



The National Days in the Bilingual School

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The bilingual school tends to address both the national days of the Arabs and the national days of the Jews as a part of its multicultural perception. As aforementioned, these days are characterized as tense and complicated days in the school, both for the Arabs and for the Jews, because of the narratives and perceptions that they represent, which sometimes are contradictory and. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the school addresses the different perceptions and narratives of each culture, with recognition of the difference and uniqueness of each one of them and with reinforcement of the commonalities between them. In this way, it gives hope and encourages the desire for a shared life between Jews and Arabs in Israel, which on the one hand includes the difference and on the other hand broadens the common denominator between the two groups. This article will describe the national days of Arabs and Jews in the bilingual school in Jerusalem. It will focus on the meaning of the days, their complexity, and the ways of coping and implementation in the framework of the school, with reference to the school perception.

KEY WORDS: national days, school, bilingual, multiculturalism, Arabs and Jews

1. Introduction

In the State of Israel today there are five bilingual schools and a Young Division (a framework that includes kindergarten and first grade) that operate on the basis of humanist ideology and on the

perception of a shared and equal life between Arabs and Jews who are citizens of Israel. Bilingual education is embodied in the presence of the languages, Arabic and Hebrew, which represent the different cultures. It enables multicultural dialogue between Arabs and Jews, which for the most part is not expressed in the reality of life in Israel, in light of the complex and tense relationships between Arabs and Jews in Israel and because of the Arab-Jewish conflict. In addition, in its existence it realizes humanist values of reciprocal recognition and respect. In addition, according to the perception of bilingual education, the separate identities, both of Arabs and of Jews, are shaped, each on its own significantly, simultaneously with a connection to the other. In other words, the dialogue in both languages leads to the re-naming of concepts and relations, to the inclusive description and interpretation of the social reality, which barely occurs in the life reality in Israel. In addition, bilingual education calls to give an equal and shared place to the Jewish identity and to the Arab identity, in the approach of the creation of a space in which there is legitimization of the different identities, dialogue between the identities and the narratives of the two groups, in contrast to the situation in Israel, in which there is barely an encounter or a discourse between the groups.

According to this educational approach, the bilingual school in Jerusalem tends to address both the national days of the Arabs and the national days of the Jews as a part of its multicultural perception. As aforementioned, these days are characterized as tense and complicated days in the school, both for the Arabs and for the Jews, because of the narratives and perceptions that they represent, which sometimes are contradictory and different (like the tension that exists in these days in Israel among both groups). Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the school addresses the different perceptions and narratives of each culture, with recognition of the difference and uniqueness of each one of them and with reinforcement of the commonalities between them. In this way, it gives hope and encourages the desire for a shared life between Jews and Arabs in

Israel, which on the one hand includes the difference and on the other hand broadens the common denominator between the two. In addition, it presents another way of coping with the Arab-Jewish conflict and with the view of the other, which can be implemented in different frameworks in Israeli society. Moreover, it is possible to see that the school presents an educational perception that can be implemented in additional multicultural frameworks around the world or in frameworks in which there are complicated relationships between different populations or different groups. Moreover, it is possible to be assisted by this approach in regions where there are conflicts between different groups.

This article will describe the national days of Arabs and Jews in the bilingual school in Jerusalem. It will focus on the meaning of the days, their complexity, and the ways of coping and implementation in the framework of the school, with reference to the school perception. In addition, it will enable us, on the one hand, to see the narratives, the approaches, and the viewpoints that are different and sometimes contradicting of each one of the two cultures, the Arabs and the Jews, and on the other hand, to see the common denominator between the cultures. It will present the educational perception of the school as another way that enables the other person to be heard, seen, and listened to, when this may contribute to the shared life between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

The article is organized in seven parts. The first part is the introduction. The second part focuses on the identities in Israeli society and the main components of the identity. The third part presents a short description of the Hand in Hand Association and the bilingual school in Jerusalem. The fourth part addresses the main national days noted both by the Arab population and by the Jewish population in Israel. The fifth part describes the national days in the schools in Israel, presents how Nakba Day and Land Day are expressed in the Arab schools and how Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day are expressed in the Jewish schools. The sixth part depicts the national days in the bilingual school and addresses their process, contents, activities, and struc-

ture. In addition, this part describes the questions, thoughts, insights, and main topics that arise in these days. The seventh part presents the conclusion and the main points that arise.

2. Identities in Israeli Society

The identity is the person's perception of himself and the other's perception of him. In other words, the person's identity is personal since it expresses the individual's viewpoint relative to himself and relative to groups with which he identifies completely or partially. In addition, the person's identity is composed of affiliative elements, such as origin, sex, and ethnic nationality, and acquired elements, such as belonging to a sports team, youth movement, and place of residence, in addition to values, experiences, memories, and so on. Affiliative elements are inherent and for the most part immutable, while the acquired elements are subject to change in the person's life (Alferson, Dubi, & Stackerman, 2006). Hence, the identity is a collection of innate and acquired traits that shape the individual and make the individual separate and different from the other.

There are three main elements of identity in Israeli society: the civic component, the religious component, and the national component:

1. Civic component. This component emphasizes the connection between the individual and the country where he lives. In the State of Israel, for the most part the shared identity of the residents is the civic identity, which is the Israeli identity. It should be noted in this context that the State of Israel defines itself as a Jewish and democratic state (Peres & Ben Raphael, 2006).
2. Religious component. This component addresses the individual's attitude towards religion. The religious identity of the citizens of Israel is Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druse. Most of the citizens are Jewish, while the Muslims, Christians, and Druse are minorities (Alferson, Dubi, & Stackerman, 2006).

