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Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

Therefore it is very clear that in Islam:

“Organ donation is a very personal choice and one should consider seeking the opinion of a scholar of their choosing.”

Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

That said, one of the fundamental purposes of Islamic law is the preservation of life. Allah greatly rewards those who save the life of others.

To help in this matter the reader’s attention is drawn to the following life-saving Fatwa:

In 1995, the UK-based Muslim Law (Shariah) Council resolved that:

• the medical profession is the proper authority to define signs of death
• current medical knowledge considers brain stem death to be a proper definition of death
• the Council accepts brain stem death as constituting the end of life for the purpose of organ transplantation
• the Council supports organ transplantation as a means of alleviating pain or saving life on the basis of the rules of the Shariah
• Muslims may carry donor cards
• the next of kin of a dead person, in the absence of a donor card or an expressed wish to donate their organs, may give permission to obtain organs from the body to save other people’s lives
• organ donation must be given freely without reward, trading in organs is prohibited
• this is supported by Muslim scholars from some of the most prestigious academies of the Muslim world who call upon Muslims to donate organs for transplantation. These include:
  - the Islamic Fiqh Academy of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (representing all Muslim countries)
  - the Grand Ulema Council of Saudi Arabia
  - the Iranian Religious Authority
  - the Al-Azhar Academy of Egypt
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How do I become a donor?

If you decide you would like to become a donor on your death, you need to join the NHS Organ Donor Register to ensure your wishes are recorded. Discuss your decision with those closest to you so that they are aware of your wishes. Adding your name to the register is simple and quick:

You can register online at
organdonation.nhs.uk
Or call 0300 123 23 23

To find out more about organ and tissue donation, visit
organdonation.nhs.uk

A guide to organ donation and Muslim beliefs
stem death'. This is not the same as being in a coma or 'persistent vegetative state'. Tests are carried out to strict guidelines to show conclusively when this has happened. When brain stem death is pronounced the patient may still be on a ventilator, and have a heart beat which continues to circulate blood around the body. This prevents the organs from losing the oxygen-rich blood supply which is necessary for a healthier transplanted outcome.

Organs can also be donated from people whose death has been certified because their heart has stopped. Certification in these 'non-heart beating' donors is also by doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team.

Care and respect

The removal of organs and tissues is carried out with the greatest care and respect. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

Islam and organ donation

In Islam there are two schools of thought with regard to organ donation. The human body, whether living or dead, enjoys a special honour and is inviolable, and fundamentally, Islamic law emphasises the preservation of human life. The general rule that 'necessities permit the prohibited' (al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat), has been used to support human organ donation with regard to saving or significantly enhancing a life of another provided that the benefit outweighs the personal cost that has to be borne. The following are some verses which have been used to support organ donation:

"Whosoever saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind."

Holy Qur’an, chapter 5, vs. 32

"Whosoever helps another will be granted help from Allah."

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

"If you happened to be ill and in need of a transplant, you certainly would wish that someone would help you by providing the needed organ."

Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi, Principal, Muslim College, London

An alternative view clearly states that:

"The saving of life is not absolute, but subject to the amount of cost that has to be borne. Therefore, although the above quotation enjoins the saving of life this is not without restriction or caveats.

"According to a similarly large number of Muslim scholars organ donation is not permitted. They consider that..."