

The Ballad of the Four Sons

Tune: *My Darling Clementine*

Said the father to his children
At the Seder you will dine
You will eat your fill of Matzah
You will drink four cups of wine.

Now this father had no daughters
But his sons they numbered four
One was wise and one was wicked
One was simple and a bore.

And the fourth was sweet and winsome
He was young and he was small
While his brothers asked the questions
He could scarcely speak at all.

Said the wise son to his father
Would you please explain the laws?
Of the customs of the Seder
Will you please explain the cause?

And the father proudly answered
As our fathers ate in speed
Ate the paschal lamb fore midnight
And from slavery were freed.

Then did sneer the son so wicked
What does all this mean to you?
And the father voice was bitter
As his grief and anger grew.

If yourself you don't consider
As a son of Israel
Then for you this has no meaning
You could be a slave as well.

Then the simple son said simply
What is this? And quietly
The good father told his offspring
"We were freed from slavery."

But the youngest son was silent
For he could not ask at all
His bright eyes were filled with wonder
As his father told them all.

Father's brother had four daughters
Who came through the kitchen door
They'd been cooking Pesach dinner
It was not a simple chore.

With one voice they said "Dear uncle,
It is time that you should teach
Your dear sons some Pesach cooking
While they work, we'll fill the breach."

And from then on, the whole family
Cooked and studied in their turn
They asked questions of each other
Each one taught and each one learned.

Torah's voice speaks on forever
To all people in all lands
Teaching us about our freedom
As the Holy One demands.

(Original author unknown, last four
verses by Jim Davis and Anna
Korteweg, Pesach 5769; revised 5777.)