3. National component. This is a component in the identity that determines the affiliation and sense of belonging of the person to his nation in ethnic-cultural terms, or in other words, on the basis of a common ethnic origin, shared territory, tradition, culture, language, and others. The citizens of the state generally have a national identity (in ethnic-cultural terms) that is not shared by all the citizens of the state. The main national identities in Israel are:

- The national identity of Jewish society. This identity is shared by the national majority group among the citizens of Israel and emphasizes the tradition, history, and culture of the Jewish people along with a feeling of solidarity with all members of the Jewish people in Israel and abroad (Ben Rafael & Ben Haim, 2007).
- The national identity of Arab society. This emphasizes the Arab national connection (pan-Arabism) in the Middle East. This identity is shared by the Arab citizens who see themselves as a part of the Arab nation, who have a shared history and a common language, which is the Arabic language (Alhaj, 2000; Peres & Ben Rafael, 2006).
- The Palestinian national identity. This emphasizes the connection to Palestine as a historical and cultural homeland. Its expressions lie in the cultivation of the Palestinian Arab culture and tradition and in the holding of relations with members of their nation who live outside of the country (Alhaj, 2000; Samooha, 2012). This can be seen, for instance, in the research of Samooha (2012), who compared the definition of the identity of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel in 2003 and in 2013 and found that these identities are undergoing a process of Palestinianization. Explanation can be found in the statements of Maruhana (1997), who thinks that the Palestinian Arabs who are citizens in Israel see their Israeli identity as only civic and formal and the Palestinian identity in the emotional and ideological context. He asserts that the emphasis of the Palestinian identity is an outcome

of the denial of national expression by the state because of the feeling of discrimination that the Palestinians feel in the areas of the state.

Hence it can be said that for the Jews the Israeli national identity is based on ethnic and genealogical characteristics and is anchored in an independent nation state. In contrast, the Israeli Arab nationalism is ethnic nationalism composed of the demand for a state and national territory, alongside a psychological sense of partnership that unites the members of the nation, when the identity of the Arabs ranges from a Palestinian identity to an Israeli identity (Haviv, Beckerman, & Bilu, 2011).

3. The Hand in Hand Association

The Hand in Hand Association was established in the year 1997 so as to promote and develop in Israel a society shared by Arabs and Jews. In addition to the core studies obligated by law, the special days and holidays are commemorated in the schools on the different dates on the calendar. All the schools are recognized and official, under the supervision of Ministry of Education. The Hand in Hand Association initiated a new model of bilingual education, in which both Hebrew and Arabic are used as the languages of teaching in the schools and are granted equal status, and Jews and Arabs learn together both languages. The basic idea underpinning the initiative is to create an equal bilingual educational environment so as to offer respect and equality to both groups and to enable children, parents, and educators in the school and in the community to develop continuous and equal relationships of cooperation, co-existence, and education for peace. The Hand in Hand schools emphasize the symmetry between the two languages in every aspect of the teaching in general and in the school perception in particular. Two teachers, an Arab and a Jew, together conduct most of the lessons. Two principals, a Jew and an Arab, stand at the head of the entire school. There is an effort to maintain numerical balance

among the students in every class, although in actuality this is not always possible (Amara, 2014).

The Max Rayne bilingual school in Jerusalem was the first of the educational institutions of the Hand in Hand Association. Today more than 696 students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade study in this school. In the school there are Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Druse, Circassian, and Armenian students, both religious and secular. The bilingual school is today divided into two schools, an elementary school (which includes a Young Division¹ and students in the first to sixth grades) and a secondary school (for students in the seventh to twelfth grades).

4. The Main National Days in Israel

This part addresses the main national days commemorated by the Arab population in Israel and the main national days commemorated by the Jewish population in Israel.

Main National Days of the Arab Population in Israel

- Nakba Day. Nakba Day is May 15 and commemorates the escape, expulsion, or departure of the Arabs from their homes and their becoming refugees, when the State of Israel was established in the year 1948 (Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2019; Masalha, 2008; Masalha, 2012). The word 'nakba' means catastrophe or disaster in Arabic.
- Land Day. Land Day is a day of a general strike of Arabs who are citizens of the State of Israel in protest of the "theft of Arab land" and the "Judaization of the Galilee" (expropriation of lands) by the government of Israel. The first time this strike was organized was March 30, 1976 (Center for Educational

¹ The Young Division is a special educational framework in which children in the younger grades are in a setting that recalls the preschool environment. Such an environment allows the children to make a gradual transition to the class and school framework.

Technology, 2006; Sorek, 2015). Over the years, this day became a commemoration of the national identity of the Arab citizens of Israel and of their demand for the equality of rights in the State of Israel. This day is expressed in rallies, demonstrations, and protests throughout the land (Benstein, 2005; Lamberger, 2019).

Main National Days of the Jewish Population in Israel

- **Holocaust Remembrance Day.** This day is dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust that the Nazis and their supporters inflicted on the Jewish people and to the remembrance of the acts of heroism and rebellion in those times (HaKnesset, 2019). On the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day places of entertainment are closed, and special programs are broadcast on the radio and television during the day, and different ceremonies are held. In addition, the memorial siren is heard all around the country for two minutes (Handelman & Katz, 1995). Moreover, this day is anchored in the Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Law, 1959.
- **Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism.** The purpose of this Memorial Day is the communion of the citizens of Israel with the memory of fallen soldiers from the pre-statehood era until today. This day is always held one day before Independence Day, on the fourth day of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*. In the year 1998 the government of Israel decided to add the commemoration of the victims of terrorism to the Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and since then it is called Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism. The Knesset anchored this day in the Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel Law, 1963. This law determines that on Memorial Day a siren of two minutes will be heard, memorials and rallies will be held, ceremonies will be conducted in the military and in the education institutions. In addition, the broadcasts will be special for this day (Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers, Book of Laws 393, 1963).

- **Independence Day.** Independence Day is celebrated on the fifth day of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*. It celebrates the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel (from the Declaration of Independence). This day is an official national holiday, a day of rest (Handelman & Katz, 1995), anchored in the Independence Day Law, 1953. It always is held the day after Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel.

5. The National Days in the Schools in Israel

This part is composed of two sections. The first section presents how Nakba Day and Land Day are expressed in the Arab schools in Israel. The second section presents how Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day are expressed in the Jewish schools in Israel.

