



मंगलम् भगवान् बीरो,
मंगलम् गौतमो प्रभु ।
मंगलम् स्थूलिभद्राचार्य,
जैन धर्मोस्तु मंगलम् ॥

JAINISM AND ORGAN DONATION

There are a variety of ways in which Jainism impacts the perceptions of organ donation.

- One aspect to consider is the practice of dana (laukika- dāna). This act of selfless giving is significant when you choose to save a person's life by donating organs and tissues.

- Most Jains believe that when the soul has departed at the time of death, the body is then separated from its earthly purpose. The soul and the physical body are two separate entities, and it is only the soul that is eternal, therefore we should not be possessive of our physical body. The donated organ is no longer linked to donor's soul and is also separate from the rest of the body.

- According to the first principles of Jaina ontology a dead body is worthless and can be disposed of according to ones wishes or wishes of the family members.

- Jainism does not discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, class or religion.

In Jainism, compassion and charity are considered two major virtues. Organ donation has been widely supported by the Jain community leaders and monks. In addition, we believe in the concept of the "Live and Let Live".

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In an exclusive report on February 1 (Citizen gives fresh lease of life after death), *DNA* had highlighted how Manisha Vora, the wife of a Gujarati Jain paint dealer, late Veerendra Vora, had withstood opposition from some relatives on religious grounds and donated the kidneys of her husband after his death due to brain hemorrhage on January 27.

The late Veerendra Vora's brother, Hemendra, had told *DNA* that certain diktats in the Jain religion discouraged cadaveric organ transplants stating that "future misdeeds by the donee could affect the donor's soul".

While some Jains said their religious beliefs prohibit organ donations, a number of Jain community leaders opposed this belief when asked about it by this newspaper.

Senior spiritual leader from the Sthanakvasi Jain Shramansangh sect, Sadhvi Pratibhashriji, told *DNA* on Wednesday that there was nothing in the Jain spiritual texts to prevent community members from participating in cadaveric transplants.

"In fact, Jain philosophy encourages its followers to remain detached from the physical body even during their lifetime," she pointed out.

"Our philosophy asks us to purify our soul and be good human beings. Hence, when a Jain willingly donates his/her body part after death to help fellow human beings, the donee's bad deeds can only affect the donee, not the donor. I congratulate Veerendra Vora's family for donating his kidneys and hope other Jains emulate his example," she said.

Many other eminent Jains in the city also lauded the Vora family's decision and encouraged their community members to participate in cadaveric transplants. Citing his personal example, road safety activist, Chandmal Parmar said, "When my daughter, Rajshree, died in a road accident in 1989 and my wife Chandanbala passed away in 2008, I donated their eyes after death. The Jain philosophy is archaic and extinct. It is more important for us to give a new lease of life to others after our death," Parmar said. Speaking to *DNA*, well-known orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Kantilal Sancheti, founder of Sancheti Hospital and a Jain said, "Religion should never come in the way of cadaveric transplants. Jain philosophy strongly encourages a spirit of sacrifice, where we are encouraged to help other fellow human beings. I congratulate the Vora family for their act and hope others emulate them."

Managing trustee of the Poona Hospital, Devichand Jain, pointed out that the waiting list of kidney patients was growing daily. "It is extremely important that more families of brain dead patients donate their kidneys. Vora's example should be emulated," he said.

According to the Pune zonal transplant coordination centre's (ZTCC) coordinator, Rohini Sahasrabudhe, Pune's record on cadaveric transplants is not impressive. "The centre wants more multiple organ donations to happen in Pune," she said.

According to Sahasrabudhe, Spain leads the world in brain dead organ donations. "Almost 90% of Spaniards have pledged their organs for donation if they become brain-dead. An aggressive media campaign by the government and unstinted support of the Roman Catholic church has achieved this," Sahasrabudhe said.

