Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu
Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel 1983–1993

CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL
RABBINIC RULING 1 Cheshvan 5747 (1986)

“Relying upon the Talmud Yoma (85a) and the ruling of the Chatam Sofer (Yoreh Deah, 338) death is determined by irreversible cessation of breathing. (See Responsa Igrot Moshe,” Chelek 3, 132). Therefore, concerning a donor it should be ascertained that the cessation of breathing is irreversible. This can be determined by proof of complete brain destruction, including the brain-stem which controls autonomous breathing.

“After investigating the criteria for establishing death, as was suggested by physicians in Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem on 8th of Tammuz 5745 and given to the Chief Rabbinate on 5th of Tishrei 5747, we find that it is acceptable according to Halacha – if the objective clinical test BAER was performed on the brain-stem.”

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu

Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron
Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel 1993–2003

“Not only are heart transplants allowed, they are a blessed endeavor to save human life. As the prophet said: ‘And I will remove your stone of heart form within your midst and I shall give you a heart of flesh.’”

[Binyan Av, Vol. III, Teshuva 53]

sponsors that are experts in this area, that they will check that all the appropriate steps were taken to make this determination.

“...families who reject brain death as halachic death have the right to request that the ventilator not be removed and that no organs be recovered for transplantation.”

Rav Shlomo Amar
Rav Ovadia Yosef