

Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael Tractate Vayassa, Exodus 16:14

When the fall of dew lifted (Ex. 16:14). Behold Scripture has taught you how the manna used to come down for Israel. The north wind would come and sweep the desert; then rain would come down and level the ground; then the dew would come up and the wind would blow upon it. The ground thus became a sort of golden table on which the manna would come down and from which the Israelites would take it and eat it.

Over the surface of the Wilderness. Not upon all the wilderness, but only upon part of it. *Fine* teaches that it was fine, *flaky* teaches that it was like flakes, *as the frost* teaches that it came down upon the ground like sleet - these are the words of R. Joshua.

Rabbi Eleazar of Modi'im says: *When the fall of dew lifted* means when the prayer of our forefathers who lay in the earth went up. *Over the surface of the wilderness*. Not upon all of the wilderness but only upon part of it. *Fine* (*dak* דק), teaches that it came from heaven, as it is said: *Who spread out the skies (kadok כדוק) like gauze* (Isa. 40:22). And since it came down from heaven one might think that it would be cold when it came down, but it says: "warm" (*ham* חם). One might think that it came down with noises but it says: "silent" (*has* חס). One might think that it came down on the ground, and how do we know that it only came down upon vessels? It says: "Like a lid".

Rabbi Tarfon says: it merely came down upon the hands of those who gathered it. "Like a pardon". God stretched out His hand, as it were, and accepted the prayer of our forefathers who lay in the earth, and in return sent down the manna for Israel, in accordance with what is said in the passage: *I have found redemption (kofer כפר)* (Job 33:24).