

LETTERS

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CHEVRA'S ANTI-HALACHA POLICY

THE time has come for there to be an inquiry into the practices of the Sydney Chevra Kadisha, if the report in the *AJN* is accurate.

The president of that important organisation is carrying out a policy that is contrary to halacha. He is giving the message that it is incorrect to donate organs to save lives. This is patently untrue as was pointed out by a number of other sources in your report (*AJN* 12/8).

Australia has a problem with too few people donating organs. Last year, there were only 218 people who became organ donors after their death. People are dying from heart failure, liver failure and lung failure because of a lack of donor organs. Jewish law emphasises the importance of saving lives.

It takes time for the message to get across to all that saving lives is a greater mitzvah than being buried whole. One would expect better from the leader of such a prestigious society as the Sydney Chevra Kadisha.

PROFESSOR BERNIE TUCH

Director, Diabetes Transplant Unit, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney, NSW

TRANSPLANTS ARE KOSHER

ORGAN transplants have raised many moral, legal, social, political, philosophical and theological issues. However from a Jewish halachic standpoint the consideration of saving life, "pikuach nefesh", is of paramount importance and transplantation is

supported by the Israeli Beth Din, the Sydney Beth Din, many learned rabbis and Jewish medical ethicists.

The prominent title of your article (*AJN* 19/8) on the Sydney Chevra Kadisha gives a totally negative, erroneous and misleading impression, and may influence those who would otherwise be willing to support this important cause. As is said, "he who saves one life, saves a whole world".

SHULA ENDREY-WALDER
Sydney, NSW

RABBIS FOCUS HERE

CONGRATULATIONS to Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence for his appropriate comments vis-a-vis Gaza (*AJN* 12/8). Rabbis from the UK, USA and elsewhere who have made a choice to live and work in Sydney and not Israel can easily make pronouncements from comfy homes and incomes. As I return to my Zfat home, I request that Sydney rabbis focus on the spiritual poverty here and not the politics of a country they don't live and vote in.

DIANE SAWICKI
Darling Point, NSW

THE GREATEST MITZVAH

THE disengagement from Gaza is almost complete and only time will tell whether or not it was in Israel's interest to carry it out. As I understand it, the premise of Prime Minister Sharon's plan was to redeploy the IDF to more defensive positions surrounding Gaza. This seems logical from a military point of view. After all, why surround yourself with terrorists,