

## THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, 1973

The Yom Kippur war was a part of the Arab-Israel conflict since 1948 when the state of Israel was formed.

### Causes of the War

1. Israel's victory in the Six Day War of 1967 gave her control over territories four times its previous size. Egypt lost her 23, 500 square mile at Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. Jordan lost the West Bank and Eastern Jerusalem. Syria lost the strategic Golan Heights. The Arab states could not tolerate this condition. PLO under its leader **Yasser Arafat** now pressed for some further action against Israel.

2. When **Anwar Sadat became President of Egypt after Nasser in 1970**, he found that Egypt was economically a troubled nation. In this situation, Egypt could no longer afford to continue its endless crusades against Israel. He wanted to make peace with Israel to achieve stability and recover Sinai. But he realized that after Israel's victory of 1967, it was likely that the peace terms would not be favourable for Egypt. So Sadat thought of a daring plan to attack Israel again, which even if unsuccessful, might convince Israel that peace was necessary.
3. Sadat now sent back 20,000 Soviet advisers from Egypt and opened new diplomatic channel with America. Sadat decided to attack Israel again with Syria hoping that this would force America to act as mediator in any future peace talks. He formed a new alliance with Syria and a concerted attack on Israel was planned. The Egyptians felt more confident because they now had modern Russian weapons and their army had been trained by Russian experts.

When the actual war began on October, 1973, many of the Israeli soldiers were away from their posting for observing the holy festival of **Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement**. Naturally the Arab armies made impressive advance with their up-to-date Soviet weapons. Iraqi forces joined the war and Syria received support from Jordan. After several days later, the Israeli army counter backed and the Arabs were in a critical position. They lost huge soldiers and war equipments. On October 25, 1973, Egypt and Israel agreed to cease fire by the intervention of America.

### Consequences of the War

**First**, Israeli victory came at the cost of heavy casualties. People severely criticized the government for lack of preparedness. In 1974 the Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir stepped down. Dayan ended his career in disgrace. In 1977 election in Israel, the Labour Party was thrown out of power for the first time in Israel's history. Menachem Begin now became the new Prime Minister with a different outlook. Because there was a terrible loss of man power of over 2,000 dead and many times were wounded. Worst of all, the war did not solve anything — except Israel's arrogance and self-confidence.

**Secondly**, although Egypt had again suffered military defeat, the initial Egyptian success greatly enhanced Sadat's prestige in Middle East politics and gave him an opportunity to seek peace. In 1979, Egypt and Israel signed the first peace agreement.

**Thirdly**, For Syria, the Yom Kippur war a great disaster. The unexpected Egyptian Israeli ceasefire exposed Syria to military defeat. Thus in 1979, Syria voted with other Arab states to expel Egypt from the Arab League.

**Finally**, the Arab oil-producing states tried to bring pressure on the USA and the other Western European states which were friendly to Israel by reducing oil supplies. This caused serious oil shortage in Europe.

**CAMP DAVID AND THE EGYPTIAN- ISRAELI PEACE, 1978-79**

There were a number of reasons which prompted both Egypt and Israel to start talks for a peace treaty.

- (1) After the Yom Kippur War, the Egyptian President Sadat became convinced that Israel could not be destroyed by force and it was a foolish thought to keep on wasting the resources of Egypt in fruitless wars. The Arabs cannot ignore the fact that the formation of Israel is a reality. He also knew that the PLO and the other aggressive Arab states like Iraq and Syria would oppose any approach. In spite of all the dangers, Sadat became ready to go to Israeli and talk to the Israel Parliament.
- (2) Like Egypt, Israel also had a number of economic problems due to their enormous defence expenditure and world recession. America also pressed Israel to settle their disputes with at least some of the Arab states. Thus Israel accepted Sadat's offer, Sadat then visited Israel in November, 1977 and the Israeli Prime Minister visited Egypt.
- (3) The US President Jimmy Carter took the initiative for a formal negotiation between the two countries at a place called **Camp David near Washington**. The treaty was finally signed in March, 1979. The terms of the treaty were as follows:
  - The state of war between Egypt and Israel since 1948 now came to an end.
  - Israel agreed to vacate Sinai.
  - Egypt agreed to remove blockade of Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aquba so that Israeli ships could use the Suez Canal.
  - Egypt promised not to attack Israel again and guaranteed to supply Israel oil from the recently opened wells in Southern Sinai.

Egypt worked on her own without the consent of the Arab League. Sadat knew very well that Syria and Jordan had no capacity to fight with Israel. Sudan, Morocco and Oman supported Egypt from the very beginning. Anwar Sadat was strongly condemned for this accord.

### 11.3. ISRAEL PLO OSLO PEACE ACCORD, 1993

The Treaty of Camp David was condemned by the Palestine Liberation Organization or PLO and most of the Arab states except Sudan and Morocco. World opinion went against Israel. But still America continued to play an active role in promoting peace and permanent settlement in this area. The other Arabian countries were against the Camp David Accord.

American attempt to make a peace settlement was threatened when President **Anwar Sadat of Egypt was assassinated** by some extremist Muslim soldiers while he was watching a military parade in October, 1981. They believed that he had betrayed the Arabs. But Sadat's successor **Hosni Mubarak** declared that he would continue the Camp David agreement. For most of the 1980s, the Arab-Israel feud was overshadowed by Iran-Iraq War.

The situation changed when a new government came to power in Israel after the election of June, 1992. **The new Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin** was prepared to make concessions for a lasting peace. On the other side, the PLO leader Yasser Arafat also responded to this call.

#### THE OSLO PEACE ACCORD OF SEPTEMBER, 1993

Main clauses were like these:

1. Israel formally recognized the PLO.
2. The PLO also recognized Israel and promised to give up terrorism.
3. The Palestinians were to be given limited self-rule on the West Bank (Jericho) and part of the Gaza Strip, areas occupied by Israel since 1967 war. Israel troops would be withdrawn from these areas.

#### CRITICISM OF THE ACCORD

This step was welcomed by most of the leaders of the World. But the extremist groups of both sides strongly opposed the agreement. A section of the PLO wanted a complete independent Palestine state. Israeli settlers on the West Bank were against all concessions to the PLO. The moderate leaders on the other hand, showed great courage and determination. Tragically the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing extremist on 4 November, 1995. In the mean time, King Hussien of Jordan paid an official visit to Israel for the first time. The promised elections were held and as expected Yasser Arafat became the new Palestinian President. In the election of 1996, there was a change in Israeli politics. The new Israeli government denounced the previous policy as 'too soft' towards the Palestinians. This threw the whole process of peace-making into doubt.

Answer the following:

1. Discuss the causes of the Yom-Kippur War, 1973 with special reference to its consequences.
2. State the reasons which prompted both Egypt and Israel to start talks for peace treaty.
3. Discuss the Treaty of Camp David along with its main clauses.