

The prize-winning entry described success as possession at age fifty of 100,000 dollars, a charming wife who was his social equal, and two children -- a boy and a girl of equal promise -- and a home in a fashionable suburb. There was more, but it was all like that. One way or another it probably deserved the first prize it got. But from a moral and social viewpoint, it might as easily been dictated by an oyster. That gray, oozy creature on the bottom of the bay would seem to have just about as much idea why it is there as would this dreamer. For neither of them is there any answer to the ultimate "why?" -- any concern about delivering the goods on arrival.

This is typical of life today. We're running fast. We've gone fast and far in the sciences, education, the arts. And we've been satisfied just with the speed of our progress. But we are beginning to be restless in all this. It is not enough that our techniques and sciences have proliferated and developed as they have. We cannot afford longer to sit back in wonder and amazement at how far and how fast things technical and scientific have gone. We have a fundamental question to ask: "Wherefore have they run?" Our inventive genius and creative skill are all at work and under high pressure. But what is the point? Will the story they're working out ever have a climax or will it always collapse into anticlimax? When they get where they are where they're going, will they have any message to deliver -- will there have been any reason for their haste? These are the questions we need to ask.

And what about our education? Here again we hurry ahead with information and skills and techniques. We've made fantastic progress in discovering ways to teach better and faster. But everywhere now educators are struggling with the problem of adding a sense of moral and social responsibility to those whom they teach. They have been turning out whole generations of sons of Ahimaaz, who have been better and better competitors in every field and have run the race of living with increasing speed, but they have not been given any serious reason for competing nor any message which would make the winning of the race significant. Somehow, somewhere, we must find time and place in our education to get the idea across that excelling is not enough. Excellence involves purpose and responsibility. It is not enough to win the race, one must have a reason for winning. History pushes aside each flashy generation and turns to watch for the slower but wiser children of Cush.

A lecturer recently developed this thought in comparing some of the presidents of our country, categorizing them into "fast runners" and "slow runners." Lincoln was one of the "slow" ones, according to the

lecturer, a man who spent a lot of time "wasting time," as some would see it. Lincoln was considered lazy when in office. During one election campaign he was termed by an opponent "a study in inertia." Once when there was a rumor that Lincoln had died, an opponent quipped, "How is it possible to tell?" Lincoln usually found time for a two-hour nap every afternoon. When he didn't, he might rock on the porch for awhile, watching the horses and carriages going by on Pennsylvania Avenue or feasting on the great expanse of lawn. To many that seemed like lethargy and laziness, but of course, those were times when his mind was working and his character was being deepened. Out of those contemplative times he shared a rich treasury of insight with us and history has recognized him as the most beloved president of them all.

Conversely, Ulysses S. Grant, whom historians rate as the nation's worst chief executive, was one of the busiest. He drove his men on backbreaking schedules and his office was like Grand Central Station. He was a fast runner, but had no message to deliver, no reason for all the feverish haste.

How have you begun this year? ^{Week} Are you off ^{Week} and running at the same hectic pace as before, not knowing why and really not carrying a message in all your haste? Before the year ^{Week} goes any farther, let me commend to you the man Cushie, rather than Ahimaaz. This may take some adjustment in your living habits and in your goals or your gods. Maybe the standard of living you seek causes you to run so fast. Many people run like Ahimaaz because they have to -- their creditors are chasing them. All of us can have a devil on our back -- driving us relentlessly at a pace too fast for us, pursuing goals unattainable. And before long we have sprinted through another year, ^{Week} and through life, tired, exhausted, and confused because we didn't know why we ran -- and we didn't have a message.

Let's run through this year ^{Week} at the pace of Cushie -- a pace that allows time to realize why we are running, a pace that permits us to enjoy life. Not only will it give meaning to life today, but also at the latter day, at the end of our running, we, too, will stand before the King and he, too, will not be concerned at how fast we ran -- he will want to know why we ran. If we run like Cushie, we will have an answer for the King at the end of the race.

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