

Can The Problem of Renting to a House of Avodah Zara be Avoided by Having a Non-Jewish Partner?

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Question: We've discussed many scenarios where a Jew is not allowed to do business with a church. Regarding many other prohibitions, there exists a solution of finding a non-Jewish partner. Would it be possible to use this solution in cases involving houses of *avodah zara*?

Answer: We can explain this better by using a specific example:

If a Jew is looking into buying a nursing home that has a church renting space inside it in the manner that we previously explained would be forbidden for him to rent to, he has an option of finding a non-Jewish partner to purchase the property with him. If he buys the nursing home together with a non-Jewish partner, they can stipulate the partnership in such a way that the room housing the church belongs to the non-Jew and he is the only one renting to them.

However, this can only be done before the building is purchased. If a Jew purchased such a nursing home on his own and then realizes that the on-site church presents a problem, he cannot avoid the issue by subsequently finding a non-Jewish partner and giving him over the rights to the room occupied by the church. As we explained, the reason it is forbidden to rent a room to a church is because of *lifnei iver*, enabling them to sin. If a Jew fully owns the room and then gives it to a non-Jewish partner, he is still enabling the house of *avodah zara* to worship their idol. Therefore, the partnership would have to be made before the sale so that the Jewish partner never becomes the owner of the room that houses the church.