# Add Rays of Sunlight — Light Beams:

This techniques uses a scattered brush to create light beams.

- **Add a new transparent layer** (depress the Create new layer icon or **Shift+Ctrl+N**).

- Select the Brush tool (**B**) with an Opacity of 100%, Hardness of 50% and Flow of 50% (increase Flow for more pronounced rays). Sample a color near the light sources that is not pure white. A white-yellowish color sometimes works best. Depress the **Alt** key and with the eyedropper tool select the color. The Foreground color swatch will reflect your color selection.

- **Create individual spots of light using the Brush tool:** Choose **Window>Brush** to bring up the Brush options.

    - **Shape Dynamics:** Click on the word **Shape Dynamics** (left column) and move the **Size Jitter** slider to **100%**. Next move the **Minimum Diameter** slider to **0%**.

    - **Scattering:** This will change the brush into a scattering of dots. Check the **Both Axes** box and move the Scatter slider to the maximum value (**1000%**).

    - **Brush Tip Shape:** Click on the Brush Tip Shape button and at the bottom of the Brush Tip Shape section, change Spacing to about 90%. Refer to the Preview section at the bottom of the dialog box and slide the **Spacing slider**.

- With the New layer highlighted, paint on your image. You will notice a cluster of different size dots are randomly placed as you paint. Be sure to paint a cluster of dots around your light source (Sun). The size of the brush is important to get the proper affect. If your dots are too large, then decrease the brush size (depress and hold the **Ctrl+Alt** keys, right-click on the image, and move the mouse to the left). The smaller the dots, the narrower the light beams.

- **Light Rays:** Choose **Filter>Blur>Radial Blur.** The amount should be set to max (**100**) and the Blur Method should be set to **Zoom**. Move the blur center point over the approximate light source point. Note the document window will not display a preview. Therefore, you will need to guess where to place the source point. Depress the **OK** button.

- **Create a Light Ray variation from the first one:** Create a new layer and with a different size brush, paint over the image. Try a smaller size brush which will give you narrower light beams. To quickly apply the radial blur affect, depress **Ctrl+F** (shortcut for applying the last Filter).

- Center the light rays originating point over the light source. Select the **Move** tool (**V**) and select both Radial Blur layers (click on one layer and hold down the Shift while clicking on the other layer). Depress the **Ctrl+T** keys to transform and move the light rays.

- **Merge Radial Blur Layers:** Individually view each blurred layer and reduce the layer Opacity to taste. Determine which blurred layer gives you the best result and discard the other blurred layer. However, If the combination of both layers give you the best result, then merge the two Radial Blur layers (**Ctrl+E**).

- **Change the Blending mode:** Generally **Screen** or **Color Dodge** work best; however, check all the other blending modes. To quickly scroll through the different blend modes, make sure the active tool you have selected doesn't have a Blend Mode selection (found in Options bar) such as the **Move Tool**. Click on the document photo and
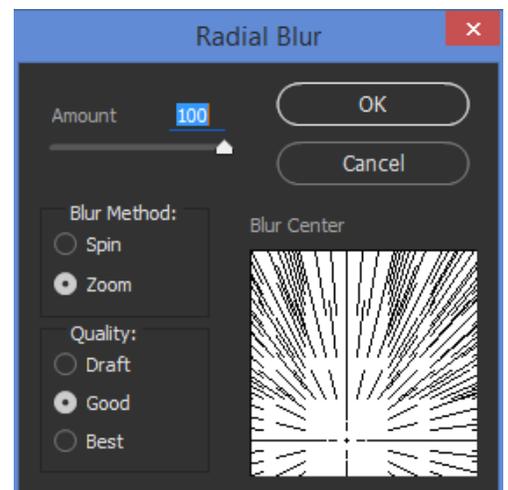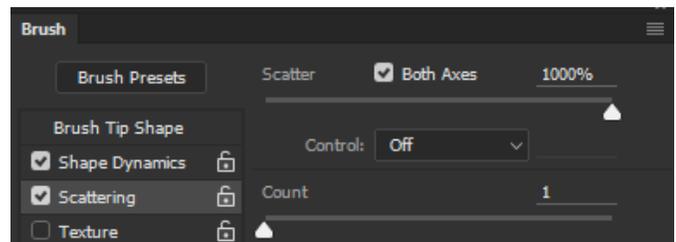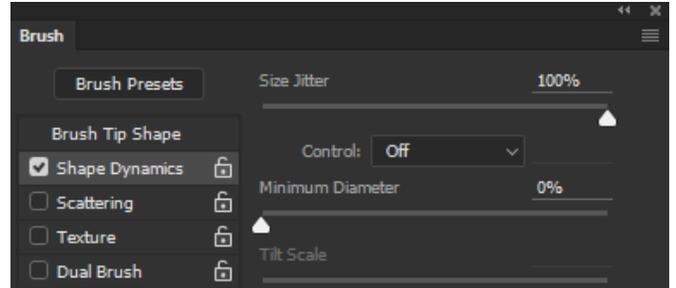
then depress the **Shift** key. Then depress the **+/−** keys to scroll through all the blend modes. Then change the layer Opacity to taste, if necessary.

