

How Is Avodah Zara Defined?

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Question : How would we define what constitutes *avodah zara* today?

Answer: To give a broad definition: *Avodah zara* means any religious worship to any deity other than Hashem.

In today's times, this generally refers to Christianity.

Many people are of the mistaken belief that Christianity's belief in a "trinity" does not constitute *avodah zara*. The consensus amongst the *Rishonim*, however, is that Christianity does constitute Avodah Zara. The Rambam and others clearly state that Christianity is a form of Avodah Zara. Although I have heard that there is a small strain of Christianity that does not worship a trinity, the vast majority of adherents of the religion do; therefore, mainstream Christianity is definitely a form of *avodah zara* and Christian churches are houses of *avodah zara*.

It goes without saying that eastern religions also are considered *avodah zara*.

Question: Are any of today's major religions not *avodah zara*?

Answer: Islam is generally assumed to not be considered *avodah zara*.

Although they believe in a *navi sheker*, they do not worship him as a god. Accordingly, when we discuss *avodah zara*, we are not referring to Islam.