

Freedom: Being G-d's Servant

Leviticus 25:39

וְכִי יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ וְנִמְכַר לָךְ לֹא תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ עֲבָדָת עֶבֶד

And if your brother becomes destitute with you, and is sold to you, do not work him with slave labor.

Maimonides Negative Commandment #257

The 257th prohibition is that we are forbidden from giving a Jewish servant degrading and humiliating work, as a Canaanite servant would do.

The source of this prohibition is G-d's statement (exalted be He), "Do not work him like a [Canaanite] servant."

In the words of the *Sifra*: "You shall not have him carry in a *linta* behind you, nor carry your things before you to the bathhouse." A *linta* is a small mat that one rests on after becoming tired from exercise. A servant customarily picks it up and carries it after his master. We are prohibited from giving any such jobs to a Jewish servant. He may be given only such jobs that an employed worker would agree to do. This is seen from G-d's statement "He shall be with you just like an employee or a resident hand."

(See also Negative Commandments #258-261 and Positive Commandment #137)