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On November 4, 1995, I was living in Tunis, studying Arabic at the Department of State's language school in the beautiful Tunis suburb of Sidi Bou Said. My previous overseas posting had been in Jerusalem, where I was lucky enough to have a front row seat for the opening of what we all believed and hoped would be a new era in Israeli-Palestinian relations. That experience – and my enthusiasm and optimism for Israeli-Palestinian peace – were well-known to both my teachers and classmates, including classmates whose next assignment would be Jerusalem.

At the time I had no phone or television in my house, and of course this was back before the era of insta-news via smartphones and Twitter. I was awakened Sunday, November 5, by my doorbell ringing. A fellow student had driven over to tell me that Yitzhak Rabin had been assassinated the night before by a right-wing Jewish extremist. That moment, and that day, will be etched in my memory forever. We drove and walked around Sidi Bou Said, Marsa Nissim (where I lived), and into Tunis itself. Tunisians everywhere were glued to TV sets, watching the news from Israel in stunned silence.

Over and over that day and in the days that followed, Tunisians – friends, neighbors, teachers, and shopkeepers who knew me (and knew I was Jewish and had lived in Israel) – offered me their condolences for the death of an Israeli prime minister who, before Oslo, had been best known to them as an enemy. What quickly became clear to me was that their condolences were not only for me, as a Jew deeply connected to Israel, but for us all, Muslims and Jews, Arabs and Israelis – at the tragic loss of a shared hope for peaceful future, not only for Israelis and Palestinians, but for the region.