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Preparing to Move to Israel: Oshrit Yeshalm Worky's Story

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I am 25 years old and I first came to Israel from Ethiopia in 1991. We used to live in a small village where my parents were farmers and raised a herd. My father used to work in the field (sowing, harvesting) for the better part of the day.

My parents decided to try to come to Israel in 1983. They sold off all of their possessions and the women packed and prepared foods that would last throughout the journey. I was born during these preparations and to this day my grandmother calls me Sankey, which means "things for the way."

Just as my parents were about to leave, however, they learned that the border to Sudan had been closed and there were no guides available. This led to their postponing our journey to Israel until 1991, when we flew to Israel with Operation Solomon.

When we first arrived here, we were given a place to live in a hotel in Tiberius, where we stayed for four months. Afterwards, we moved to an absorption center in Acco, where we stayed for three years before moving to a home of our own in Ashdod.

Moving to Israel was not easy for any one of us. My father, who was used to working in the field, began working in a factory. He did not know what to do at first and he had a hard time getting used to working inside. My mother had an easier time as she was very busy with her children's lives and with taking care of us. She got along very well with the Israelis here.

I am my parent's oldest child. We first came here with my two younger sisters and my mother gave birth to another four children since they came. I am now studying for the second year of three needed to complete my degree.