



**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Catholic doctrine takes a positive stance towards organ donation. According to Catholic ethics, organ donation should be seen as a positive and voluntary act of altruism. It should however never be seen as a duty. But there is a difference between the official doctrine and the view espoused by many religious professionals, who tend to be rather more hesitant.



**PROTESTANT CHURCHES**

The decision as to whether one should donate an organ is a personal one. The integrity of the human body valued in the bible would seem to argue against organ donation while the value of fraternal love speaks in favour. Organ donation is to

be recommended, but is not an obligation. It is generally felt that the lack of organs should not be an impediment to resurrection, but this point is still very much a matter for debate.



**ISLAM**

Islam has many forms and this means there is little or no consensus on organ donation. It is generally accepted as permissible, citing the old adage 'needs must' and the principle of fraternal love. Certain authorities reject posthumous donation as the body then belongs to God and cannot therefore be violated. The notion of brain death is also an important factor and there is a major lack of clarity on this issue within Islamic circles which can influence viewpoints considerably.



**JUDAISM**

There is a conflict between the orthodox and the liberal tendencies with regard to organ donation. Whereas care for the living takes precedence over honour of the dead body for the liberals, orthodox Jews take a more rigid stance: the integrity of the body may not be violated, as it had been formed as an earthly frame for the body, fashioned in God's image and likeness. The notion of brain death is also a factor: brain death is insufficient because according to the Halacha the fact that death has set in can only be determined for certain by taking various symptoms together.



**BUDDHISM**

Buddhism considers the human body as an indivisible whole of body (parts) and soul. Death is the gradual natural decline of this body/soul unity. Determining brain death clashes with this view because the removal of organs would defile the body. However, there are also arguments within Buddhism in favour of organ donation, especially the need to show empathy, considered an important virtue for Buddhists.



**SHINTOISM**

The removal of organs from the bodily remains provokes objections because it is thought to defile the body of the deceased. Only an intact body (gotai) can guarantee that the soul will be reborn. There is also concern as to whether all traces of life have actually left the body, because the method used for determining death only measures brain activity.



**HINDUISM**

Following death, the soul lives on and is reborn in a new body. Although there is a division between body and soul, the idea still prevails that the body must remain undefiled after death. There are however no religious laws outlawing organ transplantation. In general, it is up to the individual to decide.



**HUMANISM**

There is no official stance, but the right to self-determination and the inviolability of the human body are key factors. Ultimately, it is up to the individual to decide, focusing particularly on the notion that lives can be saved by organ donation. The feelings and involvement of those closest to the deceased should also play a crucial role in the decision.



**NEW AGE**

Many individuals and organisations regard themselves as New Age thinkers or part of the esoteric movement. There is no unequivocal view on organ donation and much focus is placed on the individual's right to decide. The general thrust is however critical. Brain death is often regarded as too materialistic a way of approaching the concept of death. It is thought possible that the donor could encounter difficulties in a certain form of life after death as part of the soul may reside in the donated organ. The transplantation can also have negative consequences for the recipient, since the organ may possess characteristics from the deceased that affect the recipient's personality. Equally, illness is often seen as a learning process that may be beneficial in itself.

NIGZ-Donor Information

