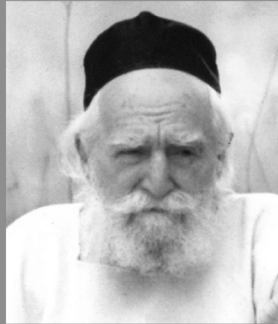


## RABBI MOSHE FEINSTEIN ZT"l

Rosh Yeshiva  
Mesivta Tiferet Yerushalayim, NY



*"According to Halacha there is no obligation to donate organs... but there certainly is a mitzvah to do so... It is human nature to be distraught over the death of a loved one... nevertheless there is a mitzvah for the family not to let those emotions interfere with saving a life through organ*

*donation... Concerning a heart transplant (in 1968): It is forbidden because it kills two people [the donor & the recipient]."*

July 1968 (19 Tammuz, 5728), Igrot Moshe, Y.D., Vol. II, Siman 174 & mentioned again March 10, 1978 (Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5738), Igrot Moshe Vol II, Siman 72.

*"[In some cases] the ventilator inflates the lungs even though [the patient] is actually dead. Breathing of this kind is not regarded as a sign of life... Breathing by means of a machine does not satisfy the halachic definition of respiration, and therefore the patient is considered to be dead as long as the other criteria [no response to any stimuli] is met. If it is determined that the blood circulation does not reach the base of the brain, it is obvious that the brain must have begun to show the physical signs of destruction referred to as lysis... after extensive lysis it is as if the head had been removed from the body or the person decapitated."*

May 5, 1976 (5 Iyar 5736), Letter from Rav Moshe Feinstein to Rav Moshe Tendler, Igrot Moshe, Y.D. Vol. III, Siman 132.

*"In a patient presenting the clinical picture of death, i.e. no signs of life such as movement or response to stimuli, the total cessation of independent respiration is an absolute proof that death has occurred."*

May 24, 1976 (24 Iyar 5736), in a letter from Rav Moshe Feinstein that was sent to New York State Assemblyman Mel Miller, and which was published in Jewish Medical Ethics, Vol. II. No. 2, May 1995.

*"Even though the heart is capable of pumping for several more days, nevertheless, as long as the patient is unable to breathe on his own, he is considered dead."*

November 14, 1985 (Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5746) in a letter from Rav Moshe Feinstein to Dr. Elliot Bondi, which was published in the ASSIA Book, Vol. 7, page 148 -148(a).

## RABBI DOVID FEINSTEIN

Rosh Yeshiva  
Mesivta Tiferet Yerushalayim, NY



*"My father's position was very simply that the stopping of breathing is the point of death. It doesn't matter if the heart is functioning or it doesn't function. As long as he stops breathing he's considered dead. That's the way he explained the Gemara in Yoma, that's the way he said they always did in*

*Europe when the Chevra Kadisha would test if a person is dead or not. He always used to test his breathing and nothing else... If you're talking about here's a patient available for a heart transplant, fine. He would definitely encourage it."*

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## RABBI MOSHE TENDLER

Rosh Yeshiva & Professor of Biology  
Yeshiva University, NY



*"I went with Rav Moshe to Downstate Medical College in Kings County to observe brain-stem patients. He observed that the patients seemed dead and did not respond to any stimuli. He met with surgeons and neurologists to discuss the issue and*

*Rav Moshe was very clear that he felt medically and halachically that a comatose patient is alive, even though he is unconscious and can't move, but a brain-stem dead patient was dead. Rav Moshe was unequivocal that it is a tremendous mitzvah to donate organs. He said so orally quite explicitly, and he did not differentiate whether or not you donated the organs to a Jew or to a non-Jew. He paskened this way halacha lemaaseh many times.*

*"Rav Moshe told Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss z"l, the Av Bet Din from Manchester who became the Av Bet Din of Beis Din Tzedek in Jerusalem, that organ donation was a great mitzvah. Rabbi Weiss responded that donor families would suffer emotionally and halacha does not require one to suffer anguish in performing a mitzvah. Only two mitzvahs require one to suffer, circumcision and Yom Kippur. Rabbi Feinstein responded that the mitzvah is not to feel any anguish because you are saving a human life. That's the main mitzvah and there is no greater joy."*

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