silver, gold or metal, and take it up to the kohen; and the kohen would take it up to the altar. The kohen would then gather a handful with the tips of his fingers and burn the entire handful on the altar, and the rest would be eaten by the kohanim. This is the procedure for those that were eaten. The procedure for those that were wholly burnt, the tasks that might be done with the meal-offerings by outsiders [non-kohanim] and those that were to be done by kohanim, and the rest of its details, are explained in the tractate built about this subject, i.e. the Talmud tractate M'nahoth.

The presentation of minhah offerings is done when the Temple is extant, by male kohanim. If a kohen transgressed and changed the procedure of a minhah that was set down explicitly for it, he would [thus] disobey a positive precept.

117 not to offer up leaven (yeast) or honey on the altar: as it is stated, for of no leaven and of no honey shall you burn any as an offering by fire to the Lord (Leviticus 2:11). The injunction was repeated at the beginning of the verse, for it is stated, No meal-offering which you bring to the Lord shall be made with leaven (ibid.). Now, “honey” is a general name for the known [usual kind of] honey, as well as honey from dates, which is the general “honey” [mentioned] in the Torah, and also the juice that runs from [all] sweet fruits. And the admonition not to burn it includes a ban not to put any of it into the compounding of the incense; as the apothecaries used to say, honey would be fine (excellent) for the incense, but the Torah forbade it.

The root reasons for this precept are too hidden to find even a small hint of them. However, I conveyed before, at the beginning of my words, that my intention in these reasons [for the precepts] that I write, is to educate the young and make them realize, as they begin to learn sacred written texts, that the words of the Torah have reasons and purposes, and let them accept them in their way of learning, according to the limitations of their intelligence. The precepts should not be for them, at the beginning, like the words of a sealed book (Isaiah 29:11), lest they rebel against them as a result in their youth, and then leave them forever and go off to worthless vanity. Therefore I will write about them whatever comes to mind at first thought; and let
no questioner seize upon me [with objections] after he knows the purpose.

Now, I say that everything to do with an offering is in order to bestir the thought of the person who brings it; in accord with that deed he will acquire his conceptions in his soul—all as we have written earlier (§95). Therefore, by keeping ḥanētz, which is made in a long interval of time, far removed from his offering, a person will attain the idea of acquiring the quality of alertness, lightness and swiftness in the activity of the Eternal Lord, blessed is He. As our Sages of blessed memory said,⁴ be light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion, to do the will of your Father in heaven. The lesson is more essential in the meal-offering of an individual than in the minḥah of the community, for despondency and lethargy are rather found in an individual, since [in] a community, one will alert another. Hence the Torah was not insistent about it for a minḥah of the community that was brought from time to time, such as the two loaves on Shavu'OTH. With the showbread, however, even though it is also called a minḥah of the community, because it was a continual regular offering every Sabbath the Torah was insistent about it, and we were commanded about it too that it should be of matzah.

Now, concerning the rejection of honey, we would say to the tender children in order to discipline them, that it is to influence one’s concepts so that a person will minimize his striving after foods that are sweet to his taste, in the way that gluttons and guzzlers are always drawn after everything sweet. Thus let him set his heart only on foods that are beneficial to his body and necessary to his sustenance, and that maintain the health of his limbs.⁵ Hence it is fitting for every intelligent human being to set his intention in his food and drink not toward the purpose of the tactile sensations of his throat. If people were but wise, they would understand this (Deuteronomy 32:29)—that the entire matter of the tactile sense is shameful for them. Then all the more certainly is it not fitting for them to aim for it and to take pleasure in it, but only what nature makes absolutely necessary. It was some of the men of wisdom who wrote that the tactile sense is something shameful for us.⁶

I heard another reason, too, for the ban on leaven and honey: because leaven raises itself ["puffs itself up"], and honey similarly rises greatly when it is boiling. Hence they were rejected, to imply that an abomination to the Lord is every one that is high, proud in heart
(Proverbs 16:5). Moreover, I saw in the commentary of Ramban of blessed memory that he wrote thus. This is his phrasing: Because the offerings are for the good will of the honored Eternal Lord, those things which have a strong power to change states of nature are not to be brought; and so also should utterly sweet things, like honey, not be brought; but only tempered, balanced substances—as the Sages of blessed memory said, in the creation of the world, He joined the quality of mercy with the quality of justice.