5.1. Nakba Day and Land Day in the Arab Schools

Different researchers assert that since the founding of the State of Israel there has been the exclusion of the Palestinian culture, national symbols, and collective memory from the public spaces (Agbaria & Jabrin, 2013; Jamal, 2005). The collective memory is composed of formative events such as Nakba Day, Land Day, and so on. According to the law, the schools are forbidden to commemorate Nakba Day or to refer to the disaster, and those who break this law (Ghanem, 2001) may lose their budgetary support (Zohar, 2010). In addition, schools are sent specific guidelines regarding the manner of behavior on Land Day. The research of Arar and Ibraheem (2016) found that the teachers and principals reported that they were compelled to come to the school on Land Day, while the Arab public in Israel (the High Follow-Up Committee) declares on this day a general strike. In addition, the Ministry of Education did not publish any guidelines regarding the commemoration of this

day. Furthermore, both on Nakba Day and on Land Day the study day is held as regular (Haviv-Barak, Beckerman, & Bilu, 2011).

It is possible to see that two contradictory forces influence the functioning of the Arab school on the topic of education for the national identity. The one is the state, which aspires to create a civic identity for Arab students and to define Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and in parallel limits the education for an Arab national identity. The second is Arab society, which asks the school to educate the students in the spirit of the values of Arab society and to emphasize the Palestinian narrative and the Arab national identity (Alhaj, 1995; Lavi, 2016; Osazki-Lazer & Jabrin, 2016; Vated-Huri, 2008).

5.2. Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day in the Jewish Schools

The State of Israel is defined as a nation state. A nation state uses strategies of the building of the collective memory, such as the holding of remembrance ceremonies, so as to strengthen the individual's national identity (Connerton, 1989). The memorial ceremonies embody the basic principles of the nation and provide an emotional experience that awakens people's commitment towards the nation to which they belong (Haviv-Barak, Beckerman, & Bilu, 2011; Smith, 1991). The schools in Israel tend to hold ceremonies on Holocaust Remembrance Day and on Memorial Day, and these ceremonies are perceived as main ceremonies. The initiative for holding the ceremonies was that of the Ministry of Education. It appears that holding the memorial ceremonies in the schools is related directly to the perception of the state that sees itself as responsible for the shaping of the collective memory of all of its citizens. This, for example, can be seen in the statements of Dinor (1953). Similarly, Lumsky-Peder (2003) maintains that the state established from its beginning a memorial day ceremony in the education system, and the school is perceived as a main agent of memory on its behalf in the establishment of Israeli nationalism.

Ben Amos and Bat El (1999) maintain that the ceremonies on Holocaust Remembrance Day and Memorial Day in the schools address three dimensions. The first dimension addresses the continuum of the holidays and memorial days that occur every year in the spring, between the Passover holiday and Jerusalem Day. The second dimension speaks about how the ceremonies are a part of a series of educational events that address every memorial day separately. It appears that the first narrative context creates a feeling of continuity – the Jewish nation has existed from the exodus from Egypt until today – and emphasizes the cyclic nature of suffering and revival in its existence. Into this broad framework is woven the context of the second narrative, which is created by frontal teaching and a series of social-educational activities related to this day. The third dimension addresses the ceremony itself, which is held on Holocaust Remembrance Day or on Memorial Day in the school, which creates an independent micro-narrative. The micro-narrative created in the ceremony differs from ceremony to ceremony, because of the composition of the passages of prose and poetry typical of every school. The Ministry of Education enables the schools to choose the passages in the ceremony and their order of appearance. However, a similar “repertoire” of texts has formed in the different schools, since the passages were taken from special materials that were published by governmental and other organizations.

In addition, there is structural similarity between the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony and the Memorial Day ceremony in the different ways: the ceremonies begin at the same hour in most schools so that an identical time framework is created in which the ceremonies are held simultaneously. In addition, most of the ceremonies open with the siren. Furthermore, the military and religious influences on the ceremony are visible. The military influences are expressed in the definition of the event as a “formation” – the audience moves to stand “at attention” or “at rest”, the trumpets blare, the flag is raised and lowered to half-mast. Moreover, the religious influences are apparent in the ceremony format, which are expressed in the lighting of candles and the reading of the Yizkor

prayers. (These Yizkor prayers are not taken from religious sources but are special versions, composed for Memorial Days). It is important to note that there is a difference in the texts and the prose between Holocaust Remembrance Day and Memorial Day, when for Holocaust Remembrance Day there is greater reference to the different experiences that the Jews suffered and even to personal experiences, while for Memorial Day there is reference to the fallen soldiers and the experience of bereavement emotionally. From these statements, it is possible to say that the ceremonies held in the Jewish schools in Israel on Holocaust Remembrance Day and on Memorial Day address the national identity of Jews and provide an emotional experience that reinforces the national belonging of the individuals (Ben Amos & Bat El, 1999; Lumsky-Peder, 2003).

6. National Days in the Bilingual School

In the bilingual schools, the national days of the Arabs and the national days of the Jews are commemorated. Land Day and Nakba Day commemorate the national identity of the Arabs, and Holocaust Remembrance Day and Memorial Day commemorate the national identity of the Jews. These days are known as challenging days, complex and tense in the school both for the teachers and for the students. This part will address the national days in the bilingual school in the year 2019 in the older grades, in the secondary school, which includes the middle school and the high school. In addition, this part will describe the process regarding these days in the school and will focus on the structure and content of the national days. Furthermore, it will address questions, thoughts, insights, and main topics that arise in these days. The description is based on observations, video films, and photographs undertaken in the course of the national days in the classrooms, in the workshops, in the ceremonies, and in the teacher meetings, including the documentation of school documents, teaching materials, and protocols, as well as the collection of information from the social networks

(which include the WhatsApp group of the teachers, emails, and the internal ICT system of the school).

The process began in the present year in a special teachers' meeting that the school management initiated on the topic of the national days. In this meeting, the teachers were asked to divide into teams, so that each team will be responsible for the management and organization of a certain national day. The team members held meetings among them and thought about the contents, activities, workshops, and daily process. They brought up ideas and discussed questions and thoughts that arose among them. Later, the teams shared with the teachers the program and the goals and even asked for their help in thinking about suitable activities and contents. In the continuation, the staff built the program and presented the agenda to the teachers using the social networks and a group or personal conversation. The teachers prepared the students in the classes ahead of time before the different national days.

6.1. Land Day and Holocaust Remembrance Day

Arab society in Israel tends to commemorate Land Day on March 30 every year. This year (2019) Land Day fell on the Sabbath and since the school is closed on Saturday, it was decided to commemorate Land Day on separate days for the middle school and the high school, because of the schedule of the high school and the planned activities for the high school students. Land Day was commemorated in 2019 in the middle school on Thursday March 28 and in the high school on Sunday March 31.

