
“SHARON WAS AFRAID OF ME”

Begin had never liked Sharon. After his resignation as prime minister he still appreciated Sharon's military contribution to the State of Israel but had reservations about the measures he took to achieve his goals, as well as his lack of commitment to the people around him and to moral values. Begin saw Sharon as an uninhibited manipulator, and when his name came up in conversations, he would point out that when Sharon left the army and entered politics, he joined the Liberal Party because “Sharon was afraid of me. He knew I was strong and preferred to avoid me.”¹ The more Begin emphasized how much Sharon was afraid of him in the 1970s, the more he crystallized his opinion on their performance together in the second government: Sharon had taken advantage of his weakness, but Begin still emphasized the fear he imposed on him when he was at his peak, rather than Sharon's ability to do as he pleased when Begin weakened. Begin coped with his failure through the things that remained unsaid, not by what he uttered.

In 1984, Sharon filed a libel suit in a New York court against *Time* magazine, which had claimed that a secret appendix to the Kahan Commission report stated that he had spoken with members of the Gemayel family about the need to avenge Bachir Gemayel's death. In January 1985, the court ruled that the information published by *Time* was incorrect and that the publication reflected negligence but not malice. (Because U.S. law requires proof of malice, the court denied Sharon's claim for compensation of \$50 million.) Sharon saw this as a victory in principle, and Begin, who had followed the case, was also pleased with the result, as he saw Sharon's victory as his own and the