



Wikipedia:Wikipedia Signpost/2021-03-28/Obituary

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Obituary

Yoninah

By Staff

Yoninah's final edit was on 18 January 2021, an abrupt end to a long and prolific tenure on Wikipedia. At the time, she was among our 400 most active editors. She was especially active at Did you know (DYK), where she mentored new contributors, reviewed nominations, and prepared sets of "hooks" to be published on the Main Page. Over the years, there had been offers to nominate her as a Wikipedia admin, but Yoninah politely refused each time, saying she was happy just being an editor. She was so omnipresent on the DYK project that her sudden absence was felt immediately among the community. Several editors began to post on her talk page on 28 January, ten days after her final edit, to wish her well and hope for her speedy return. Sadly, she never did.

Yoninah was an editor since 3 July 2005, first interested in *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. She resided in Jerusalem and identified as a Jewish professional editor, writing articles for Wikipedia about (in her order) rabbis, Breslov personalities, Jewish personalities, Hasidic dynasties, yeshivas, streets, neighborhoods, landmarks, cemeteries, Jewish themes, books and films. She might have also included food and women biographies among her contributions. Some of her articles reached Good Article status, including Birds' Head Haggadah, Chaim Topol, Chavrusa, Downtown Triangle, Schwester Selma and The Precious Legacy. Yoninah, who enjoyed

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photography, was also active on Commons, where she contributed several images related to Jewish holidays and themes, along with photos of people and places in Jerusalem.

She became the soul of DYK. Yoninah assembled diverse and interesting sets of DYK "hooks", brought her knowledge of a wide array of topics to the project, and always put our readers' interests at the forefront of her work. She contributed hundreds of articles to DYK; among her last was Psalm 148, written in collaboration. She added Hebrew text and facts about use in Judaism to almost sixty of the Psalms. She was known as someone who could find high-quality, visually intriguing images to use for DYK. As one editor noted, it's not an overstatement to say that "Yoninah has touched the lives of almost every English-speaking person in the world with access to the internet—not primarily because of the articles she wrote, but the huge positive effect she had in our community."

Her death was announced to the community at Wikipedia talk:Deceased Wikipedians on 17 March 2021, and confirmed privately by various editors. However, out of respect for Yoninah's privacy, additional information about her real-life identity and her death have since been suppressed. We never knew what she looked like, or any other personal information that did not relate directly to DYK and Wikipedia. Yoninah's gift to the world was what Wikipedia was created for—a sharing of knowledge that renders invisible the boundaries of geography and politics.

Over 60 Wikipedians have left testimonials on her talk page, including:

- "Losing her not only left a pretty noticeable gap at DYK, but her death also makes me feel like a cherished friend has vanished."
- "Yoninah just quietly got on with the work and made a huge contribution to the project that will be truly missed."
- "Yoninah's contributions to Wikipedia were immense, and she was an exceptionally

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Manuscript showing text of Haggadah with illustrations of bird-headed Jews baking matzo for Passover

collaborative and helpful colleague."

- "תהי נשמתה צרורה בצרור החיים." ("May her soul be bound up in the bond of life.")
- "Yoninah was a true guiding light in Wikipedia."
- "What a wonderful, generous spirit she held inside her earthly vessel."
- "You were always there for us on DYK, you were a rock, Yoninah."
- "She will be missed, and we will have big shoes to fill to continue her work."
- "Her commitment to the tidiness of the DYK section was magnificent."
- "Yoninah was a god-send when it came to images. Terrific lady, she was."
- "נר ה' נשמת אדם" ("The spirit of a woman is the candle of the Lord.")
- "The DYK community will feel less without Yoninah."
- "A true Wikipedian, the likes of which I'd never seen before on Wikipedia."
- "What a shattering loss. How tremendously valued she was in life."



Photo of a Passover Seder Plate, which Yoninah contributed to Commons.

Yoninah was beloved by many and will be remembered. May her memory be a blessing.

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Memory

- I remember interacting with Yoninah over at WP:DYKN! The suggestions given helped me improve my editing so much and in turn the quality of the DYKs! It was truly a pleasure

interacting with Yoninah. 🌻🌻🙏 DTM (talk) 06:06, 29 March 2021 (UTC)

DTM, thank you, but perhaps better place memories on her talk page. --Gerda Arendt (talk) 07:07, 29 March 2021 (UTC)

Noted. Thanks. DTM (talk) 11:39, 29 March 2021 (UTC)

- All I can say is, I have always loved that username. **Gerald WL** 11:04, 29 March 2021 (UTC)
- I'm deeply saddened to learn this. She'll be missed.--**3family6** (Talk to me | See what I have done) 22:58, 31 March 2021 (UTC)

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