



Moshe Dayan: Israel's Controversial Hero (Jewish Lives)

By Mordechai Bar-On

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Instantly recognizable with his iconic eye patch, Moshe Dayan (1915–1981) was one of Israel's most charismatic—and controversial—personalities. As a youth he earned the reputation of a fearless warrior, and in later years as a leading military tactician, admired by peers and enemies alike. As chief of staff during the 1956 Sinai Campaign and as minister of defense during the 1967 Six Day War, Dayan led the Israel Defense Forces to stunning military victories. But in the aftermath of the bungled 1973 Yom Kippur War, he shared the blame for operational mistakes and retired from the government. He later proved himself a principled and talented diplomat, playing an integral role in peace negotiations with Egypt.

In this memorable biography, Mordechai Bar-On, Dayan's IDF bureau chief, offers an intimate view of Dayan's private life, public career, and political controversies, set against an original analysis of Israel's political environment from pre-Mandate Palestine through the early 1980s. Drawing on a wealth of Israeli archives, accounts by Dayan and members of his circle, and firsthand experiences, Bar-On reveals Dayan as a man unwavering in his devotion to Zionism and the Land of Israel. *Moshe Dayan* makes a unique contribution to the history of Israel and the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This well-written and absorbing book offers an authoritative account of the life of Moshe Dayan and places him in the context of larger events. Doing justice to the complex and intriguing persona of Dayan, Bar-On writes for a wide audience, both general readers and students of Israel and the Middle East. I read it with great interest and profit."—Itamar Rabinovich, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and author of *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs, 1948–2003*

(Itamar Rabinovich)

"[A] revealing and engrossing account of the life of an often admirable but frustratingly enigmatic man."—Jay Freeman, *Booklist*

(Jay Freeman *Booklist*)

"Mordechai Bar-On, Dayan's bureau chief during the mid-1950s as the latter was Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff, brings a welcome addition to the canon of Dayan, weaving first-person observations as he amends the historical record."—Neil Rubin, *Baltimore Jewish Times*

(Neil Rubin *Baltimore Jewish Times*)

"This brief, incisive, elegantly written book is full of up-close and personal glimpses of and insights into the many pivotal roles Dayan played in his nation's military and political affairs."—Martin Rubin, *Washington Times*

(*Washington Times*)

"Refreshing. . . Bridging the gaps of a complex personality is the great achievement of this brief but highly thoughtful book."—Jason Warshof, *Jerusalem Report*

(*Jerusalem Report*)

"Briefly and elegantly conveys the life of a man who played an important role in Israeli history."—*The Historian*

(*The Historian*)

About the Author

Mordechai Bar-On is senior research fellow, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem. He served in the Israel Defense Forces as General Moshe Dayan's bureau chief during the Sinai Campaign, and in 1984 was elected to the Knesset, Israel's parliament. He lives in Jerusalem.

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