**Meir Ariel**

Two Mexicans on a ridge

The sun up high

One says: “Hey Juan, look sharp

Or else you’ll fall into the abyss!”

Juan’s just walking along

Lost in a dream

Doesn’t watch out, smiling and smirking

“Jose, where’s there an abyss ‘round here?”

A moment passes. Another moment. Another moment,

Until Jose heard the slap

Though there seems no point

Jose tries a yell

And he doesn’t believe it but again and again

A kind of moan rises up to his ears.

Jose lets down a rope at once

Ten minutes pass by

He’ll pull and pull, he’s good for any toil.

Whereas Juan, his two hands broken…

A moment passes. Another moment. Another moment…

Until Jose heard the slap

Jose calls out: “Grab it by your legs”

Juan, his legs aren’t right, too

Jose won’t give up: “So try with your teeth.”

Okay, Juan replies.

Jose ties the rope round a rock

And pulls and coils and pulls

Jose the friend, makes his spirit a rock

Pulls and bites his lips.

‘Cause he remembers a moment, another moment, another moment

Until his ears heard the slap.

Two strong Mexicans,

Against a dread ancient height

Juan’s shredding the rope

With the force of his own wild teeth.

Jose, his hand’s already weak

And poor Juan’s face is revealed

“Hey Juan,” Jose yells with his bleeding lip,

“You alive?” – Juan answers: “Y - - - -”

A moment passes. Another moment. Another moment.

Until Jose heard the slap.

And here for you is the moral of the tale:

Anyone who’s been slapped once —

Can’t ever learn to quit…

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“A *Midrash* on the Daughters of Zelophehad,” from *Ayn Tovah* (Festschrift for Tovah Ilan).

“Came forward the daughters of Zelophehad… the names of the daughters were” (Numbers 27:1).

Why are they first called the daughters of Zelophehad, and only then by their names? After shadow (*tzel*) and fear (*pakhad*) that they had at first. At first was the shadow of their father, and they were afraid to hold up their heads. When the sisters drew closer together, they grew more powerful and knew their names, as it says: “came forward the daughters of Zelophehad…and the names…”

“The plea of Zelophehad’s daughters is just” (Number 27:7).

Tanut asked God: If the daughters of Zelophehad told the truth, why does it not say so in your Torah, for you are true and your Torah is true and your word exists forever. As it also says: “The teaching of the Lord is perfect” (Psalms 19:8).

God answered her: “Truth springs up from the earth” (Psalms 85:12).

Another version: “You must be wholehearted with the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 18:13).

Tanut asked: This truth, even though it tarries, shall we wait for it or prophesy it?

God kept silent.

That is why they say, silence resembles confession.

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How is it that one star

Alone dares. How does he dare, for God’s sake.

One star alone.

I wouldn’t have

Dared. And I, in fact,

Am not alone.