

## SOMETHING TO TIE TO

BY FREDERICK S. HAMMETT

**T**HREADING the magazine is a stumbling, wondering groping for clearance. For clearance from the chaos which the inadequacy of man's conception of life's basis has brought us to. The thinking, writing man is but voicing in new query, but more urgently, the age long need of mankind for some stable, trustworthy point of attachment of belief. It is not only faith which man wants, it is belief.

In the maze which surrounds the kernal of truth there is but one path that leads to the goal of mind peace, and man has not yet found that path. He has followed many leaders along many of the ways, confident of the journey's end, only to find each road splitting up into a multiplicity of by-paths, no one of which brings him to rest. Most of mankind to-day has given up the quest and the following of the self-appointed leaders. It has come out of the maze and congregating around the entrance, passes the time of waiting for discovery of the right road in worried, incoherent, almost frenzied striving to forget that there is a haven to be obtained. It despairs of success and turns to the anodyne of momentary intensive interest in life's superficialities. The anodyne which protects it from its disappointment and from its fear of the unknown.

Man having nothing to tie to save himself, because he only knows himself, strives for himself only. But give him something to tie to, some recognition of universality instead of individual detachment, and he will cease this struggle for the self and obtain that mind peace he so fundamentally needs. His selfishness, his suspicion of his fellow, his envy, his greed, his hate is merely engendered by the fear of engulfment. Once this is gone and mind peace is attained, he will see what of real value

there is in the world about him and stop his mad scramble for the temporary satisfying but fundamentally fleeting pleasures.

True it is that a few searchers still start out intrepidly to solve the maze; but they either become repulsed because of its complexity or end up in some terminal canaliculus wildly shouting that they have found the haven. But from this mankind turns away because it sees the shouting is but the self-hypnosis of a woefully scared mortal.

Man, unable to understand the basis of the universe; awed by its manifestations; cowed by its relative immensity and fearsome for his existence and future conceived a Great Spirit. He worshipped this in fear and trembling. He built altars to it. He sacrificed to it. He raised images to it. He crusaded for it. He fought with and killed and persecuted his fellows because of differences of opinion over it. He never stopped to think that these differences of opinion were the products of man's imagination, and that since men were different men's opinions must necessarily be also different. He called the Great Spirit, Pragapati, Brahman, Jahveh, Zeus, God. His worship, his altars, his sacrifices, his crusades, his wars and his persecutions have been of no avail, for they have not brought him mind peace and freedom from the fear of the unknown universe. As he was ten thousand years ago, so is he to-day ignorant and afeared of what he cannot comprehend. But he is in worse state because one after another of the paths which have promised so much have turned out to be blind alleys against the walls of which he beats his head in vain. And this is leading to despair the reaction to which depends on the individual and the mass reaction to the individual discouragement.

Belief in the gods alone, the anthropomorphic divinities, has failed. Belief in the powers of intermediation of the self-appointed ministers and priests has passed. Belief that contemplation, study, introspection and education in thinking would lead to shelter from the immensity of existence has not sufficed. And finally we find that our belief that Science would give the solution is but gritty ashes. Since it was the knowledge of the unknown that was and has been sought, it is but natural that man has put his faith in those who have been unravelling the secrets of the unknown. True it is that material benefits have accrued to mankind from scientific investigation. True it is that life has been made a lesser evil for a greater number than ever before

and all through the efforts of the delvers into nature's secrets. But this is inadequate, it does not satisfy the fundamental craving for freedom from fear of the universe nor does it bring the mind peace desired. In fact as one fact after another has been disclosed, the recognition of the ruthlessness of natural laws has tended to bring man more and more under the dominion of this primal fear. His relative insignificance in the general scheme of things has appalled him, and he turns to the excitement of the moment for forgetting.

So far then the belief in gods, the belief in the intermediaries between man and the gods, the belief in the power of education and the belief in Science as a source of illumination have one and all failed of their good intent. They have failed because man has been trying to define the indefinable. He has been trying to limit by definition the illimitable. He has been trying to make finite the infinite. One cannot think of an infinite space which an act of the mind can not extend. One cannot think of anything so small but what it can be still further divided. Man has made God in his own image. Many men; many images; many gods. And no one of them true individually, but all of them containing an essence of verity because they recognise the essence of infinity. They can never be true because it is impossible to make finite the infinite. Common sense should tell that to attempt to put a fence around the infinite is futile. It is a waste of mental power. It is illogical and leads to chaos. The history of man's anthropomorphizing of the infinite shows this, if the present state of affairs is not sufficient proof of the thesis. Man can have a satisfactory conception of the infinite without definition. Man can have also a conception of an all pervading power associated with the infinite without expressing this power in terms of dynes or ergs. This power can be conceived of as infinite. It can be called, for simplicity, the Universal Spirit. It need not be defined, or limited, or enclosed in man built fences. There is no need to shape this Universal Spirit in the form of man. In fact so to do is downright silly. For if it is Universal it is in all things, and man is but one of many widely different things. A composite of some sixteen or more of the chemical elements of the universe. How really ridiculous it is to conceive of the Universal Spirit existing in the shape taken by the various combinations of these sixteen elements found in nature. Which

shape shall we use? I leave that to the judgement of the reader.

Some centuries before the Christian era the ancient Hindus conceived of this Universal Spirit. Being quite human they invested it with human attributes, mostly generative, and called it Pragapati. But their conception still held traces of the infinite and the indefinable. Notwithstanding the elaborated addenda given to the original idea there still runs through the Hindu philosophy the thread of the Universality of the Infinite. The beauty of this original and ancient conception is that each individual carries in him a representative portion of the Universal Spirit. Thus a recognition of man's participation in and being a part of the universe was had. Is there not here staring us in the face a solution of man's query? Is not the recognition that each of us bears within him a flame of the Universal Spirit which is inextinguishable, and which unites him with the universe as a whole an adequate basis for the development of mind peace?

What of where we come from, of where we go, of who or what made us? Is this really important? We cannot answer these questions, nor will we be ever able to, and so why torment ourselves with vain speculations that bring no permanent peace. Why not tie to this something we can conceive of, this flame of Universal Spirit within each of us? Why quarrel over the words of an incompletely translated record of two thousand years ago? Why say that this way or that points to mind peace when experience shows that the idea is false? Why not learn to tie to each other by the common bond of possession of the flame of the Universal Spirit? Tie to each other and depend on each other, not through sentimentality or emotional reactions, but through the upstanding recognition that our essence of universality makes us one in spirit and in aim. Here is something to tie to that is definite because bounded by our own bodies. Here is something that we can understand, something which comes within the bounds of our intelligence. A human being is not an indefinite, unlimited thing, but a tangible corporate reality. In him there burns the flame of the Universal Spirit and on him as the carrier of this we should put our dependence. Let's try it.