

option 18

One Person Can Save Eight Lives

ORTHODOX POSITIONS ON ORGAN DONATION

Judaism supports organ donation

once death has been declared as determined by halacha.

Some poskim, including the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, accept 'brain-stem death' as the halachic criterion for death. This approach allows for the donation of eight life-saving organs as well as cornea and tissues.

Other poskim assert that halacha does not recognize 'brain-stem death' as the halachic criterion for death. Accordingly, organ donation is only permissible after the heart stops beating ("cardiac death"). One can usually still donate heart valves and cornea at this stage. Occasionally, the liver and kidneys may also be successfully retrieved.

Jews, in consultation with their rabbi, may choose to donate in consonance with their halachic viewpoint. Many Jews choose to donate for one or more of the following reasons:



Anyone can be a potential donor, regardless of age, race or medical history



Organ recipients are determined by computer algorithm based on medical considerations alone. The process is not influenced by gender, ethnicity or religion.

Many rabbis view it as the ultimate final mitzvah

that a person may perform before the World to Come.

- They see organ donation as an incredible mitzvah that will serve as a great merit (zechut) for the deceased.
- It is a source of great pride and comfort for families to know that life somehow emerged from the tragedy of their loved one's death.
- They wish to help prevent the unnecessary deaths of fellow members of society, in the spirit of beneficence, solidarity, and reciprocity. They hope that if they would need a life-saving organ, someone would donate to them.

However, some Jews, like other members of society, elect not to donate, for a variety of emotional, religious, and cultural reasons. Their wishes must be respectfully accommodated. Option 18 respects all halachic perspectives and provides emotional and religious support for Jews grappling with this decision.



A donor family may direct their gift directly to a family member or friend on the waiting list for an organ



All costs associated with donation are covered by the local organ procurement organization

YOU SHALL CHOOSE LIFE

"Anyone Who Saves a Life, It is As If He Has Saved an Entire World"
Talmud



PERSONAL STORIES OF ORGAN DONATION



Lucy Dee, 48, Donated Five Organs

The Almighty did a miracle for us that from our tragedy we could do a miracle for others.

-Rabbi Leo Dee, Husband



Gavri Benson, 16, Donated Four Organs

Gavri embodied one of the most basic principles of Jewish law, namely that whoever saves a life is considered to have saved an entire world.

-Jennifer Benson, Mother



Yehuda Rubinovitz, 36, Donated Six Organs

We will miss him at all times, but I am comforted to know that his great heart is now beating in someone else's chest. Others will be able to see thanks to him, or will breathe thanks to him. It is amazing.

-David Rubinovitz, Brother



Kim Jensen Pimley, Heart Donation Recipient

My life was saved by the kindness of a perfect stranger. I live with profound awe and gratitude for my donor family's generosity, and will never waste a beat of this precious heart.



JUDAISM AND ORGAN DONATION: FAQ

WHICH ORGANS AND TISSUES DOES JUDAISM PERMIT FOR DONATION?

When death has been determined under Jewish Law, Judaism permits the transplantation of organs and tissues that save or enhance the quality of the recipient's life, such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, small intestines, cornea, and heart valves.

WILL ORGAN DONATION CAUSE AN UNUSUAL DELAY UNTIL BURIAL?

No. Recovery surgery is usually completed within 36 hours of death and everything will be done to expedite the process. In the interim, other preparations can be made for the funeral and shiva.

DOESN'T JUDAISM REQUIRE TO BURY BODIES INTACT?

The Jewish value of honoring the deceased (Kavod Ha-Met) generally requires the body to be buried intact. Yet organ and tissue donation is a dignified medical procedure that saves multiple lives.

The opportunity to save lives (pikuach nefesh) overrides any obligations for bodily integrity and brings great honor (kavod) to the deceased in performing this one final noble act.

DOES ORGAN OR TISSUE DONATION INTERFERE WITH JEWISH FUNERAL OR BURIAL RITES?

No. An organ donor can be buried in a Jewish cemetery with all traditional funeral and burial rituals, including Tahara (ritual washing).



Dedicated in memory of **ALISA FLATOW** ^{ob™} whose donation of seven organs raised awareness to Jewish organ donation around the world



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