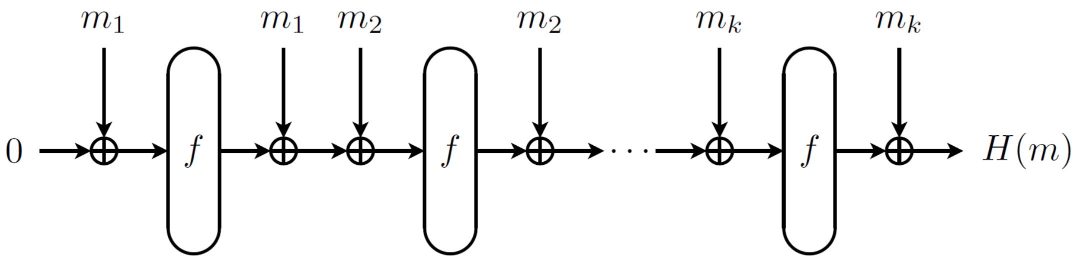
Problem 7. «Collisions»

Consider a hash function H that takes as its input a message m consisting of $k \cdot n$ bits and returns an n-bit hash value $H(m)$. The message m is at least one block long ($k \geqslant 1$), and can be split into k blocks of n bits each: m_1, m_2, ..., m_k. Let f be a function which takes an n-bit input and returns an n-bit output. We will use $\oplus$ to denote the bitwise exclusive-or operator.

The hash function H is defined iteratively as follows:

$$h_i := m_i \oplus f(h_{i-1} \oplus m_i),$$

where all n bits of h_0 are zero, and $H(m) := h_k$. Below is an illustration of the hash function H.



A **collision** for H is a pair of distinct messages (m, m') so that $H(m) = H(m')$.

Suppose that f is a secret random function and that you have obtained $10 \cdot n$ random different pairs $(x, f(x))$ of argument and value of the function f. Under these restrictions, propose an algorithm which finds a collision for H with a high probability ($> 1/2$).