

וא"ר חנינא ומה מי שאינו מצווה ועושה
כך מצווה ועושה עאכו"כ דאר"ח גדול
מצווה ועושה ממי שאינו מצווה ועושה:

And Rabbi Ḥanina says: And if this is related about one who is not commanded by the Torah, and nevertheless when he performs the mitzva he is given this great reward, all the more so is one rewarded who is commanded to fulfil a mitzva and performs it. As Rabbi Ḥanina says: Greater is one who is commanded to do a mitzva and performs it than one who is not commanded to do a mitzva and performs it.

A discussion on Being Commanded based on Kiddushin 31a

Some Textual Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Why do you think that the reward is greater for those who are not commanded?
- What defines someone who is not commanded by the Torah?
- Rav Hanina's two statements conflict. How can we solve this conflict?

Some General Questions to ask Chanichim:

- How does this idea fit in with logic that we don't know the reward behind mitzvot?
- Does this mean that we should be striving to do mitzvot we aren't commanded in, even if it sacrifices ones we are commanded in, because of the greater reward?
- Can you think of any examples of people in Tanach who followed this pattern of doing a mitzvah without being commanded?

Some Personal Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Do you feel that it's fair that those who are not commanded in certain mitzvot but still do them are given a greater reward?
- Do you feel it's unfair that those who are commanded in mitzvot are viewed as 'greater'?
- Can you think of any examples of mitzvot you do that you are not required to do?
- How does this idea fit in with the idea of societal morals and values, for example in terms of respecting parents, Tikkum Olam etc.

Other sources and quotes to bring into discussion:

Pirkei Avot 2:1

רבי אומר... והו' זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה, שאין אתה יודע מתן שכרך של מצות.

And be careful with a light commandment as with a grave one, for you did not know the reward for the fulfillment of the commandments.

Pirkei Avot 4:2

בן עזאי אומר, הוי רץ למצוה קלה כבחמורה, ובזרם מן העברה. שמצוה גוררת מצוה, ועברה גוררת עברה. ששכר מצוה, מצוה. ושכר עברה, עברה:

Ben Azzai said: Be quick in performing a minor commandment as in the case of a major one, and flee from transgression; For one commandment leads to another commandment, and transgression leads to another transgression; For the reward for performing a commandment is another commandment and the reward for committing a transgression is a transgression.

The Guide for the Perplexed Part 3 Chapter 17

ואמר "אינו דומה מצווה ועושה למי שאינו מצווה ועושה" - ובאר שהוא - אף על פי שלא צווה - נותנים לו שכר; - ועל זה העיקר נמשכו כל דבריהם.

Another saying is this: "He who has received a commandment and acts accordingly is not like him who acts in the same manner without being commanded to do so" (B. T. Kidd. 31a); and it is distinctly added that he who does a good thing without being commanded, receives nevertheless his reward. The same principle is expressed in all sayings of our Sages.

A Related Story:

The Sages raised a dilemma before Rav Ulla: How far must one go to fulfil the mitzva of honouring one's father and mother? Rav Ulla said to them: Go and see what one gentile did in Ashkelon, and his name was Dama ben Netina. Once the Sages sought to purchase merchandise [perakmatya] from him for six hundred thousand gold dinars' profit, but the key for the container in which the merchandise was kept was placed under his father's head, and he was sleeping at the time. And Dama ben Netina would not disturb his father by waking him, although he could have made a substantial profit.

Rav Yehuda says that Shmuel says: They asked Rabbi Eliezer: How far must one go to fulfil the mitzva of honouring one's father and mother? Rabbi Eliezer said to them: Go and see what one gentile did for his father in Ashkelon, and the name of the son was Dama ben Netina. Once the Sages wished to purchase precious stones from him for the ephod of the High Priest for six hundred thousand gold dinars' profit, and Rav Kahana taught that it was eight hundred thousand gold dinars' profit. And the key to the chest holding the jewels was placed under his father's head, and he would not disturb him.

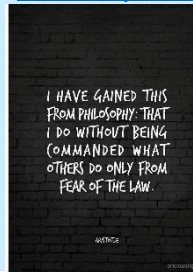
The next year the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave Dama ben Netina his reward, as a red heifer was born in his herd, and the Jews needed it. When the Sages of Israel came to him he said to them: I know, concerning you, that if I were to ask for all the money in the world you would give it to me. But I ask only that money that I lost due to the honour of Father.

It is because of this, that Rabbi Hanina says: And if this is related about one who is not commanded by the Torah to honour his father, as Dama was a gentile, and nevertheless when he performs the mitzva he is given this great reward, all the more so is one rewarded who is commanded to fulfil a mitzva and performs it.

Mashul: If your parents ask you to tidy your room, it's one thing. If you decide one day to surprise your parents by tidying your room, or the kitchen, the reward and the feeling of gratitude is so much greater because you have done something unexpectedly that you weren't asked to do.

Some Interactive Resources:

Video: Why Would Anyone Want To Be Commanded <https://www.aish.com/h/sh/video/Why-Would-Anyone-Want-to-Be-Commanded.html>



How can we apply Aristotle's quote to the ideas presented by Rav Chanina?