

## RABBI SHABTAI RAPPAPORT

Machon Hagavoa Letorah  
Bar Ilan University, Israel



"In Rav Moshe's earliest tshuva from 1968, he wrote organ transplantation was double murder because back then he had heard they were removing organs from patients whose EEG was flat, which only meant they were in a coma. Since

the person was autonomously breathing he was alive according to halacha so removing the heart was murder. And the recipients died just a few days later so it was like a double murder. But the later tshuva from 1976 talks about a person whose breathing is not autonomous but simply mechanical via a ventilator. Rav Moshe said this type of "breathing" is not a sign of human life, and if the brain is dead the person is dead. And by this time the recipients began to live for years after the transplant. So there is no contradiction between the teshuvot of 1968 and 1976. It was a change in circumstances. The first tshuva talks about someone who is breathing on his own and the second tshuva talks about someone who is not breathing on his own. That's the difference. It's as simple as that.

"I called Rav Moshe twice to discuss his teshuvot on this issue and he explained to me that when the brain is destroyed it is equivalent to the severing of the head because when the mishna says "head" it does not mean the skull, it means the brain. I heard Rav Moshe say that once we know that the person's autonomous breathing has irreversibly stopped by using the Apnea test he is dead.

"In the summer of 1975 I met with Rav Moshe and my father-in-law in Monsey and we discussed the issue of pulling the plug. It was Rav Moshe's opinion that an unconscious person in the hospital who seems to be dead and his brain-stem is dead, even if his heart is still beating, the plug should be pulled and the organs should be donated."

## DR. IRA GREIFER Z"L

Professor Emeritus of Pediatric Nephrology  
Montefiore Hospital, NY



Dr. Ira Greifer understood Yiddish and met and spoke with Rav Moshe Feinstein about organ donation. "Rav Moshe told me that a beating heart alone was not an indication of human life, and he felt very strongly that if the person's brain was dead the person was dead."

## DR. ARTHUR EIDELMAN

Professor, Neonatologist, Department Head  
Shaare Zedek Hospital, Jerusalem



Dr. Arthur Eidelman understands Yiddish, and he met and spoke with Rav Moshe Feinstein about organ donation. "There is no doubt from my meeting with Rav Moshe that he understood the medical and the biological basis of what he was giving his halachic psak on. I heard him explicitly say that brain death is death and that he supported organ transplantation. He did not believe a heart had to stop beating for a person to be declared dead."

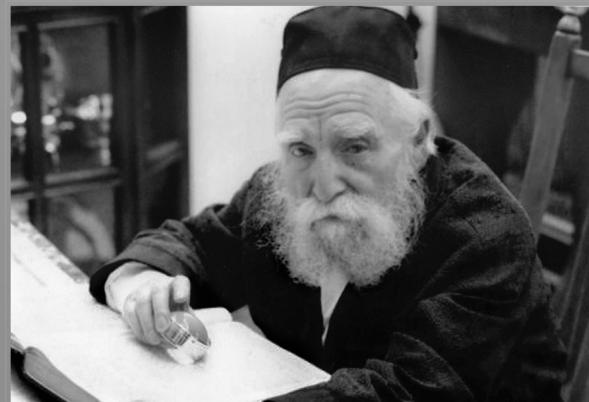
## DR. FRANK VEITH

Professor, Department of Surgery  
NYU Langone Medical Center, NY



Dr. Frank Veith met and spoke through a translator with Rav Moshe Feinstein about organ donation. "Rabbi Feinstein told me he accepted brain death and the analogy that a person or a patient who is brain dead is analogous to someone who has been decapitated. He said that a dead patient is just as dead as a person who is decapitated even though his heart might be beating a short while after decapitation."

# RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN ON ORGAN DONATION



**HODS**  
Halachic Organ  
Donor Society

**MAKE YOUR LAST MITZVAH  
THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE**