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Israel-Palestine: Peace is unescapable

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Rami Elhanan is an Israeli Jew, Bassam Aramin a West Bank Palestinian. Each of them lost his daughter by an act of war violence. They met, sympathized, founded the *Fighters for Peace*, became friends. In his masterful work, *Apeirogon*, Colum McCann gives them the floor.

[https://acdn.net/spip/local/cache-vignettes/L400xH123/bassam_aramin_rami_elhanan_arte_07.12.2023-74459.jpg]

Rami Elhanan:

One state, two states, for now it doesn't matter - we end the Occupation and begin to give dignity to each of us. In my mind, it's crystal clear. Sometimes, of course, I'd like to be wrong. It would be so much easier. If I had found another path, I would have followed it - I don't know, revenge, cynicism, hatred, murder. But I am Jewish. I have a great love for my culture and my people, and I know that to dominate, oppress and occupy is not Jewish. To be Jewish means to respect justice and fairness. No people can dominate another people and obtain peace and security. The Occupation is neither just nor sustainable. And being against the Occupation is by no means a form of anti-Semitism.

Bassim Aramin:

When they killed my daughter, they killed my fear. I have no fear. I can do anything now. One day [her brother] Judeh will live in peace, it will come. Sometimes I feel like you're trying to take the water from the ocean with a teaspoon. But peace is a reality. It's only a matter of time. Look at South Africa, Northern Ireland, Germany, France, Japan, and even Egypt. Who would have thought that would be possible? Did the Palestinians kill six million Israelis? Did the Israelis kill six million Palestinians? The Germans killed six million Jews, and look, today there is an Israeli diplomat in Berlin and a German ambassador in Tel Aviv. You see, nothing is impossible. As long as I'm not busy, as long as I have my rights, as long as you allow me to travel, to vote, to be human, anything is possible.

I don't have time to hate anymore. We have to learn to use our pain. Investing in peace, not in our blood, that's what we say.

Rami went to Germany with me a few years ago, but it's a long story, I had to convince him to go, he hated the Germans. He never thought he could go. But he went. And he saw a different country than he imagined.

Interview of Bassam Aramin & Rami Elhanan on Arte, 7 December, 2023 (in French, 0'-15')

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