**Rambam Hilchot Avadim chapter 9**

**Halacha 1**

When a Jew has relations with a Canaanite maid-servant - even if she is his own maid-servant - the offspring is considered a Canaanite slave with regard to all matters. And one may use him for service forever as any other slave.

**Halacha 2**

The laws applying to a Canaanite slave apply whether the master purchases the Canaanite slave from a fellow Jew, a resident alien, a gentile living under our jurisdiction or a person from another nation.

Similarly, a resident alien, a gentile living under our jurisdiction or a person from another nation has the prerogative of selling himself to a Jew as a slave, and then he is a slave with regard to all matters. Similarly, when a gentile sells his sons and his daughters they become Canaanite slaves. This is reflected by [Leviticus 25:45](http://www.chabad.org/9926#v45): "From the children of the residents from them and from their families who are with you who give birth in your land may you purchase." All of these are Canaanite slaves with regard to all matters.

**Halacha 3**

If a person from another nationality engages in relations with one of our Canaanite maid-servants, a son who is conceived is a Canaanite slave, as implied by the phrase *Ibid.*: "Who give birth in your land." If, however, one of our slaves has relations with a gentile woman, the offspring is not a slave, as implied by the phrase: "Who give birth in your land." For a slave is not considered to have any genealogical connection to his offspring.

**Halacha 4**

When a gentile king wages war, brings captives and sells them, a slave who is purchased in this manner is considered a Canaanite slave with regard to all matters. The same laws apply if such a king grants permission for anyone who desires to go and kidnap people from the nation with whom he is waging war and sell them as slaves, or if his laws state that whoever does not pay his taxes - or does such and such or fails to do such and such - may be sold as a slave, the laws he ordains are binding, and these individuals are considered Canaanite slaves.

**Halacha 5**

When a gentile purchases another gentile as a slave, he does not purchase his physical person, but only the fruits of his labor. Nevertheless, if the gentile sells this slave to a Jew, his physical person is acquired by the Jew.

**Halacha 6**

A woman may purchase maid-servants, but she should not purchase slaves - even those below the age of majority, lest suspicions of her modesty arise. If she does purchase them, she acquires their physical person as a man would. It appears to me that she is forbidden only to purchase slaves that are nine years old or older.

Similarly, it is forbidden for a person to free a Canaanite slave. Anyone who frees such a slave violates a positive commandment, for [Leviticus 25:46](http://www.chabad.org/9926#v46) states: "And you shall have them work for you forever." Nevertheless, if the master frees him, he attains his freedom, as we have explained. And once he frees him, we compel his master to compose a bill of release for him conforming to all the laws we have described.

It is permitted to free a slave for the sake of a mitzvah, even a mitzvah of Rabbinic origin - e.g., if ten free men were not present in the synagogue, a person may free his slave to complete the quorum. Similar laws apply in all analogous situations. Similarly, if people are treating a person's maid-servant in a licentious manner and she presents a stumbling block to sinful people, we compel her master to free her so that she will marry and thus remove the stumbling block. The same principles apply in all analogous situations.

**Halacha 7** A master may tell his Canaanite slave: "Work for me, but I will not provide you with sustenance," and the slave must instead, go and beg from door to door and derive his sustenance from charity. For the Jews are obligated to support the slaves that live among them.

When does the above apply? To a man's own slaves. For the court does not take any steps to protect the property of adults. If a person does not provide food and drink for his slaves in a fitting manner, they will flee or die. And a person has greater concern for his own money than anyone else. Different rules apply, however, to slaves that his wife brought to his household as *nichsei m'log*. He is obligated to provide for their sustenance, for this is one of the conditions of bringing them to his household. For if the husband does not provide them with sustenance, they will die or flee, and he is not responsible for them.

**Halacha 8** It is permissible to have a Canaanite slave perform excruciating labor.Although this is the law, the attribute of piety and the way of wisdom is for a person to be merciful and to pursue justice, not to make his slaves carry a heavy yoke, nor cause them distress. He should allow them to partake of all the food and drink he serves. This was the practice of the Sages of the first generations who would give their slaves from every dish of which they themselves would partake. And they would provide food for their animals and slaves before partaking of their own meals. And so, it is written [Psalms 123:2](http://www.chabad.org/16344#v2): "As the eyes of slaves to their master's hand, and like the eyes of a maid-servant to her mistress' hand, so are our eyes to God."

Similarly, we should not embarrass a slave by our deeds or with words, for the Torah prescribed that they perform service, not that they be humiliated. Nor should one shout or vent anger upon them extensively. Instead, one should speak to them gently, and listen to their claims. This is explicitly stated with regard to the positive paths of Job for which he was praised [Job 31:13](http://www.chabad.org/16433#v13), 15: "Have I ever shunned justice for my slave and maid-servant when they quarreled with me.... Did not He who made me in the belly make him? Was it not the One who prepared us in the womb?"

Cruelty and arrogance are found only among idol-worshipping gentiles. By contrast, the descendants of Abraham our patriarch, i.e., the Jews whom the Holy One, blessed be He, granted the goodness of the Torah and commanded to observe righteous statutes and judgments, are merciful to all.

And similarly, with regard to the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, which He commanded us to emulate, it is written [Psalms 145:9](http://www.chabad.org/16366#v9): "His mercies are upon all of His works." And whoever shows mercy to others will have mercy shown to him, as implied by [Deuteronomy 13:18](http://www.chabad.org/9977#v18): "He will show you mercy, and be merciful upon you and multiply you."

Blessed be God who grants assistance. This concludes the tenth book, the Book of Acquisitions. It contains 75 chapters.