

## **TSI Videos Transcriptions**

Rabbi Moshe Tendler **Ask The Religious Leaders**

Professor of Medical Ethics, Yeshiva University NY

“Organ donation has many Jewish law imperatives associated with it. There is a sense of priorities in Jewish law—with the saving of life taking precedent over all other laws, except for the three cardinal sins: adultery, idolatry, and murder. It is therefore incumbent upon those who follow traditional Jewish law to establish that priority in their own lives as well. When it is possible to save a human life, no other considerations have any ethical import. There is little defense for not signing an organ donor card, and no excuse seems to be valid. In fact, the rabbinate in Israel, the only really formal rabbinate that we have, or the chief rabbi, has approved this some twenty years ago, and Israel has one of the most successful heart transplant programs anywhere in the world. It is with great confidence that I share this information with you, because this is both the consensus of all who study the topic, as well as an intuitive understanding that comes from what is the prime ethical responsibility--that is to save a fellow human life. Organ donation, however, is not voluntary in Jewish law, it's obligatory. It is called a mitzvah, a divine command to save a fellow human's life.”

Rev. Gary L. Mehl **Ask The Religious Leaders**

Sr. Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church

“Well, first of all, there is nothing at all in Lutheran teaching that would prevent organ donation. Our understanding of the resurrection, the hope of the resurrection, certainly does not center around intact body parts at all. As a matter of fact, we would see organ and tissue donation as an extension of Christ's command that we love and care for one another. I know this can be very personal. Over thirty-six years I have visited many people in hospitals that were awaiting organ and tissue donations. Some have passed away because they didn't receive these donations, and also many have lived, much to the joy and thanksgiving of so many people. So we, in our congregations, from time to time urge our members to in fact make these kinds of registrations for organ and tissue donations. In my own parish a couple of months ago, we had such a Sunday in which we received over one hundred registrations. So it's a way in which we extend our care. We would like to see as many of these donations as possible because the more we receive the more available they will be, especially regardless of geographical situations.”

Rev. Harold C. Smith, Jr. **Ask The Religious Leaders**  
Dix Hills Evangelical Free Church

“Those of us who identify ourselves with the Evangelical Christian community certainly understand how diverse that group of people can be. But one thing binds us closely together and that is our commitment to the authority of the Bible as God’s word to us, regarding both faith and conduct. Jesus gave his followers a wonderful promise of a future resurrection, in which those who have died in Christ and those who are still alive at his coming will be miraculously changed by his power. We will receive a new body like his resurrection body, and we shall share in the glory of his presence for all eternity. With that hope in mind, we will one day cast aside this old body of ours and look to something far better. It’s understandable that the Bible does not speak directly to the issue of bodily organ transplants since that medical procedure was unknown at the time of the writing of the Scriptures. But there are some wonderful broad and encompassing principles by which the Lord Jesus has called us to live. One such command is given by the Apostle Paul in the Book of Galatians chapter six verse ten where it says: “so then while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Opportunities to do good to others abound in our world today. Being alert to those special opportunities God gives us is certainly a way of pleasing the Lord in all that we do. If God is his sovereign wisdom and infinite love should place any of us in a situation where our earthly life is ending, no matter what medical efforts we might try, then perhaps we must trust him that our days are numbered and that his way and his timing is right. But if at that moment some of our bodily organs still might be functioning and useable to save the life of another person, then wouldn’t that be one of those unique opportunities the Scripture refers to, where we can give witness not only to our love for Christ and our hope in the gospel, but also our desire to help someone else in need. I encourage you in your devotion to the Scriptures to search out these matters very carefully for yourself. It’s a decision that every Christian should prayerfully and carefully consider now along with his or her family. I have registered as an organ donor and many in our local church have done the same. I trust the Lord will guide you clearly in this important matter.

