

**Realize who you truly are,
and the power you have
to create heaven on earth today
through spiritual practice,
supportive community,
and selfless service.**

SEPTEMBER 2015



Seeds of Meditation

Recognizing
the Lord everywhere
reflects the Self within—
this is the eternal reward.

– Bhagavad Gita

Like a Sunburst

Norman Paulsen, Sunburst's founder

The great Being of Light came to me many years ago, looking just like the sun we see every day, but so intensely alive, and speaking directly to me. Yes, like a sunburst, the Divine appears in our meditations and can show us the reality of this great sphere of creation with all its planets, star systems and galaxies—the great immensity of it all. This stupendous Being is here right now waiting for each one of us. Wondrous is the journey!

God realization, the consciousness that exists just behind our ego, can be approached through meditation and in living virtue the best we can every day. Now is the time for everyone on this planet to move toward the opening of the heart and a face-to-face encounter with their Creator. Each one of us has the opportunity to receive and *know* this Being.

War and strife will exist no more, and nations will work together. Young people will not be going to fight wars created by the unmindful, and lose their lives—no more! This is a dream that I see, and I see it because God keeps giving it to me. I know this Being that we call God loves, cares for, and has so uniquely created each one of us. Just look at all the faces he's made—no two exactly alike, ever! All are faces of the Divine, but how many know who they truly are? The great Soul of the Universe is pleading with each one to sit down and find out.

The things that this world is going through aren't easy; it's tough everywhere you look. Every man, woman and child is going to have to stretch to their full height. But we have each other, and we have Spirit's promise that we can inspire others to hold up the light, to be strong and tireless, holding high the sign that says: "**The way of unselfish love works!**"

God bless you, dear reader, I pray, and I know! Think about your freedom in the Light. Like the wind in the trees that has no name, like the light from the sun, can you catch it; can you hold it? God is life, the sweet love throbbing in our hearts that we feel for another, for many.

We each have attributes of the Divine. We now need that consciousness, that vision which enables us to see the interior of all created images, to see God in everything.

What a wonderful privilege it is to have these bodies, these eyes, these hands, these hearts to love one another, to look upon one another. We are all here to encourage each other toward the Light. No matter who you are or what you have done, you can experience this. When that vision calls, may you find your way.

Continence, What Is It?

Sharon Ray

Walking the Sunburst Path, each month brings the opportunity to celebrate, study, and focus on a virtue. The virtue of Virgo is *continence*.

Some of us have had the privilege of taking care of our elderly friends and family, and to visit the incontinence aisle at the drug store. As people get older they sometimes become incontinent, and that means they can't hold it. The virtue of continence is the ability to hold all of the energies that help us succeed in achieving our aspiration for divine union.

Thoughts are energies; emotions and desires are energies. By our conscious effort these energies can become a powerful catalyst towards the Divine. We want to hold them sacred and point them in a positive direction, homeward.

Gandhi was a lover of the virtue continence: *"I know the Path—it is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: 'He who strives never perishes.' I have implicit faith in that promise."*

Paramahansa Yogananda is quoted as saying: "Self-control is the key to a happy life." Boy, is that ever true!

I look at the times I've eaten a big dinner and not had room for dessert, but ate it anyway. We're not just talking about a piece of pie; let's not forget the ice cream. I would go to bed so uncomfortable, and have nightmares which were something like being chased by a knife, fork, and a spoon!

I was once told that a good yogini never eats to fullness, but always saves room for digestion. So, continence speaks of moderation. We respect our need to eat delicious, healthy food, but moderate the amount, taking care of our bodily temple that houses the Divine.

These changes don't take place overnight. They take place over time—it's a transformation that begins with a sincere declaration and prayer, saying, "I really want to be a healthy

person, not driven by desire. I want to be the master of my senses. Please help me." Sincere prayer lights the fire that begins the transformation and outpouring of grace. We give God a request he wants to support, and aid us with.

We can affirm: "I apply wisdom and care in directing the gift of life force. I refrain from the misuse of sexual energy, realizing that this can bring deep suffering. Through my devotion and love for the Divine, I know this powerful, vital force can become the fires of my illumination."

Moderation of sexual activity allows the second chakra reservoir of life force to build and become full. That energy comes up the spine in meditation and is an illuminating force.

Mindfulness is another definition for continence, and it means staying in the present moment. God is always in the here and now. The present is the only place where the Divine can be felt. It's worthwhile to pay close attention, and extend one's senses to experience the presence of the Divine.

So, developing continence means developing mindfulness and moderation, taking health and spiritual goals into consideration. Our opportunity is to discover that, as Sunburst's founder Norman Paulsen said, "Self-discipline is a liberation!" Through our sincere efforts to make our thoughts, emotions, and actions positive and healthy, we receive great benefits and a sense of freedom.

