



organ and limb transplants. "it is said that the soul is invisible...knowing this you should not grieve for the body", Bhagavad Gita, chapter 2:25.

Islam and organ donation

In 1995 the Muslim Law (Shariah) Council UK issued a fatwa (religious opinion) on organ donation. The council resolved that:

- The council supports organ transplantation as a means of alleviating pain or saving life on the basis of the rules of the Shariah.
- Muslims may carry donor cards.
- The next of kin of a dead person, in the absence of a card or an expressed wish to donate their organs, may give permission to obtain organs from the body to save other people's lives.

The fatwa is based on the Islamic principle of al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat (necessities rule prohibition). Normally, violating the human body, whether living or dead, is forbidden in Islam – but the Shariah believes this can be overruled when saving another person's life.

However there are also a significant number of Muslim scholars who believe that organ donation is not permissible and hold the view that this does not fall under the criteria of the Islamic principle of al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat (necessities overrule prohibition) due to other overriding Islamic principles.

Both viewpoints take their evidence from the Qur'an and the Ahaadith and therefore individual Muslims should make a decision according to their understanding of the Shariah or seek advice from their local Imam or scholar.

The Muslim Law Council UK fatwa draws on one of the basic aims of the Muslim faith: "Whosoever saves the life of one person it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind", Holy Qur'an, chapter 5:32.

Judaism and organ donation

In principle, Judaism supports and encourages organ donation in order to save lives (pikuach nefesh).

This principle can sometimes override the strong objections to any unnecessary interference with the body after death, and the requirement for immediate burial of the complete body.

As all cases are different, Jewish law requires consultation with a competent Rabbinic authority before consent is granted.

For more information please contact the Office of the Chief Rabbi, or another competent Halachic authority. "One who saves a single life – it is as if he has saved an entire world." Pirke D'Rav Eliezer, chapter 48.

Sikhism and organ donation

Sikh philosophy and teachings place great emphasis on the importance of giving and putting others before oneself.

It also stresses the importance of performing noble deeds and there are many examples of selfless giving and sacrifice in Sikh teachings by the ten Gurus and other Sikhs.

Sikhs believe life after death is a continuous cycle of rebirth but the physical body is not needed in this cycle – a person's soul is their real essence. "The dead sustain their bond with the living through virtuous deed." Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib, p143.

NHS Organ Donor Register

The NHS Organ Donor Register records the details of those who want to donate and makes it possible for those who need an organ to receive one. Anyone can register. Organs and tissue from people in their 70s and 80s are transplanted successfully.

Doctors and nurses are committed to doing everything possible to save life and organs are only removed for transplantation once all attempts to save life have failed and the patient has died. Most donated organs come from people who die while on a ventilator in an intensive care unit, after having suffered a severe brain injury.

By joining the register you are giving your agreement to your organs and tissue being used for transplantation to save or enhance the lives of others after your death. Please tell those closest to you that you have registered so they can confirm your wishes.

For more information:

0300 123 23 23
www.organdonation.nhs.uk

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Organ donation and religious perspectives



Organ donation

Organ Transplants are the only hope for people with organ failure. Every day nine lives are saved through receiving an organ transplant but three more die because there aren't enough organs available.

Some people are not sure whether their religion would prevent them from agreeing to donate their organs after their death – yet all the major religions in the UK support the principles of organ donation and transplantation.

It is important that people from all backgrounds donate organs, as there is a much better success rate when transplants are carried out within the same ethnic group. Black and Asian people are three times as likely to need a kidney transplant than white people, so there is an even greater need for more black and Asian donors.

What is organ donation?

Organ donation is the removal of organs from a person who has recently died, or from a living donor, for the purpose of transplantation. Organs that can be donated after death are the heart, lung, kidney, liver, pancreas and small bowel. Skin, bone, heart valves and corneas can also be used to help others.



Living donation

You can donate a whole kidney and sections of the lung, liver, pancreas and intestine while still living. Nearly one in three of all kidney transplants are from a living donor. You can lead a completely normal life with only one kidney. Kidneys transplanted from living donors have a better chance of long-term survival than those transplanted from people who have died.

Organ donation and religion

All the major religions of the UK support the principles of organ donation and transplantation. However, within each religion there are different schools of thought, which means that views may differ. All the major religions accept that organ donation is an individual choice.

This leaflet offers a brief guide to religious viewpoints regarding organ donation. If you have any doubts, you should discuss them with your spiritual or religious leader.



Buddhism and organ donation

There are no injunctions in Buddhism for or against organ donation.

The death process of an individual is viewed as a very important time that should be treated with the greatest care and respect. In some traditions, the moment of death is defined according to criteria which differ from those of modern Western medicine, and there are differing views as to the acceptability of organ transplantation. The needs and wishes of the dying person must not be compromised by the wish to save a life. Each decision will depend on individual circumstances.

Central to Buddhism is a wish to relieve suffering and there may be circumstances where organ donation may be seen as an act of generosity. Where it is truly the wish of the dying person, it would be seen in that light. If there is doubt as to the teachings within the particular tradition to which a person belongs, expert guidance should be sought from a senior teacher within the tradition concerned.

When he discovered a monk sick and uncared for, the Buddha said to the other monks, "whoever would care for me, let him care for those who are sick". Mahavagga VIII.26.1-8 Kucchivikara-vatthu The Monk with Dysentery. Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Christianity and organ donation

The Christian faith is based upon the revelation of God in the life of Jesus Christ. Throughout his life Jesus taught people to love one another and

he proved his love for the world upon the cross. It seems in keeping with this that Christians consider organ donation as a genuine act of love and a way of following Jesus' example. This act of love then becomes part of a Christian discipleship or faith journey that is motivated by compassion to help someone else and demonstrates a sense of social responsibility.

Sacrifice and helping others are consistent themes in Christianity, which teaches the principle of seeking for others what you hope others would do for you. Enabling life to be lived as fully as possible is consistent with the teaching of the Son of God, Jesus Christ: "freely you have received, freely give", Matthew, chapter 10:8t.

Christians should be encouraged to help others in need. Discussing organ donation with family and friends is a responsible and thoughtful act.

Hinduism and organ donation

There are many references that support the concept of organ donation in Hindu scriptures. Daan is the original word in Sanskrit for donation meaning selfless giving. In the list of the ten Niyamas (virtuous acts) Daan comes third.

Life after death is a strong belief of Hindus and is an ongoing process of rebirth. The law of karma decides which way the soul will go in the next life.

Organ donation is an integral part of the Hindu way of life, as guided by the Vedas. That which sustains is accepted and promoted as Dharma (righteous living). Scientific treatises form an important part of the Vedas – Sage Charaka deals with internal medicine while Sage Sushruta includes features of