

# Tzafun

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**TZAFUN (CAFUN)** (Hebraic צַפּוּן) - the name of the eleventh Part of the Seder Meal.

During the Jewish Passover (see: Passover) the leader of the liturgical assembly takes care to assure that the celebration runs strictly according to the order (in Hebrew: Seder). For this purpose he uses the special book, "The Passover Haggadah". "The Passover Haggadah" contains fourteen main parts to be accomplished sequentially. One of these parts is "TZAFUN (CAFUN)" - "HIDDEN". What is its meaning?

**To answer this question, one ought to perceive, that:**

- 1. The Hebrew name of this part of the Seder Meal (צַפּוּן) in "Haggada" sounds the same as the second part of the Hebrew biblical name "**Baal-Zephon**" - the name of the locality opposite which Israelites pitched a camp before their passage through the Sea of Reeds (cf. the Book of Exodus 14:2.9, but especially see the spelling of this word in the Book of Numbers 33:7: צַפּוּן)
- 2. The Hebrew word "**Tzafun**" / "**Zephon**" (in "Haggada" / in Bible) means "**hidden**" / "**north**". It is very important that these two versions of one Hebrew word have the same consonants. Because the consonants here are identical, so until the 6th century after Christ this two different words (one in "Haggada", the other in Bible) were the same word. Why? Because they differ only in the vocalic signs, added to the biblical text by Masoretes not before the 6th century after Christ (whereas the latest fragments of the Book of Exodus and the Book of Numbers were written about 6th century before Christ, and this fragments of the "Haggada" were the word "Afikoman" is were written about 2nd century after Christ).

While one accomplishes the eleventh Part of the Seder Meal "**Tzafun**", the special **unleavened "Afikoman"** is eaten.

**What is the meaning of "Afikoman" in Seder?**

- 1. It is a **liturgical sign**, i.e. the sign which not only informs about the reality, but also translocates its executors into this reality, as it is explained in "Haggada": "In every generation, one ought to regard himself as though he had personally come out of Egypt". It is fitting to notice the direction of the translocation accomplished by liturgy: not the translocation of past events to our time, but the translocation of us to the time of those past events; not the past events are made present for us, but we are made present at this past events.
- 2. Afikoman as liturgical sign acts in this manner: in the strictly appointed time of Seder, i.e. when everybody of Paschal participants eats Afikoman, then "here and now" paschal community really participates in the passage of God and of whole Israel between the halves of the divided waters of the Sea of Reeds (See Book\_of\_Exodus 14 [1]).

**The correct etymology of "Afikoman" is very important to understand its meaning in Seder.**

Against the prevailing opinion, it is not the Greek word on which "Afikoman" is based. The meaning of "Afikoman" is easily perceptible in its Hebrew inscription. But... where one can find this Hebrew word? The answer is following: within the framework of the 5th part of the Seder, the leader has to explain all the laws and orders bearing upon of the celebrated ceremony. This presentation of laws he has to finish on the prohibition of the eating of anything after the eating of paschal **Afikoman** (this prohibition is written in Mishna, where in the order Moed in the tractate Pesahim the tenth and final chapter discusses the order of the Passover seder: for Afikoman see X.8). Here we have the Hebrew word "Afikoman" - אֶפִיקוֹמָן. This word presented without these vocalic signs which were added to Hebrew texts by Masoretes about the 6th century after Christ, has the following form: "אֶפִיקוֹמָן". Because in dictionaries of Hebrew there is no the word with such consonants, one can suppose that this is a word formed as the composition of two or more well-known Hebrew words. Penetrating research showed that it is so indeed.

**So we have the meaning of "Afikoman", perceived in its Hebrew inscription:**

- Afik (אֶפִיק = bottom, chanel (see for example Psa 18:16: אֶפִיקַי מִבְּטוֹם הַיָּם - the bottom of the sea)
  - Afiko (אֶפִיקוֹ) = **its** bottom, **its** channel (added final וֹ - **its**)
  - man (מָן) = manna (see for example Exod 16:31)
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- In the composition it gives: Afikoman (אֶפִיכֹמָן)= its bottom is of the manna (i.e. the sea bottom is possessed by manna) - see also the description of the Afikoman <sup>[2]</sup>