There's a benefit even beyond being a healthier, happier person, spoken of by Gerhart Tersteegen in his beautiful prose:

*Within, within, O turn thy spirit's eyes,
And learn thy wandering senses gently to control;
Thy dearest Friend dwells deep within thy soul.*

The most precious benefit of continence is that by guiding these energies, our path to Self-realization and divine union is quickened.

*If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things,
you will understand them spiritually. If you deny your appetite for them,
you will enjoy their truth, understanding what is certain in them.*

– St. John of the Cross

*Almighty Spirit,
I reach into you;
You reach into me.
Come alive
in my consciousness
in this moment.
Awaken fully,
that You can walk
and talk and live and
love through my life.
I use
my concentration and
my God-given will power
to open into Thee,
to open into Thee.
Come forth within
and make my life
a blessing.
Om...*

– Valerie Joy King

Self-Discipline

John Henry

Each of us has learned how to play different games in our lives; some are sporting games, and others are board games, or card games. At a certain point, any game requires you to know the basic rules of how the game is played so you can enjoy yourself and fully participate. The more involved you get in different games, the more you learn the things the game has to offer.

We're all participating in this game of life. On the surface, the game of life looks like most games; it has lots of players, a big playing field, and lots of rules with more all the time. In fact, there are people who just make up the rules for life; it seems that's their job. But that's just the way it looks. That's not the reality; we've just come to believe that that's the way this game is played.

The reality of the game of life is that there are just two players—a human player and a divine player—you, and I AM THAT I AM. And there's just two rules. What are they? The first rule is to love God above all else. With your whole heart, mind and soul, love God. And the second one is to love your neighbor as yourself. All the other stuff is just a distraction.

I ask myself, "Do we need self-discipline?" and the answer is a resounding "Yes!" One of the biggest reasons is because I've never met anybody who wants to be disciplined by somebody else. Right? We reject that notion. We know what's best for us, or so we think; and deep down, I think we really do.

Each one of us has the opportunity to make contact with I AM THAT I AM and have a harmonious life, one of service and fulfillment. That was the whole message of our founder, Norm Paulsen: Go within and get your answers; they're there waiting for you.

Many Native American cultures very strictly rejected the idea of one person

telling another what to do. But we can't all just do what we want, helter-skelter; our actions have impacts on other people. For every action there's a reaction. So we need to take into account our connections to everyone on this plane when we set about to perform an action. We need to go to the source and develop a relationship with I AM THAT I AM so we feel comfortable asking for guidance, and then remain in a calm enough place to understand what that guidance means when it comes.

We do this through prayer and meditation, and setting aside time to have a one-on-one dialogue with our Creator. As I was doing that this past week, the first thing that came to me was that when you bake bread, if you don't put the yeast in there, it just doesn't rise. Or if you bake a cake and leave out the baking powder, it just doesn't work. There are certain ingredients in any recipe that you need to include in order to guarantee a successful endeavor.

In the case of self-discipline, what came to me was that if we can be compassionate people—if we can really care, truly in our hearts, for all the people we're coming in contact with, and around the world, as well as the plants and the animals—the consciousness that compassion brings will be the vehicle through which self-discipline can manifest in our lives. It's the ingredient we need to stir into our self-discipline recipe to open the door between our souls and the Great Central Sun right above us.

*Humankind has not woven
the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web,
we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together.
All things connect.*

– Chief Seattle (1854)



Sunburst founder Norman Paulsen

Questions Welcomed

Call or email your question.

Q. Do the animals in creation have a will to give back, or do they have a choice within themselves as an animal, or a spirit?

A. *Norman Paulsen, founder of Sunburst [archives]:*

Animals are a great mystery. We can only understand animals when we have put on Christ consciousness. There is a mystery in Mother's nature—her creatures, her birds, her furry ones, her plants. When our hearts are open, we find that Mother is observing us through each one of them, wondering when we are going to understand who they are. I know that each one of us is beginning to understand.

Someone wisely told me recently that the greatest fertilizer was the footsteps of the farmer.

Invitation To Deepen Your Path

You are invited to immerse yourself in the camaraderie of your fellow aspirants. This fertile environment will encourage you to uncover and explore the realization of who you truly are and the power you have to create a heaven on earth by means of spiritual practice, community, and service.

Sunburst offers opportunities for you to deepen your understanding and experience of the Sunburst Path, nurturing the inner awakening of the divine pure Self.

Please contact the Sunburst office for more information.

Sunburst Garden Party >



*Whatever I do, I do with the greatest love that I have in me.
Try this, and you will see that you do not become fatigued at all.
Under the influence of love the will can do almost anything.
In the state of love, no matter what you do, it's going to be good.*

– Paramahansa Yogananda