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## LATENT POWERS

The third Object of the Theosophical Society encourages members “to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity.” In his 1875 Inaugural Address to the Theosophical Society, President Henry S. Olcott declared: “We should make ourselves familiar with the manifold powers of the human soul and test the claims for the potency of the human will.” In Mahatma Letter 92 the Master K.H. states, “Every human being contains within himself vast potentialities.”

Whereas the Theosophist can approach the second Object (the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science) largely through selected readings and thoughtful reflection, the scope of the third Object suggests a somewhat circumscribed role for books, journals, and other written material. A different approach is implied.

It has been suggested that we adopt an attitude of open-minded inquiry. As Olcott further stated in his Inaugural Address, “We seek, inquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof: we are students, not teachers.” That statement also describes the attitude of the true scientist who generally tests his or her theories under controlled laboratory conditions with empirical methods. A meaningful exploration of the Third Object likewise requires the student to test various occult theories. There is a huge difference, however, between the methods employed by the scientist and those used by the student of occult laws and phenomena. In the latter case, the methods are largely subjective and, more importantly, the student *becomes* the laboratory.

An exploration of the Third Object is an undertaking not without its share of perils and pitfalls. Idle curiosity is not a sufficient motive for probing the powers that lie dormant within the human soul. The careful student will find many helpful hints and suggestions in the vast literature of the Theosophical Society.

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