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British Haredi Religious Court Stalls Organ Donation Drive



After meeting the Chief Rabbi in March 2009, the founder of a campaign to encourage Orthodox Jews to carry organ donor cards agreed not to lecture on organ donation in the UK until the Chief Rabbi and his haredi-controlled London Beth Din would their position that summer. But 16 months have passed without any action from the Chief Rabbi or his beit din.

[Beth Din stalls organ donation drive](#)

By Simon Rucker • London Jewish Chronicle

The founder of a campaign to encourage Orthodox Jews to carry organ donor cards has voiced frustration at the time taken by the Chief Rabbi to issue new guidelines on the subject.

Lord Sacks's office said its views on organ donation would be available before Rosh Hashanah.

But Robert Berman, who runs the Halachic Organ Donor Society (Hods), said he had been led to believe that the policy was due out last August.

Mr Berman, who lives in Jerusalem, said that after meeting the Chief Rabbi in March 2009, he had agreed not to lecture on organ donation in the UK until the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din decided their position in the summer.

He said: "I'm puzzled as to why it would take 16 months and counting for the Chief Rabbinate of England to review the halachic and medical issues surrounding organ donation."

Arguing there had been no major new developments on organ donation in medicine or Jewish law over the past decade, he declared: "I hope this review will not drag on for years, as I fear it will. This issue is of an urgent life-saving nature and should be given priority."

Two hundred rabbis from Israel, the USA and elsewhere support the carrying of the Hods card.

While some rabbis still insist on the traditional principle that death takes place only when the heart stops beating, increasingly more rabbinic authorities, including Israel's Chief Rabbinate, have begun to accept brain-stem death as legitimate.

A spokesman for the Office of the Chief Rabbi said for the past 12 months, the London Beth Din had been engaged "in careful consideration" of organ donations and living wills.

[Hat Tip: Seymour.]

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Comments

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Some of these buys have been taking donations of penis from live bodies-so what's the problem here?

Posted by: Norm | [July 15, 2010 at 10:17 AM](#)

The chareidim do not espouse the modern definitions of brain death because for them brain death occurs at birth!!

Posted by: Dr. Dave | [July 15, 2010 at 10:45 AM](#)

How sad and an painful to read this.

It is only a matter of time when a dying Jewish child or other Jewish family member is in desperate need of an organ (a la pekuach nefesh) but the British Haredi Religious Court is not giving us Yidden a pasken to live or die by.

Could someone please give them a message from me and tell my distinguished Hebaric-Judaic bretherin for Kehelas Yisrooel to stop pulling on their dicks while dreaming of uber hot n' Skanky babettes sans sheyteleh or stop watching porn between taking out the Torach and Adon Olam and save a Jewish life or even better a goy's life since we are all betzelem alohim.
BS.

What was that lie?

I forget already.

Perhaps someone can refresh my memory.

Something about saving a Jewish life is as if the entire world was saved.

Yah right.

Who the fuck are they scamming while have a jolly good time vacationing in Thailand.

Posted by: Menachem Mendel III | [July 15, 2010 at 01:21 PM](#)

the biggest fraud of the lot, is the CR, of! such an intellectual, such a humanist.

"bidon" is what they call people like him in french slang, an empty tin drum that is good for nothing except making noise. between his 'feeling' -read inaction- on converts to this, no wonder he postures even as a humble student to the masses. Useless, I would return his Koren siddur, had I not received it as a gift.

"קיש קריא-נא, קישאיסתר א בלגי".

A shame for otherwise magnificent Minhag Anglia that completely succumbed to the medieval Haredism and dark ages Chassidus.

Posted by: Yosef ben Matitya | [July 15, 2010 at 03:19 PM](#)

I no haredi, but I would personally maintain that a person is alive so long as the autonomic nervous system (including heart beat) is at all active, whether autonomously or aided.

I also think that aborting a viable fetus amounts to a killing (which may or may be justified, just like the organ donation).

I would in both instances, defer to the ethical choices of the protagonist as determinative. It is the individual's choice of which ethical school he or she elects to adhere.

Posted by: A E ANDERSON | Miami, Fla. | [July 15, 2010 at 04:35 PM](#)

They are probably stalling because it's all seeped in politics.

Posted by: R | [July 15, 2010 at 05:39 PM](#)

British Haredi Religious Court Stalls Organ Donation Drive

But the piano donations are doing just fine.

Posted by: Dr. Dave | [July 15, 2010 at 09:25 PM](#)

"a person is alive so long as the autonomic nervous system (including the heart beat) is at all active." Anderson

Anderson,

First, the heart beat is not said to be "active." The heart either beats or it doesn't beat.

Second, the heart muscle itself is not considered to be a part of the nervous system - autonomic or otherwise. it is merely regulate by it at times.

Posted by: Bill | [July 15, 2010 at 09:32 PM](#)

Bill,

But if it beats, then that is being caused by the nervous system (or something else). I interpret that as living.

Posted by: A E ANDERSON | Miami, Fla. | [July 15, 2010 at 10:32 PM](#)

but if it beats, then that is being causes by the nervous system or something else - Anderson

the heart can beat spontaneously without the help of the nervous system.

Posted by: Bill | [July 16, 2010 at 11:40 AM](#)

<http://www.jlaw.com/Articles/brain.html>

The Brain Death Controversy in Jewish Law
Rabbi Yitzchok A. Breitowitz

Historically, death was not particularly difficult to define from either a legal or halachic standpoint. Generally, all vital systems of the body-respiratory, neurological, and circulatory-would fail at the same time and none of these functions could be prolonged without the maintenance of the others. Today, with major technological advances in life support, particularly the development of respirators and heart-lung machines, it is entirely possible to keep some bodily systems "functioning" long after others have ceased. Since we no longer face the inevitable simultaneity of systemic failures, it has become necessary to define with greater precision and specificity which physiological systems are indicators of life and which (if any) are not, especially in light of the scarcity of medical resources and the pressing need for organs for transplantation purposes. Over the past 20 or so years, the concept of "neurological death" commonly called "brain death," "whole brain death" or "brain-stem death" (and, sometimes, inaccurately-termed "cerebral death") has gained increasing acceptance within the medical profession and among the vast majority of state legislatures and courts in the United States. Whether this standard comports with halacha is a matter of great controversy among rabbinic authorities. The purpose of this article is not to take sides nor in any way resolve the halachic debate. Its purpose is more modest. This article will attempt to explain to the general reader: (1) what is "brain death" and how is it clinically determined; (2) some (not all) of the major sources on whether it is an acceptable criterion of death from the standpoint of halacha; (3) a "scorecard" on how contemporary authorities line up; and (4) the halachic and legal ramifications of one view or the other.

Posted by: Nachshon ben Aminadav | [July 18, 2010 at 02:21 AM](#)