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THE THIRD OBJECT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity.

— *Third Object of the Theosophical Society*

The wording of the Theosophical Society's three Objects was revised a number of times during the early years of the Society, but they have remained essentially unchanged since 1896. Many of our members associate this Object primarily with psychic powers such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, precognition, telepathy and the like. Certainly the scope of the third Object includes these types of interesting phenomena, but it really goes much deeper than that. In the March 1953 issue of *The American Theosophist (AT)*, seventy-eight years after the founding of the Society, the Theosophical writer Rohit Mehta observed, "We have yet to understand the full significance of the third Object." Oddly enough, this may still be the case today.

Over the years, deep students of Theosophy have given us hints as to the inner meaning of the third Object. In *Human Regeneration*, Radha Burnier suggests that "we must see the connection between the three Objects . . . to the unfoldment of the human consciousness." In the October 1970 issue of the *AT*, Joy Mills suggested that the third Object relates to both "a way of knowing" and "a way of living." By *knowing* she meant, not an accumulation of intellectual data, but rather a "process of inner comprehension." Another insight was given by Hugh Shearman in his *AT* article of June 1949: "Occult truths are never hidden from us by anybody. We reveal or conceal them ourselves individually by what we are and what we are not yet."

In other words, the methods used to gain ordinary knowledge are not sufficient to comprehend the hidden laws of nature and unfold the latent powers within.

If we are unhappy and frustrated with life, the possession of psychic powers will not bring us the inner peace we so desperately seek. At best, they provide a temporary diversion; at worst, they can lead to psychological instability and impairment of physical health. Serious students of Theosophy agree that we must first change ourselves before we can safely acquire intimate knowledge of Nature's occult forces. This is why it has long been said, "Live the life if you are to come to the wisdom."

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