The structure of Land Day in the middle school. The students begin the day in the first lesson with the homeroom teachers, in the continuation they continue to workshops, and at the end of the day they conclude with a summative conversation and a summative activity with the homeroom teachers. The *content characteristics* of Land Day engage in the event and its historical influence on the Palestinian identity and the importance of remembering it, in addi-

tion to enable the identification with the wrong as Jews and Arabs. The workshops engaged in different topics and aspects of Land Day such as the group of the City Council that promotes the Judaization of Jerusalem, literary passages that refer to Land Day, Jewish solidarity in demonstrations of Land Day, Land Day in numbers, discussion of the topic of whether demonstration and protest are effective, transparent plunder of things, and more.

The structure of Land Day in the high school. The day opens with a shared meeting in the library of the high school students and the teachers who accompany them with two teachers, one Arab and one Jewish. After the meeting there were workshops in the homeroom classes. The content characteristics of Land Day in the high school are identical to the content characteristics of Land Day in the middle school. The meeting in the library engaged in the event and its historical influence on the Palestinian identity and the importance of the remembrance of the events. In addition, it addressed the emotional experience, the pain, the suffering, and the wrong that was done. The meeting spoke also about the aspiration to equality between Arabs and Jews and the shared life between the two. In the meeting Jewish and Arab students participated, as well as teachers who teach in the school who spoke, read texts, addressed events and topics related to Land Day, and presented different pictures of Land Day.

In the bilingual school they tend to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day on the official date set by the state, like all the Jewish schools and the events that are held around the country. This year it began on May 2, 2019.

The structure of the Holocaust Remembrance Day. The students begin the day on the first lesson with the homeroom teachers, in the continuation they continue to workshops, then there is a joint ceremony for all the school. The day ends with a summative conversation and summative activity with the homeroom teachers.

The content characteristics of Holocaust Remembrance Day address the remembrance of the Holocaust as a disaster so that such an event will never recur and so as to prevent it in the future, thinking

on how an individual in society can lead society to become a more caring and better society, thinking on how I as an Arab address the Holocaust and how I as a Jew feel on Holocaust Remembrance day in the bilingual school, seeing why it is important for both nations to learn about the Holocaust, understanding what are the lessons that can be learned from the Holocaust, and discussing the question of whether to forgive after such harm. In the workshops they engaged in different topics associated with Holocaust Remembrance Day, for instance, Jews and Arabs fought the Nazi together when they enlisted in the British military (the stories of Arabs who helped Jews in World War II), the denial of the Holocaust (the meetings of Neturei Karta² with Iranians), the problem of the refugees, solidarity in the Holocaust, concentration camps, and ways to commemorate the Holocaust, what a person had to do to survive in the Holocaust, love in the time of the Holocaust, and so on.

The Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony. From a structural perspective, the ceremony opens with the siren that is heard throughout the country at a regular time and by standing at attention to remember the victims of the Holocaust. The ceremony is held in the school library. During the ceremony there is the use of different means, such as passages of music, the reading of texts, and the presentation of personal stories of children from the period of the Holocaust, in the background there are different pictures from the Holocaust that are shown in a presentation. The texts were read by Jewish and Arab children who read one after the other. In addition, two teachers read texts in Hebrew and Arabic according to their nationality. The text content also addressed the idea of the remembrance of the events of the Holocaust as a disaster, so that they will never happen again and so as to prevent them in the future, as well as to understand why the Holocaust is mentioned.

Questions and topics that arose in the conversation with the students on Holocaust Remembrance Day and Land Day among students in the

² Neturei Karta is a group of Ultra-Orthodox Jews that opposes secular Zionism and calls for the dismantling of the State of Israel.

seventh and eighth grades. The students bring up the following questions. Why is it necessary to commemorate Land Day? Why is it necessary to remember it? Is this day connected to students? Is it relevant also to the Jewish students? The students note that their peers who learn in the Jewish schools do not learn about Land Day. Similarly, the students ask the following questions about Holocaust Remembrance Day. Why is it necessary to remember the Holocaust? Is the Holocaust relevant to the lives of the students in general and to the lives of the Arab students in particular? The Arab students note that their friends who learn in the Arab schools do not learn about Holocaust Remembrance Day. The student A says, "My friends, who learn in the school in the village, do not talk about this at all in the lessons".

The conversations and discussions in the classroom addressed the meaning of the historical events and the importance of remembering them and their relevance to the students' everyday lives in general and to the lives of the other national group in particular. It would seem that the main reason that arises both regarding Land Day and regarding Holocaust Remembrance Day about the need to remember the historical events is so that they will not recur and so that they can be prevented in the future. In addition, the argument regarding the two days arises that it is important to understand the historical events and the pain and considerable suffering they caused, not only to the relevant national group but also to the other group, since these events can happen to every group and because it is necessary to identify the symptoms that led to the occurrence. Moreover, it appears that the memories, stories, and events on Land Day and on Nakba Day awaken a powerful emotional experience both in the relevant national group and in the other group. In addition, it is possible to see that the students and the teachers go from the topics and thoughts that arise on Land Day and on Holocaust Remembrance Day to other topics, related to the reality of their lives, and in this way they become relevant for them. For instance, on Holocaust Remembrance Day the student R, who belongs to the Arab sector, says, "It is sad that there are people like this, who do

bad to people who did nothing to them. Today too there is evil, in other things, and something must be done about it”.

The analysis of the programs, contents, and activities undertaken on Land Day and on Holocaust Remembrance Day shows that both of the national days refer to events, their meaning, and their historical significance regarding the national identity. In addition, the two days address the importance of the remembrance of the events, and they also enable the identification with the wrongs and even with the pain and suffering that these days represents, as Jews and as Arabs. In other words, the two national days focus on the experiences of personal pain and the feelings of suffering, which are in essence are human and even universal experiences and feelings, pertaining to each one of the participants, and thus they in essence strengthen the feeling that the experience of pain and grief are shared by all. This is similar to what is mentioned in the research on the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony (Lumsky-Peder, 2003).

