

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted February 18, 2008, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

WHAT IS THE AFIKOMAN?

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Today, we are used to the idea that the afikoman is a piece of matsah that is "standing in" for a piece of the Passover sacrifice of lamb. When the Temple stood, groups would buy into "shares" of lamb and everyone in the group would eat a portion as the last thing they tasted during the Passover meal.

In the Yerushalmi, however, we have several alternative definitions:

What does the term afikoman mean?

Rabbi Simon said in the name of R. Inanini bar R. Sisay: Kinds of music played as entertainment after dinner.

Rabbi Yochanan said: Kinds of sweet things eaten after the meal to whet one's thirst for further drinking.

Samuel said: For example, the mushrooms and pigeons of Hananiah bar Shilat which were delicacies eaten after the main part of the meal. (Y. Pesachim 10:8, 37d)

Here are some definitions we would never expect given our practices today! Instead of just some dry matsah we have music, sweets or savories! All of which seem designed to make sure the festive meal continues. In addition, these foods and practices seem designed to make sure that the people who came down as a group stay together in their group and not wander around and join someone else's group and mistakenly eat a Paschal sacrifice in which they have no share.

Discussion Questions:

1. Now that you have these definitions of the word afikoman, will you change your practice at your seder?
2. There is little worry that those at your table will wander off to another, but how will you make sure their interest is maintained at your seder table this year?