



## Islam and organ donation

In Islam there are two schools of thought with regards to organ donation. The human body, whether living or dead, enjoys a special honour and is inviolable and, fundamentally, Islamic law emphasises the preservation of human life. The general rule that 'necessities permit the prohibited' (al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat), has been used to support human organ donation with regards to saving or significantly enhancing a life of another providing that the benefit outweighs the personal cost that has to be borne. The following are some statements or verses which have been used to support organ donation:

"Whosoever saves the life of one person it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind."

Holy Qur'an, chapter 5 vs. 32

"Whosoever helps another will be granted help from Allah."

Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)

"If you happened to be ill and in need of a transplant, you certainly would wish that someone would help you by providing the needed organ."

Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi, Principal, Muslim College, London

An alternative view clearly states that:

"The saving of life is not absolute, but subject to the amount of cost that has to be borne. Therefore, although the above quotation enjoins the saving of life this is not without restriction or caveats.

According to a similarly large number of Muslim scholars organ donation is not permitted. They consider that organ donation compromises the special honour accorded to man and this cannot be allowed whatever the cost. Scholars, such as the Islamic Fiqh Academy of India, allow live donations only." Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

Therefore it is very clear that in Islam:

"Organ donation is a very personal choice and one should consider seeking the opinion of a scholar of their choosing." (Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain)

That said one of the fundamental purposes of Islamic law is the preservation of life. Allah greatly rewards those who save the life of others.

To help in this matter the reader's attention is drawn to the following life-saving Fatwa:  
In 1995, the UK based Muslim Law (Shariah) Council resolved that:

the medical profession is the proper authority to define signs of death  
current medical knowledge considers brain stem death to be a proper definition of death  
the Council accepts brain stem death as constituting the end of life for the purpose of organ transplantation  
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 donor card or an expressed wish to donate their organs, may give permission to obtain organs from the body to save other people's lives

organ donation must be given freely without reward, trading in organs is prohibited.

This is supported by Muslim scholars from some of the most prestigious academies of the Muslim world who call upon Muslims to donate organs for transplantation. These include:  
the Islamic Fiqh Academy of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (representing all Muslim countries)

the Grand Ulema Council of Saudi Arabia.

the Iranian Religious Authority

the Al-Azhar Academy of Egypt



ISLAM