

## LETTERS

### Organ Recipients

I applaud your decision to publish "The Final Gift" (Oct. 11), about J.J. Greenberg's last mitzvah: saving lives via organ donation. I hope that one day soon, organ donation from Orthodox Jews like J.J. will not be the exception and a surprise but the rule and expected.

It should be noted, though, that the article describes one organ recipient as a Palestinian. He was, in fact, an Israeli Arab. This distinction is not merely politically correctness but is very important. During this period of war with the Palestinians, I have received many questions from Israeli citizens who are concerned that their organs might "go to the enemy." It is important to let potential donors know that organs donated in Israel will go only to Israeli citizens.

The article claims that the Rabbinical Council of America accepted the definition of brain-stem death as halachic death. To the best of my knowledge, the RCA has not yet formulated an official policy about this issue, but I understand the organization is in the process of reviewing it.\*

In addition, although the article mentioned that there is a debate among rabbis concerning the acceptance of the brain-stem death definition, the article only mentions rabbis and organizations that are pro-organ donation without listing any that are against this, of which there are several.

For articles and opinions about both sides of the debate, one may go to the Halachic Organ Donor Society's Web site, [www.hods.org](http://www.hods.org).

***Robby Berman***

*Founder and Executive Director  
The Halachic Organ Donor Society  
New York, N.Y.*

\*This statement was made based on information supplied to Robert Berman by an officer of the RCA, at the time that the letter was written. However, there is evidence that in fact the RCA officially accepted brain-stem death as halachic death, at their 55th convention held in Spring Glen, New York, in 1991.