Moreover, it appears that the structure of Land Day in the middle school is mostly identical to the structure of Holocaust Remembrance Day, with the exception that on Holocaust Remembrance Day there is a ceremony for the entire school while on Land Day there is a meeting for all the middle school. It is possible to see that on the two days the students begin the day with the first lesson with the homeroom teachers, in the continuation move to workshops, and at the end of the day hold a summative conversation with the homeroom teachers.

The examination of the characteristics of Land Day indicates that the structure of Land Day in the middle school is different from the structure of Land Day in the high school. However, the content characteristics of both are identical. In other words, both in the middle school and in the high school they discussed and engaged in identical topics. The examination of the characteristics of Holocaust Remembrance Day shows that the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony in the school is similar in certain elements to the canonical ceremonies held in Israel in general and in the Jewish schools in particular (HaKnesset, 2019). This can be seen for instance in that it

opens with a siren and it is necessary to stand during the siren. Furthermore, it appears that the ceremony was adapted to the nature and perception of the school, which is expressed in the ceremonies, pictures, and music passages and in that the ceremony did not include certain elements customarily found in canonical ceremonies (Ben Amos & Bat El, 2003), such as the conclusion of the ceremony with the state anthem, the recital of the Yizkor prayer, and the lighting of candles.

In addition it is possible to notice that the teachers in the school move from the personal stories and collective events to a more universal and broader approach. This can be seen, for instance, in the workshop held for students on Holocaust Remembrance Day, in which the teacher went from the problem that the Jews were refugees in the Holocaust era to a more universal problem, the global refugee problem. Similarly, on Land Day there was a workshop in which the teacher went from the demonstrations and protests of the Arabs on Land Day to a discussion on a universal topic, the effectiveness of demonstrations and protests.

6.2. Memorial Day and Nakba Day

The bilingual school has tended in recent years to commemorate Memorial Day and Nakba Day on the same day, on the Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism, although Arab society tends to celebrate the Nakba on another date. This is because, according to the school, many Arab students did not come to the school on Memorial Day, due to the feeling that this day is not connected to them and since Jewish students did not come to the school on Nakba Day in response to the absence of the Arabs on Memorial Day. Memorial Day and Nakba Day are the most challenging, complicated, and tense days in the school, since they address on the one hand both the Jewish national identity and the Arab national identity and on the other hand they speak about the main events at the basis of the dispute between the Jews and the

Arabs. Moreover, the course of this day is different from the other national days commemorated in the school since this is the only day in which the school population is divided into national groups in certain activities, for instance the single national forum and the single national ceremony.

The structure of the day. The day opens when all the students meet with the homeroom teachers in the classroom. Then the students divide into a single national forum for a single national conversation, and in the continuation a bilingual forum is held, in which all the class students hold a shared conversation of the two national groups, with their homeroom educators and the teachers who accompany them. Then, two ceremonies in parallel were held according to the national groups, the Nakba Day ceremony for the Arabs and the Memorial Day ceremony for the Jews. The day ends with a shared ceremony for Jews and Arabs.

6.2.1. Content Characteristics of Nakba Day and Memorial Day

The Single National Forum

In this forum there is a single national conversation. The goal is to allow every individual in the national group to express his statements and thoughts and also to share with the group members the experiences, stories, feelings, and personal pain, from an honest and true place, without being afraid of the harm to the feelings and emotions of their friends, members of the other national group.

This part will describe the Arab single national forum and the Jewish single national forum among the students of the seventh and eighth grades and will address the main things that arose.

Arab single national forum. The activity in the classroom addresses the feelings and emotions of the students on Nakba Day. The teachers hand out to the students pieces of paper and ask them to write their feelings and emotions about this day, and then they ask them to share their feelings with their friends. The students bring up feelings of sadness, anger, and frustration. A number of children

say that they do not know what their feelings are. Main responses that arose in the conversation are as follows.

The student A says, "I am angry that after the Jews went through the Holocaust they came to Israel and took Arab lands and because of this Arabs were killed". In the continuation of her words, the student L presents the word 'sadness' and says that "the Holocaust that the Jews experienced caused them to do the same Holocaust for the Arabs". The student H responds to her words and says to her, "The opposite, the Holocaust that the Jews went through prevents them from behaving in the same way".

The student G raises a question. "Why do we need to repeat every year the same topics and the same repertoire?" The student M responds to his words and notes, "This is boring and routine". A number of students agree.

In response to these statements, the teacher G asks the students. "Why do we commemorate Nakba Day every year?" One student responds, "To remember the pain and suffering". Another student says, "For our children and grandchildren". The teacher H adds and says to the students, "It is important to remember the Nakba for the Arabs who live in other places like Ramallah and Gaza". The teacher G adds, "It is important to remember for your children and grandchildren, It is important to remember the Nakba so that the coming generations will not undergo a similar experience". In the continuation, there is an in-depth discussion on the two topics raised: the relevance of the remembrance of the events of the Nakba to the students' everyday life and the importance of the remembrance of the events of the Nakba and their influence on the Palestinian national identity.

Moreover, in the conversation a main question arises that occupies both the students and the teachers. "Should Nakba Day and Memorial Day be commemorated on the same day or on separate days?" Some of the students want Nakba Day to be commemorated on a different day so as to connect to their personal pain while others want a shared day, since they assert that the joint meeting enables them to see and to hear their story and the other's story and in

addition to see their pain and the other's pain. Similarly, the teacher T shares the students in her thoughts and says, "This is an important question, which I too ask, and there is no unequivocal answer. On the one hand, every nation wants to be with its personal memory and to experience its pain, while on the other hand, the ability to see that both sides are in pain on the same day and that both have emotional and painful memories and personal stories focuses the reference and understanding that the two sides suffer and are in pain, and that the memories and the stories of both sides are real ..."

Jewish single national forum. The homeroom teachers in the classroom brought to the students different passages of information about soldiers who died or people who died in terrorist attacks. The students divided into groups and were asked to address the different questions from a collection of questions. In addition, the group discussed two guiding questions. First, how do they feel in the school on this day in particular? Second, what are the challenges they face on this day in the school?

