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Many Jews are unaware that the day after Rosh Hashana is a fast day. It commemorates the death by assassination of Gedaliah Ben Achikam, the governor of Israel during the days of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia – the final governor, because as a result of his death, Jews lost their autonomy in the land, many thousands were slain, and the remaining Jews were driven into exile. Gedaliah was murdered by a Jew, Yishmael Ben Netanya, who did so specifically to disrupt Gedaliah's leadership and change political direction. Gedaliah had in fact been told of the plot against his life, but refused to believe that another Jew would raise a hand against

him, and so he restrained anyone from taking action against him.

If this is sounding familiar, it should.

I grew up in a family that was proudly Zionist. I was always the kid in my public school class whose social studies report on a country was about Israel. I can still remember those little blue-and-white books we got from the embassy, that I used to write about Israel's imports and exports, the amazing, egalitarian kibbutzim, the sizes of the major cities and what they were known for. Somehow it never occurred to me that there might be something missing from those neat little pictures, and those clean descriptions of the land waiting for its people. For some of us – even some of my own family- those descriptions, still hold sway.

The idea that those little books, the *hasbara* we still receive even today, leaves out not only the people dispossessed of the only land they had ever lived on, bereft of citizenship rights, and living under a grossly unequal military occupation – but ALSO leaves out an always present – and continuously growing- group of people to whom the mindset of Yishmael ben Netanya is perfectly understandable. Like him, they are determined that their vision will be the one that wins. Like him, they do not quail at raising their hands against those who seek a peaceful way forward, through alliances and negotiation. Like him, they are shortsighted and cannot foresee the disaster that their actions have already wrought, and the worse consequences that they will still bring – if not today, than certainly tomorrow.

Rabin's death was a wake-up moment for many, but for me, it was a burnt book. In many ways I'm still that idealistic child who has always loved whole-heartedly, that beautiful, miraculous land, and believed in every one of those wide-eyed words written in those little blue-and-white books. I still delight in every moment I spend there – and wish I could be there more. But Rabin's legacy is now the inability to turn my eyes away from the violent trends in Israeli society, and how despair is turning even more of the country down a dark path.

Rabin is the reminder both of that dark fearful impulse that leads towards death, and of the shining light of reason, of true Judaism, and –yes- pragmatism that can lead us forward to peace.