GOETHEANUM COMMUNICATIONS

Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, 2 September 2023

**True forgiveness**

**Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan in conversation at the Goetheanum**

**Two daughters die in the Middle East conflict. Their fathers Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan are examples of how to find a future perspective. They speak with Udy Levy at the Goetheanum about conflict, grief, solidarity and peace.**

“As a pediatrician I ask myself in the face of widespread anxiety and depression, how one can encourage young people and show them perspectives of how to rise up again, even after the most severe stroke of fate,” says Karin Michael, co-leader of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum. She regards the way Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan found to deal with their families‘ devastating experience as an example of working positively towards the future.

Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan live in the West Bank and Israel respectively. Each of them has lost a child in the Middle East Conflict: ten-year-old Abir was killed by Israeli border police and fourteen-year-old Smadar by a Palestinian suicide bomber. The two fathers met and worked together in the Parents‘ ‘Circle - Families’ Forum, an organization for people who lost relatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Marion Debus, also a member of the Medical Section leadership, sees in the work of Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan a force for the future: “The principle of retribution lives in a destructive physical causality that is rooted in the past. Forgiveness is always unexpected; it arises from individual freedom and has a healing effect in situations of social turmoil.” She lauds the fictional description of the situation of Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan in Colum McCann‘s novel ‘Apeirogon’. “The Irish writer illustrates how human lives are interwoven in the most complex ways and carefully uncovers aspects of the web of destinies in the Middle East conflict: the inner and outer conditions for the conflict do not appear as a monodirectional chain of events but as interrelated causes.” It becomes apparent how such events are based on relationships.

Karin Michael hopes that others can be encouraged by this way of dealing with tragic circumstances and that they can share their own experiences in their communities, because “in every community lives the existential question of how one can truly forgive after suffering a painful loss or emotional wound through the fault of another or of ‘the’ others”.

(375 words, 2301 characters/SJ; English by Margot M. Saar)

**Conversation (English with simultaneous German interpretation)** How deepest pain can turn into brotherhood, Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan in conversation with Udi Levy, 15 October 2024, 7 pm CET, Goetheanum. Free admission, retiring collection. Groups are asked to book in advance **Web** goetheanum.ch/en/events/vortrag-elhanan-und-aramin **Livestream** goetheanum.tv/programs/wie-aus-tiefstem-schmerz-bruderschaft-wird-aramin-elhanan

**Contact person Groups/Organization**   
Clara von Recklinghausen, projektteam@goetheanum.ch

**Contact person Conversation**   
Marion Debus, Karin Michael, info@medsektion-goetheanum.ch