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To the Editor:

Tomorrow is the first anniversary (in the Jewish calendar) of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and I invite committed people of all religious faiths to join me in a sunrise to sundown fast on that day, a day to atone for our religious convictions.

It is easy to dismiss the assassin as a madman, as not representative of the high moral ideals of Judaism. It is equally easy for Moslems to dismiss those who commit acts of terrorism or for Christians to dismiss those who bomb abortion centers (or who in centuries past burned infidels at the stake), and speak of their acts as aberrations.

Most of us who share the spiritual foundations of all great religions never could condone such actions -- for all of our faith communities seek wholeness and healing, peace and unity. Nevertheless, each of our traditions in affirming its validity as a proper path also asserts its superiority. For most of us, these convictions are moderated by compassion and human decency. But the message that says "God is on our side" is a powerful one. And many of those who hear that message are prepared to act on it.

We must not hide from the reality that it is our deepest convictions that lead us astray -- the more strongly we assert our truth, the more likely it is that somehow it will be transformed into "the truth", and, as we all are aware, people who have "the truth", people who believe they know God's designs, have a divine license to violate all of the rules.

The day after Rosh Hashanah is traditionally observed as a fast for Gedalia, governor of Judea and contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, who was assassinated by the zealots of his time. So I ask you to join in this fast day against zealotry, a day to ask atonement for the zealotries of our own hearts, a day to recognize that each of our truths is but one version of the truth, a day to resolve that we will moderate our own convictions and our language of faith.

Joseph G. Rosenstein