Rev. Stephen D. Michie **Ask The Religious Leaders**  
First Presbyterian Church

“The Presbyterian Church USA is fully supportive of organ tissue donation and donor registration. One of the strongest inclinations we human beings have is also formed by our Christian beliefs: to save another human life which is in peril. Modern medical technology has made it possible to save human lives through blood product transfusions and the transplantation of organs and body tissues. But the willingness to donate those life restoring body elements is a reality separate from what our technology can achieve. Most of us familiar with the New Testament know very well the marching orders Jesus gave regarding care and concern for others. *Love the Lord your God and Love Your Neighbor As Yourself* is one of them. What follows is perhaps the greatest biblical story concerning the choices we make when facing a medical crisis that has beset another person. The parable of the Good Samaritan communicates clearly our obligation to

respond well, even with an extravagant generosity, when a neighbor is in dire need. Your willingness to register as an organ tissue donor embodies your concern for the other as neighbor. It is a generous self-initiative personifying good will toward your fellow human being, and it's probably the greatest fidelity one can offer in response to this commandment of Jesus. There is no greater sign of our common humanity as children of God than giving in this ultimate way to others. And there's no greater expression of our belief that we were made in God's image than the fact that our organs and tissue can be transplanted or donated from one person to another. Your free gift of body elements or blood fosters a sense of community; it serves a need; and it evokes profound gratitude within the recipients toward others in the human family, whom they've never met, and on whom they depend for another chance at living life and life in all its fullness. Registering as an organ tissue donor fosters an interdependence in which we all are sustained by God's love and grace. Everything about this choice you can make is a profound witness to the good news of God's love. I encourage you to join me in registering as a donor today."

Rev. Judith A. Mills **Ask The Religious Leaders**  
Dix Hills United Methodist Church

"As a United Methodist Clergy, I would strongly like to recommend to you that you become a registered organ donor. The United Methodist denomination strongly encourages you also. We have a book of discipline, which is like our rules or our guide book. In that book of discipline there are the social principles. One of the social principles is about organ transplantation and donation. I'd like to read this for you: 'We believe that organ transplantation and organ donation are acts of charity, agape love, and self-sacrifice. We recognize the life-giving benefits of organ and other tissue donation and encourage all people of faith to become organ and tissue donors as a part of their love and ministry to others in need. We urge that it be done in an environment of respect for deceased and living donors and for the benefit of the recipients, and following protocols that carefully prevent abuse to donors and their families.' As you can see the United Methodist Church not only strongly encourages you but says that as a Christian one ought to become and organ donor."

Dr. Faroque Ahmad Khan **Ask The Religious Leaders**  
Islamic Center of Long Island

"In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful, Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, taught Muslims that maintaining a healthy body is an individual's duty and urged Muslims to seek treatment whenever needed. According to one saying of the prophet, disease is part of faith, and so is the cure. There is a consensus among Muslim jurists that preserving life is the supreme objective of Islamic law. Caring for the sick and the weak is a collective social responsibility. As blood transfusions are permissible in Islam, transplantation is generally allowed after consultation with the patient or his or her guardians. Also organ donation is permissible if there is a will or if the family permits it. Sale of organs is not permitted. God Almighty says in Koran, the Muslim holy book, saving one's life is as if you have saved the whole humanity."

Fr. Robert Smith, Ask **Ask The Religious Leaders**

Professor of Moral Theology, Seminary of the Immaculate Conception

“It can certainly be said that official Catholic position on organ donation and transplantation is one of unequivocal support. I would look to two places to kind of verify that. First, Pope Pius XII, in 1957 spoke of the fact that donation of organs or the donation of one’s body for medical research is certainly a noble gesture. It’s a concrete way of expressing one’s desire to aid the sick and the suffering. A little bit closer to our own time Pope John Paul II in 1991 spoke of the fact that organ transplantation is a new medical way of assisting the human family, and that those who donate their organs provide a rich gesture of solidarity and self-gift which is very much needed in our present society.”