A number of main responses that surfaced in the conversation are as follows. The student M says "it is hard for me to feel what the Arabs experienced since this happened to them". The teacher L asks the students a question following this statement and she says, "What is the difference between to understand and to identify?" The student M explains, "To identify is like two people are the same thing, equal, like they have the same story, to understand is like to listen to the story of another". The teacher L turns to her student in the continuation and tells her, "You can understand the Nakba but not identify with it".

The student D says "I want to remain on this day with my personal pain and less with the pain of the other". The student A responds and says, "I can hold my pain as a Jew and also understand the other's pain". The student S responds and maintains, "It is important that every side know the story of the other, and will even know the challenge of the other on this day and will understand the other's pain in addition to his pain". Another student continues and

adds, "Every side will see what are the memories, pains, fears, and challenges of the other side, in addition to these experiences, which he also has, and will understand that they both have, perhaps in this way he will calm down and will stop being afraid". In the continuation of these statements, the teacher Y asks, "Do the Arab friends need to know the story of Memorial Day? To know that it is hard for us". The student M says, "It is important to know the story of one another and to understand that it is hard for the other side, since I also know the other side, I expect from my friend to respect that it is hard for me like I respect that it is hard for him".

It is possible to see that the students on the one hand raise the need to deal with their personal pain on this day and on the other hand emphasize the importance of knowing the story of the other side so as to understand his pain in general and on this day in particular. Moreover, it is possible to notice the main question that recurs in this group, "Can they leave the personal pain on this day and see the pain of the other side?" An example of a response to this question can be seen in the statements of student A, who says, "When I am found in a feeling of pain, I think about the personal pain and it is hard to leave this pain". Another example of this question is seen in the responses of teacher M to the words of student A, "This is a difficult question of people who cope with pain in general, whether it is possible to leave the private pain and to see the pain of the other". She shares and adds, "We also, the teachers, ask this question".

Binational Forum

The students of the class hold a shared conversation of both the groups with their homerooms and their teachers. The goal is for every individual to listen to the pain of the other side, members of the other national group, even if this contradicts his personal pain. In addition, the aim is to find a way to reach the other side's pain and to attempt to include the difference between my pain and the other side's pain.

This part will describe the binational forum among seventh and eighth grade students and will address the main things that arose. The forum discussed a main question that also arose in the single national forum in the two groups: "Should Nakba Day and Memorial Day be commemorated on separate days or on the same day?" The main arguments that were posited among the students for commemorating these national days on the same day are as follows. First, the shared day enables the students to be there more for one another, it contributes to the feeling that both sides deal together with their personal pain and their personal story, since they can voice their story and present their pain to their friends and in parallel hear the other's story and understand the other's pain and in addition they can understand that every side has pain. This is in contrast to what happens in the single national schools, in which every side knows its memories and stories and is not exposed to the memories of the other side at all. In other words, each side is exposed to its narrative and not to the narrative of the other nation. Second, the shared day, as it is built this year, enables both single national conversation and binational conversation. It enables every group to identify with the pain and personal story, and it enables a shared meeting between the groups, and in this way it gives both sides the opportunity to attempt to understand the pain and story of one another. This is in contrast to the structure that was accepted in the past, which called for a binational meeting and binational conversation throughout the day. Third, the official argument of the school states that it is necessary to commemorate both national days on the same day since it is relevant to both national groups and prevents the failure to attend on the part of one national group.

Main arguments voiced against the commemoration of Nakba Day and Memorial Day on the same day are as follows. First, the commemoration of the national days on separate days will allow the individual to connect more to his emotions and feelings and to commune with his personal memories and personal pain. Second, separate days will allow the individual to depart from his personal pain and to see the other's pain, while on the shared day, the indi-

vidual is immersed in his personal pain and it is hard for him to leave his pain for the pain of the other. Third, the shared day speaks more about co-existence and less about the memorial day of each people.

It is possible to see that the teachers too address the question of whether to commemorate the national days on the same day or on separate days. For example, the teacher G tells her students, "The ability to hear the stories of others, to listen to the other's pain, and to know him on that day is already the beginning of a conversation, this does not mean that it is necessary to agree with what happened but to hear, to hear, and to continue to believe in your story, to understand that each story is separate and each pain is different". Another example of the reference can be presented from the statements of the teacher M, who maintains that the "arguments and conversations today enable us to speak. Sometimes the statements will be agitating and will be pressuring and we will say painful things, which will cause us to argue, but this will allow us in the end to hear one another and even to leave with a hug". Hence, both of them think that the shared day for the commemoration of the two national days develops a conversation between the groups and even allows the hearing of the other's story and the listening to his pain, despite the difficulty, the pain, and the feelings it causes in each one of those present and although the story of one group contradicts the individual's story.

Moreover, the group discusses the question of whether it is possible to respect the other's story. Is it possible to identify? It appears that most of the students maintain that they can respect the other's story. Some of the students hold that they can also understand the other's story, while some of the students assert that they cannot understand the other's story because of their memories and personal stories, which prevent them from doing so. It is possible to see that the teachers also discuss this question. The teacher M addresses the question and adds, "Although every group has its pain and its stories, it is necessary to think how to embark from the memories and personal stories for a shared path. In other words, to look at the

general picture, from an overall perspective, and to think how to depart from the existing memories to a shared path”.

The Nakba Day ceremony and the Memorial Day ceremony are held in parallel according to the national group.

The Nakba Day ceremony for Arabs. The ceremony is held in the library, and the attendees tend to come in black clothing, as customary on Nakba Day. The teachers hand out to the students and ceremony attendees a sticker for the remembrance of the events of the Nakba. Members of the Hand in Hand community participate in the ceremony. In structural terms, the ceremony opens with a presentation that shows pictures of Arab villages, homes, and communities before the Nakba and pictures of homes and villages after the Nakba. Throughout the ceremony there is the use of different means, such as passages of music, the reading of texts, some of which are read by the children one after the other, in a predetermined order, and personal stories of families are generally related by representatives of the families. In terms of the program, the ceremony addresses the following topics: the historical event and its impact on the Palestinian identity, reference to the personal pain and to the personal story of the families, reference to the Palestinian identity, and aspiration for a better future and co-existence in Israel.

