

Allah (ﷻ) commanded them to fight. He stated that it was something disliked by them, because of what it entails of effort, hardship and exposure to different kinds of fear and risk, yet despite that it is still pure good, because of what it brings of great reward, protection from severe punishment, victory over the enemy, acquiring booty and other benefits, despite the fact that it is disliked.

﴿But it may be ... that you like a thing although it is bad for you﴾, such as refraining from jihad and preferring ease and comfort. This is bad because it leads to defeat, the enemy gaining the upper hand over Islam and its people, humiliation and degradation, loss of great reward, and incurring punishment.

These verses all confirm that doing good deeds that may be disliked – because of the hardship involved – is undoubtedly good, and that doing bad deeds that may be liked – because of the imagined comfort and pleasure involved – is undoubtedly bad.

With regard to what options one may have in worldly affairs, the above is not always the case. But usually if the believer likes something, then Allah diverts it from him in some way, it is better for him, so the most appropriate response in that case is to give thanks to Allah and to think that what happened is good, because he knows that Allah (ﷻ) is more merciful to him than he is to himself, and is more able to direct His slaves to that which is in his best interests, and knows better than he does what is in his best interests, as He says: ﴿Allah knows, and you do not know﴾. So the most befitting response is to accept whatever He decrees for you, whether you like it or not.

However, if the command to fight was not limited, it would have included the sacred months and others, so Allah (ﷻ) made an exception concerning fighting during the sacred months, and said: