

FailedMessiah.com

Covering Orthodox Judaism Since 2004

© 2004 – 2009

[Home](#)
[Chabad](#)
[Rubashkin](#)
[5WPR](#)
[Crime](#)
[Ethiopian Jews](#)
[Science](#)
[Advertise](#)
[Media](#)
[Contact & About](#)
[Donate](#)

December 30, 2010

What Do You Say To Rabbis Who Interfere With Organ Donations?

The death yesterday of former soccer star Avi Cohen has renewed public awareness of the lack of transplant organs in Israel. The deceased had given his own permission and carried an ADI donor card from the National Transplant Center. But in the end, under pressure from rabbis, the family refused and Cohen's organs were not made available to save the lives of others.



Head to Head / What do you say to rabbis who oppose the practice?

An interview with organ donation advocate Ofer Gilor.

By Dan Even • Ha'aretz



The death yesterday of former soccer star Avi Cohen has renewed public awareness of the lack of transplant organs in Israel. Cohen, 54, who was fatally injured in a traffic accident last week in Ramat Gan, was pronounced brain-dead by a medical committee at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv on Tuesday. Yesterday morning Cohen's heart stopped beating and he was later laid to rest.

The hospital produced a death certificate and an organ transplant coordinator was dispatched to the family for their consent. The deceased had given his own permission and carried an ADI donor card from the National Transplant Center. But in the end, under pressure from rabbis, the family refused and Cohen's organs were not made available for transplant.

Two and a half years have passed since 12-year-old Omri Gilor's tragic death, after being trapped in a cave where he was playing on Moshav Kadima. After he was pronounced brain-dead at the Schneider Children's Medical Center, his parents decided to donate his organs.

Since then, his father Ofer Gilor has become active in projects encouraging organ donation in Israel. He is concerned that this week's developments threaten to set back several years worth of efforts to raise the number of organ donors here.

Ofer Gilor, what do you say to Israeli rabbis who oppose organ donation?

Many rabbis have issued statements recognizing brain death and the potential to save lives. The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Amar, supported the donation of Avi Cohen's organs this week. But there are still rabbis in the ultra-Orthodox community who oppose organ donation, as well as some secular people, because no high-level Jewish religious authority has publicly issued a halakhic defense.

And so it happens that some completely secular families, who may be considering whether to donate their loved one's organs, are likely to refrain from doing so just because someone raises a rabbinical doubt.

Nonetheless, doctors have told me that they've never encountered anyone who has a problem with accepting organ donations. There's no problem in accepting them, only in giving.

What is your feeling on the Cohen family?

I don't know the family, so it's difficult to talk about them, but I can understand them and of course am very sorry for their loss.

When we were going through the most difficult situation in our lives, many people also came to us telling us we should do all kinds of things to increase the chances for a miracle, and that perhaps Omri would awaken. When a family is requested to donate organs, your world immediately turns upside down and you find yourself in a position where you never dreamed you'd end up.

There were people who prayed for Omri, and those who told us to go to a synagogue. During those moments, it was an embrace, despite the fact that prayer is not a part of our lives. But when it came time to consider organ donation, we kept this decision within the family.

It was a decision for a mother and a father to make, we did not even include grandparents. The more people the family includes in such a decision, the smaller the chances of a donation, because the person who says no is always more dominant.

What message would you like to send to the Cohen family?

I don't have a personal message for them, but I can say that if the family had donated organs, they would not only have saved lives but also advanced awareness of the issue - especially since we are talking about someone well-known, whom people admired and followed, an educational figure.

The family could have effected a significant change in the public, and in this case a turning point in saving lives through organ donation. It's sad, because now people are concerned that what happened this week will lead to a decrease in the percentage of donation agreements. Those who work in the field know how significant each donor is.

Two and a half years ago, when you were told that Omri was brain-dead, how did you come to the decision to donate his organs?

Omri was a charming boy who loved nature and sports. Nature was his second home. After [the accident], we had three days to say goodbye to him in the hospital. We agreed [to make the donation] after we asked ourselves what he would have wanted.

His twin brother Ohad said that Omri had seen an ADI donor card a few months earlier when we were sitting in a cafe, and even asked to add his name. This was characteristic of his sense of justice. He was like a gabai in a synagogue, collecting candies in his pocket for his friends.

His organs saved three children and two adults, including a heart transplant patient on the verge of death, and a girl who suffered from complications in her digestive system. She received his organs when an expert surgeon in the field happened to be visiting Israel. In addition, one of his corneas restored the vision of a boy from Haifa.

In principle, organ donation [from one person] can save the lives of up to six people - two kidneys, two lungs, a heart and a liver - and the vision of two more who receive the corneas.

Can you recall the moment when the subject arose for discussion?

The moment that brain death is pronounced - it's a disaster, and it cannot be taken for granted that people will agree. In times of great fear and sadness, when you understand that there is no more hope, when a parent loses a child, it's difficult to think about the happiness of someone else whose life is going to be saved.

For us personally, it was very hard for quite a while to keep in touch with those who had received his organs. We only recently met the person who received his heart, and soon we'll meet the girl who received his digestive system.

Has donating Omri's organs strengthened you in any way?

I personally did not see organ donation as a way to keep Omri's memory alive, because nothing will bring him back. I visit his grave every week, and I still feel sadness and loss and longing, and in this sense I don't know whether organ donation adds or subtracts anything. But the donation definitely strengthens values related to giving, mutual responsibility and saving lives.

What is the importance of a donor card if the family can later refuse to donate the organs of the loved one who signed it?

While the card has no legal standing, it still holds great importance in terms of the statement it makes, and in encouraging families to donate organs. The National Transplant Center is involved in education and awareness programs to increase the amount of cardholders, and I also devote some of my time to telling Omri's story to advance public awareness of transplants.

What else do you do to increase the number of donations?

Last September, symbols - an idea I thought of - were distributed to the families of donators as a means of raising awareness. The symbol was designed by Roe Shachnai, a Bezalel graduate and lecturer at the Shenkar College who is in my army reserve unit. In the shape of an offering hand, it bears the words "the gift of life" and is meant to be affixed to the graves of donors. It has become a national badge of esteem and educates people by marking the graves of those who, in their deaths, saved lives.

In your experience, how does the Israeli public regard organ donation?

There is an outrageous amount of ignorance among Israelis on this subject. It is important to understand that the diagnosis of brain death is based on research considered irreproachable by the medical community. There is not one documented case of error in such a diagnosis in Israel.

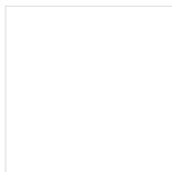
Still the public, due to lack of information or some idea they hold personally, are confused about what it means to be in a vegetative state - in which different sections of the brain have been injured, and a condition in which the body can be sustained on life support for a long time and some parts of the brain continue to operate internal organs - versus the state of brain death, for which no medical technology can prevent the heart from stopping within a few days.

When someone is diagnosed as brain-dead, the heart will stop within a few days - and in between there is a window of time to harvest organs for donation and save lives.

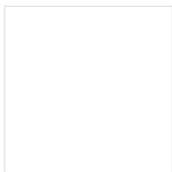
There is another argument stemming from ignorance, according to which some believe that doctors prefer not to provide treatment so they can remove organs from the patient - but this is completely ridiculous. First of all, doctors are obligated to save lives whenever there is a chance for recovery.

Beyond this, in order for a patient to become an organ donor after brain death, he must receive the best medical care for the internal organs to be preserved. In any case, doctors provide intensive medical care to patients who are in critical condition and unconscious.

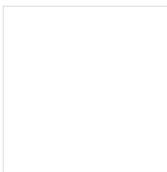
You might also like:



Protect Organ Donation



Modern Orthodox Rabbis: Call Police Even On Shabbat



A Violated Will

LinkWithin

Posted at 01:32 AM in [Haredim](#), [Israel](#), [Med-Ethics](#), [MO & Chardal](#) | [Permalink](#)

Comments

You can follow this conversation by subscribing to the [comment feed](#) for this post.



From the other side, Haredi degenerates have no problem to receive organ transplantation in countries like Columbia and China, when everybody knows that these organs coming from a freshly-slaughtered human beings. Somme Rabies like Ginzburg even publicly justified taking of organs from healthy and innocent gentiles to save Jewish life since Jewish body has higher level of divinity. Sometimes I am happy that I'm PhD and not practicing MD, I would not be able to aid these degenerates. To my opinion, somebody that deny scientific (like brain death) and ethical (equal right for life for everybody) fundamentals of the modern medicine, should not be aided by it.

Posted by: Russian PhD | [December 30, 2010 at 06:38 AM](#)



i just don't understand...AGAIN....oh! a jew...no organs...but a non-jew...spit on them...take the organs...

if cohen had the card...there should have been no pressure from the rabbis.

these people fucked it up for a young girl who could have lived with a new liver. a young israeli woman in need of a liver.

i want that rabbi's fucking liver.

Posted by: ruthie | [December 30, 2010 at 07:22 AM](#)



Perhaps laws throughout the world should be changed such that one can only receive a donor organ if one is also prepared to donate one under the same conditions as it was donated. If Charedi rabbis can't work out a way for their sheeple to donate organs upon modern medical definitions of death, then they are not allowed to receive organs from donors who are "dead" according to a lesser definition.

BTW, apart from a belief in Bronze Age definitions of death, Charedim also object to organ donations as it results in bodily "mutilations" of the dead. Can one therefore, please explain, why various Chevra Kaddishas (burial societies) routinely circumcise the bodies of uncircumcised Jewish males (e.g. Russians)?

Incidentally, by modern medical standards it's still possible to be alive with no heart beat (which is dead according to Charedim). There are a number of documented cases of people in hypothermia (such as "drowned" in freezing water) who have been bought back to life after several hours. These people would be buried by Charedim but bought back to life by medical science.

Posted by: David | [December 30, 2010 at 07:34 AM](#)



DAVID

excellent points. thank you

Posted by: ruthie | [December 30, 2010 at 07:50 AM](#)



David is absolutely right. Circulation can be stopped deliberately for 1-2 hours, after special preparations (artificially induced hypothermia and medications), without damage to the patient's brain and body. This technique is used, in particular, during the heart surgeries. By the way, why paramedics of Haredi rescue services, such as Hatzala, learn to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)? According to their Rabies person with cardiac arrest should be forwarded straight away to the Hevra Kadisha.

Posted by: Russian PhD | [December 30, 2010 at 08:02 AM](#)



"Sheeple" - Great word, David.

These charadei rabbis are mostly ignorant of even a basic understanding of science. Medicine, health, biology - "Does not compute Will Robinson. Does not compute."

Why anyone would listen to these morons is beyond me.

Posted by: Althelion | [December 30, 2010 at 08:47 AM](#)



Last I checked, families can overrule organ donations in the US, too. In fact, I think but I'm not absolutely sure, that they won't go ahead without the permission of the family even if the person has elected to donate. This is idiotic.

Posted by: effie | [December 30, 2010 at 09:00 AM](#)



back to your question reb SR:

"What Do You Say To Rabbis Who Interfere With Organ Donations?"

very simple, i call them 'multiple' or 'mass' murderers. as they are taking the life of many humans that could be saved.

I can't help thinking of the pricks running around worshipping signaling to them to centre their tefillins on the hairline, in the middle of the forehead while without a thought, they will oppose holy organs donations. of course who wants a mutilated carcass when the mamesh wakes up from his slumber?

Posted by: YbM | [December 30, 2010 at 09:24 AM](#)



When you die.....the soul flies free.

The body? Well, it cools down. Rigor mortis sets in. Dries up. Decomposes.

Sorry all you frumer-than-frum yidden - That's the reality of the situation.

Posted by: Althelion | [December 30, 2010 at 09:27 AM](#)



i want that rabbi's fucking liver.

Posted by: ruthie | [December 30, 2010 at 07:22 AM](#)

With fava beans and a nice Chianti, I presume?

Posted by: Yochanan Lavie | [December 30, 2010 at 09:51 AM](#)



I would respect the charedi position if they refused to accept donated organs. But of course they want to have it both ways. That is blood curdling hypocrisy.

Posted by: Yerachmiel Lopin | [December 30, 2010 at 10:08 AM](#)



From an article in December 2007:

"In Israel the rate of organ-donation agreement is only 45 percent, a rate that is about 50 percent lower than in most Western countries. The percentage of signatories that have a donor card ("ADI" cards) in Israel is only 8 percent; in Western countries the percentage of signatories to similar cards is 30-40 percent. With a rate similar to that in the West, we would be able immediately to double the number of organ transplants each year, and to shorten the waiting list, which now stands at about 1,000 patients, in just a few years."

<http://tinyurl.com/3amswau>

I suspect the real crux of the debate has less to do with the science & halachic disputation on when death occurs; and, more to do with a deeper belief in some circles of bodily resurrection.

Obviously, the selfish stakes are higher if you believe that you will be resurrected without a heart, or kidneys or eyes, etc.

Posted by: IH | [December 30, 2010 at 10:28 AM](#)



"Obviously, the selfish stakes are higher if you believe that you will be resurrected without a heart, or kidneys or eyes, etc."

Listen, if we're talkin' resurrection here, who cares about mortal limitations? If I arise from the dead without a heart and/or kidney and I'm feelin good - great!

Hopefully I'll have the main organs I want to have and they'll be in tip-top shape.

Posted by: Althelion | [December 30, 2010 at 10:45 AM](#)



Aren't these the same shamans who beleive its okay to make a donation of one's sex organ to little boys?

Posted by: norm | [December 30, 2010 at 10:50 AM](#)



There should be a religious obligation for every Jew to donate his or her organs upon death, if feasible. The ability to turn a tragedy into an event that saves and improves multiple lives should be celebrated, not debated or banned.

Posted by: Jason | [December 30, 2010 at 11:22 AM](#)



* But in the end, under pressure from rabbis, the family refused and Cohen's organs*

There you have the problem. Modify the law that if someone carries a doner card them the fuckin rabbis and family should have no say whatsoever. The person's wishes overrides what the family wants - finished!

Posted by: JC | [December 30, 2010 at 01:45 PM](#)



If God will make a miracle and resurrect the dead, which would include restoring to health those who died of horrible injuries or debilitating diseases that destroyed much of their bodies, why can't God resurrect you with replacement organs for those you donated at death?

Is God incapable of doing so, if He is indeed planning this resurrection of the dead when Moshiach arrives?

Posted by: WoolSilkCotton | [December 30, 2010 at 03:16 PM](#)



I was trying to make the point that folk superstition is rife and trumps both halacha and science. Sorry if I wasn't clear.

Posted by: IH | [December 30, 2010 at 05:35 PM](#)



* But in the end, under pressure from rabbis, the family refused and Cohen's organs*

I suspect -gut feeling- the rabbis didn't persuade the family but rather 'persuaded' them like a 'don' would do, that is if they donate, then the chevra qadisha will run an

embarrassing burial.

Reason why I say that, is that the man wasn't religious and had signed the card. Why would his family be that much 'frummer' than him to the point if ignoring his wish? Did the rabbis persuaded them to do instant teshuva?

Posted by: YbM | [December 30, 2010 at 06:34 PM](#)



What do you say to a rabbi who interferes with organ donation? MIND YOUR OWN FUCKIN BUSINESS! ASSHOLE! My body, my choice! Bet you wouldn't interfere if you were needing a heart or a kidney, and couldn't manage to take it out of some dying gentile, black, hispanic, asian or anyone else you consider to be beneath you!

Fuckers

Posted by: Alter Kocker | [December 30, 2010 at 10:53 PM](#)



By the way, why paramedics of Haredi rescue services, such as Hatzala, learn to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)? According to their Rabies person with cardiac arrest should be forwarded straight away to the Hevra Kadisha.

Excellent point. Why are Charedi paramedics trained in CPR when according to their "Rabbis" cardiac arrest means death? In fact, they would regard CPR as "abuse" of a dead body.

Can someone explain, please? Please also explain how it is possible to even train Charedi paramedics when they only have a Bronze Age understanding of the world, at best.

Posted by: David | [December 31, 2010 at 02:21 AM](#)



Excellent point. Why are Charedi paramedics trained in CPR when according to their "Rabbis" cardiac arrest means death? In fact, they would regard CPR as "abuse" of a dead body.

Can someone explain, please?

I don't even follow the logic of this question.

Haredi rabbis do not oppose preventing death or reviving the dead. What they oppose is, in their minds, "killing" a brain stem dead patient to save someone else.

Posted by: Shmarya | [December 31, 2010 at 02:34 AM](#)



"Obviously, the selfish stakes are higher if you believe that you will be resurrected without a heart, or kidneys or eyes, etc."

Listen, if we're talkin' resurrection here, who cares about mortal limitations? If I arise from the dead without a heart and/or kidney and I'm feelin good - great!

Hopefully I'll have the main organs I want to have and they'll be in tip-top shape.

Posted by: Althelion | [December 30, 2010 at 10:45 AM](#)

now don't you think if hasem could resurrect you he could also give you a new heart.

That argument is nonsense what happens if someone body is blown up no more heart they still would get resurrected Hashem can do what he/she wants.

(i am assuming people believe that fairy tale)

Posted by: seymour | [December 31, 2010 at 08:44 PM](#)



I think the rabbia who made that decision should have to go to the six people who could have been saved and tell them you will die, because I refused to allow someone who wanted to give an organ to you to do it.

Let him look into their face and say is all according to halchacha.

The whole issue is in a way nonsense the frummsies are clinging and basing live and death issues on medical knowledge from the dark ages.

Simply if you are frum you should be put last on the list for donors

Posted by: seymour | [December 31, 2010 at 08:54 PM](#)

Verify your Comment

Previewing your Comment

Posted by: |

This is only a preview. Your comment has not yet been posted.

Your comment could not be posted. Error type:

Your comment has been posted. [Post another comment](#)

The letters and numbers you entered did not match the image. Please try again.

As a final step before posting your comment, enter the letters and numbers you see in the image below. This prevents automated programs from posting comments.

Having trouble reading this image? [View an alternate.](#)