### The meaning of Afikoman is the most clear against the background of history of Exodus:

- 1. On the one hand, let us consider the meaning of “Afikoman” in the history of Exodus:
  - 1.1. Afikoman is an **unleavened** bread - it is not leavened, its taste is rather close to the sweetness of manna, about which is written (Exod 16:31): “the taste of it as a wafer with honey”.
  - 1.2. Israelites going in a hurry out from Egypt, brought out **not leavened dough** in their kneading bowls, whereof they were baking **unleavened bread** on the way: “And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves” (Exod 12:39). Their march continued without a break by the space of seven days. In the middle of this period - during the night of the fourth day of the march - they were passing between two halves of the divided Sea of Reeds; they were passing upon the dry ground, upon **the bare bottom of the sea. “The Israelites walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea (Exod 14:29).**
  - 1.3. Israelites carrying “**manna**” (i.e. **not leavened dough**) on their shoulders, in a certain sense covered the bare bottom of the Sea of Reeds with “**manna**”. In a certain sense they changed the sea bottom into “manna”. Now we can understand why “Afikoman” means: its (i.e. of Sea of Reeds) bottom is manna.
  - 1.4. **For that reason:**
    - Afikoman = its bottom is manna.
    - Afikoman = its (i.e. of the Sea of Reeds) bottom is manna
  - 1.5. Because during this passage Israelites had nothing to eat excepting the dough not acidified, whereof they were baking **unleavened** cakes (“**Afikoman**”) - exactly for that reason at the time of Passover it is just after **the eating of Afikoman** that the eating is forbidden (except drinking the wine of the third and the fourth ritual cup, of course).
  - 1.6. **In brief: “Afikoman” is unleavened**, not sour, so “Afikoman” is like those unleavened cakes of historical Exodus, and especially of passage upon the dry bottom of the sea.
- 2. On the other hand, let us consider the meaning of “**Baal-Zephon**” in the history of Exodus:
  - 2.1. One can notice that the passage of Israelites took place exactly opposite to locality **Baal-Zephon**: Exod 14:2 “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of **Baal-Zephon**; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea”.
  - 2.2. Because two main facts are:
    - 2.2.1. As it is proved in the first section of this article, “**Baal-Zephon**” **can be read “Baal-Tzafun”**
    - 2.2.2. Afikoman is a liturgical sign not only informs about the reality, but also translocates its executors into this reality
    - 2.2.3. **so we can conclude:** Within the framework of the eleventh Part of the Seder Meal (“Tzafun”) there is the **unleavened Afikoman** eaten as a sign that **just now** participants of the paschal liturgy participate in the passage between the two halves of the divided Sea of Reeds, just after their encamping by the sea in front of **Baal-Zephon / Baal-Tzafun.**

### Conclusion

It is well known that rich in history and tradition, the Passover Seder commemorates the exodus of Jewish slaves from Egypt thousands of years ago... Now we can link the particular part of Seder with the particular part of exodus history: the eating of “Afikoman” in the eleventh Part of the Seder Meal (“**Tzafun**”) means that just in the time of this eating, *participants* of Passover *participate* in the passage under the leadership of God with their fathers between the two halves of the divided Sea of Reeds.

### The last remark

The eating of Afikoman by the participants of Passover translocates them into the whole way from the place of the consumption of the lamb in Egypt to the place of singing hymn in Lord's honour on the second strand of the Sea of Reeds, but - in compliance with the correct etymology of Afikoman and of the eleventh Part of the Seder Meal ("Tzafun") - chiefly into this its fragment which is on the bare bottom of the Sea of Reeds, in front of **Baal-Zephon**.

## External links

- Wojciech Kosek, The original rite of the Passover in the light of the literary scheme of the Book of Exodus 1-18, Wydawnictwo Naukowe of The Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow, Cracow 2008, pp. 440 - summary of the doctoral thesis <sup>[3]</sup>
- W. Kosek, The original rite of the Passover - Internet presentation in the English language <sup>[4]</sup>
- W. Kosek, The original rite of the Passover - Internet presentation in the German language <sup>[5]</sup>
- W. Kosek, The original rite of the Passover - Internet presentation in the Polish language <sup>[6]</sup>
- HAGGADAH (SHEL PESAH) in free Jewish encyclopedia on the Internet. <sup>[7]</sup>

## References

Wojciech Kosek, Pierwotny ryt Paschy w świetle schematu literackiego Księgi Wyjścia 1-18, Publisher: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej, 2008, pp. 440, 978-8374381598 <sup>[8]</sup> and [9]

## References

- [1] <http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=2&CHAPTER=14>
- [2] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/prANG/Exod39.html](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/prANG/Exod39.html)
- [3] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/summary\\_Wojciech\\_Kosek\\_Passover.html](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/summary_Wojciech_Kosek_Passover.html)
- [4] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/prANG/Exod01.html](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/prANG/Exod01.html)
- [5] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/prezentacja1/DDR\\_A\\_0\\_prezentacja1.html](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/prezentacja1/DDR_A_0_prezentacja1.html)
- [6] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/prezentacja1/A0\\_prezentacja1.html](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/prezentacja1/A0_prezentacja1.html)
- [7] <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=60&letter=H&search=HAGGADAH>
- [8] <http://mak.bn.org.pl/cgi-bin/makwww.exe?BM=23&IM=01&WI=KOSEK%7FWOJCIECH&NU=01&DD=11ISBN>
- [9] [http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca\\_doktorska/strony\\_kolorowe/Kosek\\_Pierwotny\\_ryt\\_329\\_330.pdf](http://www.adoracja.bielsko.opoka.org.pl/praca_doktorska/strony_kolorowe/Kosek_Pierwotny_ryt_329_330.pdf)

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