The Memorial Day ceremony for the Jews. The ceremony is held in the amphitheater, and the attendees tend to come with blue pants and a white shirt. The teachers hand out to the students and the ceremony attendees, a sticker with the word Yizkor (remember) on it. Members of the Hand in Hand community participate in the ceremony. From a structural perspective, the ceremony opens with the siren heard all around the country, by standing during the siren, by saying the Yizkor prayer, and by lighting a memorial candle. Throughout the ceremony, there is the use of different means, such as passages of music, singing, and dancing, reading of texts, most of which are read consecutively by students, in a predetermined order, and the statements of the head of the parents' committee. The ceremony closes with shared singing of the participants of the state anthem (HaTikva – the Hope). The content of the ceremony addresses

the topics of the personal pain and the personal grief, the voice of the dead or the voice of the mourners, the personal stories of the soldiers and dead people, the aspiration for hope and a better future and co-existence in Israel.

The joint ceremony for Arabs and Jews. The ceremony is held in the sports hall, and members of the Hand in Hand community come to the ceremony. This ceremony is perceived as the main event in the school in the framework of the national days. In structural terms the ceremony opens with words spoken by two teachers, one Arab and one Jewish, who stand beside one another. Throughout the ceremony there is the use of different media, including film, presentation, passages of singing and music playing, different texts read in Hebrew and Arabic by children, in a set order, when for the most part there is an Arab announcer alongside a Jewish announcer (sometimes there are a number of announcers). In addition, the Christian Arab elementary school principal speaks in Arabic alongside the Jewish high school principal who speaks in Hebrew. The head of the parents committee, a Jew, speaks her words in Hebrew, followed by the head of the parents committee, an Arab, who speaks in his language. The ceremony ends with a new anthem written this year for the school, titled "To the Horizon" (for the celebrations of twenty years of the Hand in hand Association). Jewish and Arab students sing the anthem. In terms of content, the ceremony addresses the aspiration for a better future, for peace, and for a share life between Jews and Arabs in Israel. This ceremony concludes Nakba Day and Memorial Day.

Moreover, it is important to note that the school engaged in and discussed Nakba Day also on its official date, May 15, in a different format from the previous days. In the first two hours there were meetings with the homeroom teachers in the classes that addressed the Nakba in Jerusalem. Then, there were lessons with subject teachers, addressing the different topics connected with the Nakba, such as stories about Palestinian people before 1948. With the end of the national days, the school management initiated a meeting of all the teachers in the school to conclude the national days, which dis-

cussed experiences, feelings, impressions, conclusions, and recommendations.

The aforementioned statements indicate that the bilingual school attempts to develop a shared society for Arabs and Jews and to create a bilingual educational environment based on equal relations of cooperation and education for peace (Hand in Hand, 2019). In addition, the school allows for a meeting between two different national groups, which are found in a continuous conflict in the same country (Fraser, 2015; Kelman, 2018). In other words, the school enables the expression of the Arab narrative and the Jewish narrative, which are different narratives, which barely are expressed in a joint manner outside of the school walls in light of the Jewish Arab conflict (Bar On, 2011). Moreover, it creates a meeting and exceptional conversation between the two groups in the national days, which are complex days, difficult and tense for each one of the groups.

It is possible to see that both the teachers and the students from the two national groups hold onto the collective memories and collective perceptions that express their feelings and anxieties because of the historical events and experiences unique to their nationality, as expressed in the words of the student A from the Arab sector in the single national conversation. "I am angry that after the Jews went through the Holocaust they came to Israel and took Arab lands and because of this Arabs were killed". It is possible to see the holding onto the memories and fears and concerns also in the statements of the teacher G. "It is important to remember for your children and grandchildren. It is important to remember the Nakba so that the coming generations will not undergo a similar experience". However, the two national days, like Holocaust Remembrance Day and Land Day, emphasize the experiences of pain and the feelings of grief, which are universal and human experiences that pertain to all the participants and thus create convergence and cohesion of the participants around these experiences and feelings. This is similar to what is said in the article of Lumsky-Peder (2003).

In addition, the shared conversation enables the students and teachers from the two groups to express their personal story and

their pain regarding the events and their collective memories related to the Jewish-Arab conflict and in parallel to hear the story of the other and even to understand that the other has fears, which are enrooted in the events and collective memories associated with the conflict and in this way to go to a stronger and more balanced approach. An example can be seen in the following statements said in the Jewish single national forum by a student, B, from the Jewish sector. "It is important that every side know the story of the other side and even know the challenge of the other side on this day and will understand the other's pain in addition to his own". Another student adds in this context, "Every side will show what are the memories, pains, fears, and challenges of the other in addition to these experiences, which he has too, and will understand that both of them have, perhaps this way he will be calm and will stop being afraid".

In addition, it appears that the approach that exists in the school is to address every event, every story, and every pain separately, as standing in its own right. The individual can understand the other's pain and to respect the other's story, despite the individual's identification with his story. It is possible to see this, for example, in the statements of the teacher G in the shared conversation on Nakba Day and Memorial Day. "The ability to hear the others' stories on this day, to listen to the pain of the other and to know the other, this is already the beginning of the conversation, this does not mean that it is necessary to agree with what happened, but to hear, to hear, and to continue to believe in your story, to understand that every story is separate and every pain is different".

It should be noted that every national group sees the other national group as another group, separate, standing in its own right. This is seen in the words that the teachers and the students use, such as "the other" and "the second side". Additional terms that arose are "my story/our story/their story" as opposed to "the other story". This is in contrast to the declared goal of the school that aspires to equality and cooperation (Hand in Hand, 2019).

It is further seen that the school emphasizes the principle of symmetry as a part of the school perception (Hand in Hand, 2019).

This principle is expressed in the shared ceremony in the following ways: the school principals, a Christian Arab and a Jew, stand beside one another and say things in their native language, the Arab students read texts alongside the Jewish students, an Arab teacher reads alongside a Jewish teacher, the heads of the parents' committee, Jewish and Arab, speak, a presentation that is built from an Arab teacher and a Jewish teacher, and Jewish and Arab students sing together the school anthem that combines between the Arabic and Hebrew languages. Moreover, it is possible to see this symmetry in the binational forum, which was directed by Arab and Jewish teachers and in different ways. This is in contrast to the lack of symmetry that exists in the State of Israel between Jews and Arabs and even in the power relations between the two (Haviv, Beckerman, & Bilu, 2011) that derive from the very definition of the state as a Jewish state (Declaration of Independence).