- **Apply a Hue/Saturation adjustment:** Make sure you are on the merged layer and depress **Ctrl+U** (**Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation**). Adjust all three sliders to your liking. Most likely you will only need to adjust the Lightness slider.

- **Add a Mask** to the merged layer and paint out sunbeams you do not want.

==Second method:== This method works best with speckled clouds that have lots of bright and dark areas using Radial Blur Filter.

- **Add a New Blank Layer**: Start by creating a completely new layer by clicking on the '**Create a new laye**r" icon at bottom of Layers Panel. Then add a Layer Mask to this layer.

- **Isolate the highlight areas:** With the Mask highlighted, go to **Image>Apply Image**. This creates a grayscale copy of the image as a layer mask (highlight areas will be white and shadows will be dark). Accept the default values in the Apply Image dialog box:
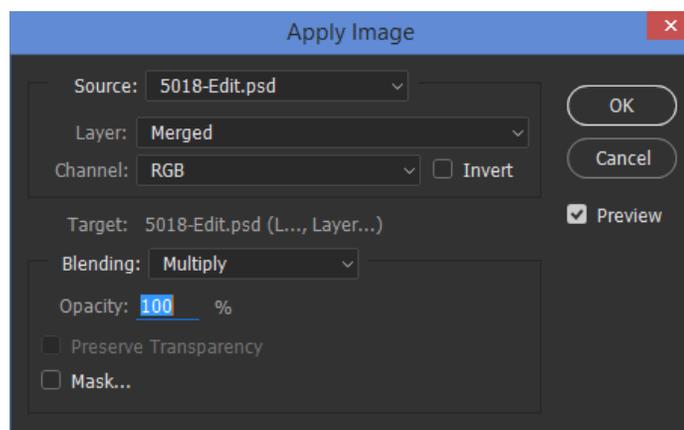
- Hold down the Alt key while clicking on the Layer Mask. The document window will become the grayscale image.

- Add a **Layers Adjustment** by going to **Image>Adjustments>Curves** (**Ctrl+M**). Then move the sliders to isolate the highlights. Move the Black point slider to the right a considerable amount and move the White point slider to the left. Refer to the document window to make sure the highlight areas are very selective and white.

- Now turn the highly defined mask into a selection by **Ctrl-clicking** on the mask thumbnail.

- Click back on the Layer below your new layer. Duplicate the selection (**Ctrl+J**) which will add your selection as a completely new layer.

- Now delete the New/masked layer (highlight the layer and depress the **Delete key**).

- Change this layer into a **Smart Object** so that you easily readjust the Blur adjustments. Right-click the Layer and select 'Convert to Smart Object.'

- **Apply a Radial Blur Filter:** Choose **Filter>Blur>Radial Blur**. This step changes the selection layer into beams of light.

  - Set the Blur Method option on the left of the dialog box to **Zoom**, and the blur Amount to around **100** as a starting point.

  - Set the location where the rays of sunlight appear to be emitting by clicking inside the box and, with your mouse button held down, drag the blur center to the sun location.

  - Set the Quality option in the bottom left of the dialog box to **Best** and click **OK**.
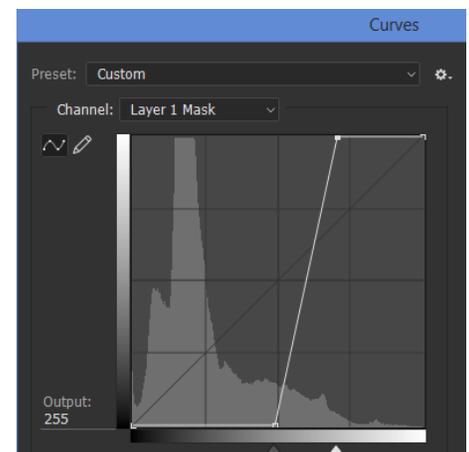
- If you didn't get the results you wanted, double-click on 'Radial Blur' under the Smart Object thumbnail. This will re-open the Radial Blur dialog box with all your previous settings. Drag the blur center to a new position and/or change the Amount value if needed, then click OK.

- Exaggerate the blur twice more (**Ctrl+F**) to make the beams more pronounced.

- To make the beams stronger, duplicate the layer several times (**Ctrl + J**) and then group all duplicated layers together by holding down the **Shift key** and clicking on the bottom layer to select all the layers. Then depress **Ctrl + G** to put them in a group.

- Add a Black Mask to the Group by holding down the Alt key and clicking on the **Add a layer mask** icon.

- Paint back the light beams where you want them. Select a soft White Brush and change the Opacity of the brush to approximately 20%. Then paint where you want your light beams to appear. If the beams are too intense, then lower the Opacity of the grouped layer.