

THE FOUR SONS

(sing to the tune of "Oh My Darling, Clementine")

THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR SONS

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 barely speak at all.

AND WHAT DOES THE WICKED SON SAY?

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

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

WHAT DOES THE WISE SON SAY?

Said the wise son to his father,
"Would you please explain the laws?
All of the customs of the seder
Will you please explain their cause?"

And the father proudly answered,
"As our fathers ate in speed,
Ate the paschal lamb 'ere midnight
And from slavery they were freed.

So we follow their example
And 'ere midnight must complete
The service of the seder'
After twelve we may not eat."

AND THE SIMPLE SON, WHAT DOES HE SAY?

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

AND THE SON WHO DOES NOT YET KNOW HOW TO ASK?

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

Now dear children, heed the lesson,
And remember evermore,
What the father told the children,
Told his sons that numbered four.