Moreover, according to Beckerman and Bilu (2011), it appears that the Nakba Day ceremony and the joint ceremony underwent a process of structuring and formalization, and in them elements from the Jewish ceremony were adopted, such as the use of passages of music and song, different texts that address both the personal stories and the collective events, uniform clothing, a sticker to remember the events of the Nakba, and so on. Moreover, it can be said that like the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, the Memorial Day ceremony is similar in structure and components to the canonical ceremonies in Israel, while its content is adjusted to the school approach. This is similar to the data that arise from the research literature, which indicates that ceremonies combine between the canonical perception and the perception of the school in Israel (Ben Amos & Bat El, 2003; Lumsky-Peder, 2003).

It is possible to see that Memorial Day and Nakba Day are the only days in the year in the school in which the school population divides according to national groups in certain activities, such as the single national forum and the single national ceremony, since this division contradicts the school perception (Hand in Hand, 2019). In addition, the change that occurred in the structure of the day ena-

bles the integration between single national meetings and binational meetings, when on the one hand every national group is allowed to express freely its emotions and thoughts as well as its personal pain and on the other hand opportunities are created for a shared conversation and a shared meeting so that every individual will recognize the story and pain of the other side. This is in contrast to another format of the day, which was customary in the past in the school, in which shared activities and encounters for all the class students were held throughout the day, aside from the time of the ceremony, in which all the students divided into groups according to their nationality.

The analysis of the responses and statements of the teachers in the single-national forums and binational forums indicates that the teachers adopt a moderate and balanced approach in the guidance of the forums, which suits the school perception. Their statements and responses express the school thinking, which calls for cooperation between the nations. It is observed that they respond with restraint and balance, tolerantly and attentively to the students' words and to the mentioned events. They emphasize the importance of the listening to and the seeing of the two narratives and the pain of each side, without voicing extreme or contradictory opinions on the matter. For example, on the Arab single-national forum, when the group discusses the question of whether to commemorate Nakba Day and Memorial Day on the same day or on separate days, the teacher T shares her thoughts with the students and told them, "This is an important question, which I too ask, and there is no unequivocal answer. On the one hand, every nation wants to be with its personal memory and to experience its pain, while on the other hand, the ability to see that both sides are in pain on the same day and that both have emotional and painful memories and personal stories focuses the reference and understanding that the two sides suffer and are in pain, and that the memories and the stories of both sides are real ..." It is further seen that the teachers share with the students their questions, deliberations, thoughts, and emotions in an open and clear manner, and this can be seen, for instance, in both

the response of teacher T, as presented above, and in the response of teacher M, in the bilingual forum for the question of whether it is possible to leave from the private pain on this day and to see the pain of the other. She says, "This is a difficult question of people who deal with pain in general, whether it is possible to leave from the personal painful and see the pain of the other". She adds and shares, "Even we, the teachers, ask this question".

The question asked following this analysis is whether their responses and statements derive from their personal belief in the school's approach or whether because they work in the school they are required to align with the school perception. It appears that to answer this question it is necessary to conduct a more focused research study that will examine this question.

It is possible to see that the question "Should Nakba Day and Memorial Day be commemorated on the same day, on the Memorial Day of the Jews?" is addressed both by the students and by the teachers. There are a number of main explanations for commemorating Nakba Day and Memorial Day on the same day. First, the official reason is that the commemoration of the national days on the same day prevents one national group from not coming to school since this day is relevant to both national groups. Second, the shared meeting of the two national groups, in which each national group can voice its story and present its pain and in parallel hear the story of the other group and understand its pain, contributes to the feeling that the groups cope together with their personal story and with their personal pain and in addition allows them to see that the pain is felt by both groups. The main explanations against commemorating these two days on the same day are that each group wants to commune with its personal story and its personal pain, and in addition the individual is immersed in his personal story and his personal pain and it is hard for him to leave his pain for the pain of another.

However, it is possible to argue that the very meeting and conversation between the two national groups, between which there is ongoing conflict and tension in Israel, when they can talk with

one another and listen to one another, especially on complicated days such as the national days and in the period when the relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel are tense (Fraser, 2015; Kelman, 2018), and can embark on a shared path (which is expressed in the everyday life in general and in the national days in particular), gives hope for a better future and aspiration for a new reality and a different narrative, which may be built on collaboration and even on peace. The teacher M expresses this well: "Although every group has its pain and its stories, it is necessary to think how to embark from the memories and personal stories for a shared path. In other words, to look at the general picture, from an overall perspective, and to think how to depart from the existing memories to a shared path".

7. Conclusion

To conclude, it is possible to say that the bilingual school addresses the national identity of both groups, Arabs and Jews, and customarily commemorates the main national days of both groups. The bilingual school addresses both narratives, the Arab narrative and the Jewish narrative, as a part of its perception, with reference to the values of Arab and Jewish cooperation, the shared emphasis between the cultures, and the aspiration for co-existence and peace. Moreover, it is possible to see that on the one hand while the two groups hold their memories and collective events, their personal stories and personal pain, on the other hand they listen to the story of the other group and respect the pain of the other group, through the meeting and conversation between the two groups on the national days, which are known to be complicated and emotionally charged days for both. In addition, it appears that the school goes from the personal experiences and feelings to universal and human experiences and from the collective events and the personal stories to broader and more universal approaches, which pertain to both groups and are relevant to both of them, with the aim of strengthen-

ing the common denominator of the groups. Furthermore, the perception of the school, which calls for an equal and shared life between Jews and Arabs, is expressed in the national days in different ways, such as in the preservation of the principle of symmetry between Arabs and Jews, in the perceptions, thoughts, and assertions of the students and the teachers, in activities, in workshops, in ceremonies, and in the teaching materials. Hence, it can be concluded that the school addresses both cultures, Arab culture and Jewish culture, with the recognition of the difference and uniqueness of each culture, and with the reinforcement of the shared values through meeting and conversation between the groups, which barely is expressed in the reality of life in Israel in light of the tense relationships between the Arabs and the Jews and the Jewish Arab conflict (Bar Or, 2011; Fraser, 2015; Kelman, 2018), and gives hope for a shared life between Jews and Arabs.

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