Organ donation cards

In the previous weeks (see here), I explained the opinions of the Rabbis regarding living organ donation, and the differences on opinion over the determination of the moment of death, which affects the Rabbis' ruling on cadaveric organ donation.

In our days, the willingness to donate one's organs is stated in the driver license or in a card that one carries in his or her wallet. The practical question we will address today is, what is the best way to declare that one wishes to donate his or her organs.

In my opinion, the best recommendation (and what I have personally done) for a Jewish person who wishes to donate his organs, is to register in the Halachic Organ Donor Society, and to carry their card in his wallet.

The advantages of this card, compared to the general statement written in the driver license, is that the HODS card specifies the following points:

1. Organs should be removed **only** if they are to be transplanted, not for research or experimentation. Due to the importance Judaism gives to the integrity of the body at the time of burial, only the possibility to save a life outweighs those concerns.

2. To insure that medical care is not compromised in most sensitive moments, the HODS card specifies that:*"Transplants may commence only after a medical team, that is independent of the attending physicians and that is unaware that I am a potential organ donor, determines death …."*

3. It also indicates that the body damage should be minimized: *"All medical procedures must be done with proper respect, and minimum damage, to the cadaver."* To this effect, consultations will be made with a family-appointed rabbi.

4. Finally, it gives the carrier the option to choose between one of the two major Halakhic opinions prevalent on determination of death: a. Irreversible termination of breathing activity, for those who follow the more stringent rabbinic opinion, or b. Irreversible brain stem death, for those who follow the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's opinion.

Each person should consult with his or her Rabbi to make a

final decision on this delicate issue.

For those who wish to register as potential Halakhic organ donors, see here .
For Israel, see here.
May Hashem bless all of us with good health and a long life!
*Read more on organ donation from a Jewish Orthodox perspective, by rabbi Moshe Tendler
*For Israel see here