



# Victoria Hazan-Elfassy

“My husband came to Israel alone from France. I did the same from Morocco. We met and fell in love as very new immigrants at a Jewish Agency Absorption Center and then served in the Israeli army, helping to build and protect our country.”

Growing up in Casablanca, Victoria Hazan-Elfassy, 26, was a traditional Jewish girl living peacefully in a Moslem country. She went to a local French high school, and then to college in Paris to study to be a physical trainer. "Believe it or not, there was more anti-Semitism in France than I ever felt in Morocco," says Victoria.

It was while she returned to Morocco on vacation to work with her mother, a cinema costume designer that Victoria met a friend who had gone to study at Yeshiva University in New York. Together, they became observant.

Her career plans had been to be a physical trainer for the French army. "But then I thought why shouldn't I go to Israel and join the army. This is my country," says Victoria. So in August 2005 she made aliyah and went to the Calanit Absorption Center in Ashkelon, where she participated in the Jewish Agency's TAKA program for new immigrants to continue their academic studies. "A month later, I met my husband, who was on the same program. He came from France, but his father was born in Morocco."

The couple became engaged in October 2006 and both joined the army as lone soldiers that December. Victoria entered the army's sport academy and then became an officer and a physical trainer for an elite combat engineering unit.



הודפס בבית הדפוס של הסוכנות היהודית

"I felt that what I was doing in the army was really important," says Victoria. "I wanted to give a little of myself to my soldiers so they could feel my love of life and my love of Israel. It's important for Israeli-born people to know that Jews from all over the world are leaving their homes to be a part of this nation."

Victoria and her husband, Aaron, are living in Jerusalem, and Victoria is at a crossroads, deciding whether to become a career officer or return to college. But whatever choice she makes, Victoria knows that she and Aaron will raise their children in their homeland and play a small role in fulfilling the destiny of the Jewish people.