The laws of the precept are, for example, what the Sages of blessed memory said, that all meal-offerings which were offered up on the altar were to be brought of matzah, as we stated. So too the remainders of meal-offerings which the kohanim ate: even though they were allowed to eat them with every food, and with honey, they would not eat them as hametz—for it is stated, It shall not be baked with leaven; as their portion [have I given it, etc.] (Leviticus 6:10), which would imply that even their portion they should not make into hametz. If someone made hametz of its remainders, he would be given whiplashes. And one is thus whipped for any single action with it: How so?—if he kneaded it as hametz, shaped it into a loaf of hametz, basted it with water [making it] hametz, or baked it as hametz, he is given whiplashes—for it is stated, shall not be made with leaven (Leviticus 2:11), and again, It shall not be baked with leaven (ibid. 6:10), to impose punishment for every individual action: thus, for making it hametz, there is a penalty of whiplashes.

Then [we have these laws]: The wheat of meal-offerings is not to be wet before grinding, for fear that it will become leavened. Nevertheless, our Sages of blessed memory taught that meal-offerings that were baked were kneaded with lukewarm water, and they were watched that they should not become leavened—because the kohanim were quick. As for leaven (yeast) and honey, their ban is on the slightest amount: for it is stated, you shall not burn of it (Leviticus 2:11), even the least bit. But guilt is not incurred unless they are burnt with an offering or as an offering. Whether they themselves are burned or a mixture containing them, the punishment of whiplashes is given. However, if they are burned by themselves as fuel, there is no guilt; for it is stated, but on the altar they shall not come up for a pleasing savor (ibid. 12): for a pleasing savor you shall not bring them up, but you may bring them up for fuel. The rest of its details are explained in the Talmud tractate Menahoth.
119 to offer up salt on all the offerings: i.e. that one should put salt on the meat of an animal sacrifice, and so too on the flour of meal-offerings—as it is stated, with all your offerings you shall offer salt (Leviticus 2:13). We said earlier, at the precept of building the Temple (§95), that at the root of the religious duty of the offering lies the purpose of making the spirit of the person who brings it worthy and upright; and therefore, to arouse the spirit of the person offering it, he was commanded to bring good, savory things, which are beloved to him, as we wrote above. The salt in it is also for this root reason—so that this act will be complete, lacking nothing according to the norms of human behavior in the matter: then his heart will be the more aroused by it. For anything without salt will not be pleasing to a man, neither in its taste nor even in its aroma. And apart from this, there is another matter implicit in salt: Salt makes everything endure and prevents spoilage and rot.\(^1\) So too with the act of the offering, a man is saved from becoming spoiled; his spirit will be protected and it will remain in existence forever.

Among the laws of the precept there is what the Sages of blessed memory taught, that all offerings were salted before they went [were brought] up to the altar; and you would find nothing brought to the altar without salt except libations of wine, blood, and wood. This matter is [known by] the Oral Tradition; there is no Scriptural verse for it.\(^2\) If someone transgressed and brought an offering without salt, however, the offering would be fit and acceptable—except for the minhah (meal-offering), which salt can prevent [from being acceptable, by its absence]: for it is stated about this explicitly, and you shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your meal-offering (Leviticus 2:13).\(^3\) The rest of its details are explained in the Midrash Sifra and in certain places in the tractate M'nahoth.

It is in effect when the Temple is extant, for male kohanim. If one transgressed this and offered up a minhah or an animal sacrifice without any salt at all, he would thus disobey a positive precept; moreover, he would [thus] violate a negative precept (§118)—for it is written, and you shall not let the salt . . . be lacking, etc.