as she integrated the parts of herself.

The day after this session, Rasha called, exuberant. Finally, her eyes were healing. She reported:

“I realize what all of these stories are about: helplessness. And I realize that no matter what happens, I don’t have to move into that feeling. Now, if I lost everything tomorrow, I would not move into helplessness, because that feeling locks in the trauma and victimization. Now, if I were ordered to evacuate, I would say to myself, “OK, so let’s go to Oklahoma and see what we can do there.

“I can choose what to do with fear. Even if I/others get sick and die, change will happen, but I am not helpless. Life is movement, and it is going to change. I have choice. If I allow myself to move with the flow of life, I will have joy, connection, and power, one way or the other. Hallelujah!”

Follow-up

After our second Soul Detective session, which built upon the insights of many other healing sessions with other practitioners, Rasha’s eyes healed

completely. She knew she had found the invisible roots of this symptom, because her eyes never got red again. Soon her insight was tested as new challenges entered Don's life. Rasha came to a deeper understanding of his soul essence as she watched him face soul issues similar to the ones he had faced as John. Once again, Don's choices separated him from Rasha. This time, Rasha's personality did not split, and she did not move into helplessness or lose her connection to God. She took time to heal, to choose her power, and to allow herself to move on with the flow of her life. Rather than getting stuck in grief and rage, Rasha chose to focus on gratitude for all that she learned from this experience.

Rasha's Gratitude List

- My soul has recovered its strength and my heart its dignity.
- So much past life healing came to me, to Don, and to my brothers and sisters in the Cherokee nation who walked with me on the Trail of Tears.
- My inner child parts are now integrated.
- I know that whether I walk with or walk alone, either way, I can stay connected to my heart and to Great Spirit.
- I accept and trust life's movement as the ultimate journey of the soul—the great, all-embracing seed of consciousness.
- White men have no secret to a loved and valuable life. It is each man and woman's right and choice, and that choice continues on and on.
- The life truth hidden in my soul is now freed. I fulfilled my vision of speaking for my people. The silence is over!

