

The Mystery Lights of Syria

By Victor Barraza

Once, in the land of Syria, there were three armies fighting over control of the country. The first army was the army of the corrupt and secular President who was only trying to hold onto his power. The second army was the army of the disparate and moderate Rebel leader who was fighting for a freer country. The third army was the army of the ruthless and stern Caliph who wanted to implement complete religious control over the country and to destroy anything not adherent to the faith.

In the far desert of the country, a strange phenomenon was observed. This phenomenon included strange lights and fireballs in the sky that were directed with some sort of intelligence. They normally would have been ignored if the lights hadn't begun to follow soldiers from each army. The President asked if they could be drones of a foreign power. The Rebel leader wondered if the government had been given new technology. And the Caliph considered if they were a divine manifestation or satanic spirits.

Soon, the lights started speaking and it became clear that they were nothing like anything on Earth. At the frontlines, the lights declared that they were visitors from another world and they asked each side what they wanted most. Soldiers from each army approached the lights and asked for assistance fighting against the other side. This resulted in a flurry of destruction as each army was pummeled and decimated by unseen cyclones, mysterious disappearances, and deadly encounters with strange creatures.

It became clear that only one side should be given complete power over the others and the lights asked the leader of each army to justify himself to them. The first was the President who reasoned that he should be given their powers because the greatest goal any man could aspire to was greatness for his nation and his people, and that by choosing him, Syria and the Syrians could

become the greatest in the world. Next was the Rebel leader, who argued that any people and any country would never be the best unless they were free from corruption, conflict, and inequality. He reasoned that extraordinary physical powers were ancillary to democratic powers and that the Syrian people would rather be free than be dominant. The last to speak was the Caliph who stated that he was only a servant of the Most High and that true faith was the greatest possession any people could possess. He said that no otherworldly power could match the promise of divine manifestation and that no people could be their strongest without purging and destroying obstacles to the purest faith.

After they all spoke, the lights looked to confer among themselves and then gave their decision. They decided to give their powers to the Caliph for his devotion to a higher and greater cause. But their powers would only be given on the stipulation that his army would refrain from their proscribed charity offerings and to reduce their observed daily prayers to three. Accepting this, the Caliph reasoned that scripture never mentioned more than three prayers, that zakat offerings could be made through other means, and that the possibility of world conquest against all spiritual evil would justify a concession of faith.

It wasn't long before the Caliph and his army became the most dominant power on Earth with every leader and army vanquished. But uprising and acts of a resistance still plagued the worldwide Caliphate so the Caliph asked the lights to completely make everyone in the world to submit. The lights this time refused unless the Caliph and his forces completely renounced everything in their faith. It was then that the Caliph realized that the lights were not from another planet but were from the realm of the satanic jinn. The jinn then told the Caliph that they displayed these powers in the hope to strike a blow against the most pure faith and that each of his deviations from the righteous path only made them stronger. With nowhere to turn and unwillingly to accept more help from the jinn, the Caliph could only hope that the hereafter would be more forgiving as the resistance beat down his door.