

Rabbi Arie Folger's Blog

Thoughts on Judaism and Jewish life / Gedanken über das Judentum und das jüdische Leben

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Brain Death and Organ Transplantation in Halacha – Redux



Recently I posted an entry entitled "[When Does Death Begin, According to Halacha?](#)" about a long awaited paper which the Rabbinical Council of America's Vaad Halacha recently published. It turns out that it's not just the RCA that has recently revisited "brain death" and organ transplantation in *halakha*, nor was their opinion piece long in the making. Turns out that British Jewry has been grappling with the same issue. The Chief Rabbi's and London Beth Din's rulings had yet to be published, as of last summer.

However, while the RCA's paper is billed as a research paper and an educational tool, the London Beth Din's decision is supposed to be an actual *halakhic* ruling from a national organization in a country with a significant Jewish population, making it particularly interesting.

[From the Jewish Chronicle \(July 15, 2010\):](#)

The founder of a campaign to encourage Orthodox Jews to carry organ donor cards has voiced frustration at the time taken by the Chief Rabbi to issue new guidelines on the subject.

...

Mr Berman, who lives in Jerusalem, said that after meeting the Chief Rabbi in March 2009, he had agreed not to lecture on organ donation in the UK until the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din decided their position in the summer.

...

Arguing there had been no major new developments on organ donation in medicine or Jewish law over the past decade, he declared: "I hope this review will not drag on for years, as I fear it will. This issue is of an urgent life-saving nature and should be given priority."

...

A spokesman for the Office of the Chief Rabbi said for the past 12 months, the London Beth Din had been engaged "in careful consideration" of organ donations and living wills.

Can anyone report whether the Beth Din has meanwhile issued this ruling?

One wonders whether one of the things the Beth Din was waiting for was the RCA's paper, as it significantly contributes to the field by documenting the medical conditions the landmark published *halakhic* responsa responded to.

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This entry was posted on Tuesday, December 21st, 2010 at 11:34 am and is filed under [English, news](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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2 Responses to *Brain Death and Organ Transplantation in Halacha – Redux*

1. *noam stadlan* says:

[December 22, 2010 at 1:42 am](#)

I think it is quite ironic that the posts on the RCA paper are adjacent to a post that discusses the issue of misleading people.

[Reply](#)

2. *Robby Berman* says:

[December 25, 2010 at 8:39 pm](#)

I spoke with Chief Rabbi Sacks and his dayanim more than 3 years ago. They said -way back then – they were going to issue a ruling in a few months. That was three years ago. I am not hopeful that simply because they again said a ruling is forthcoming that a ruling is actually forthcoming.

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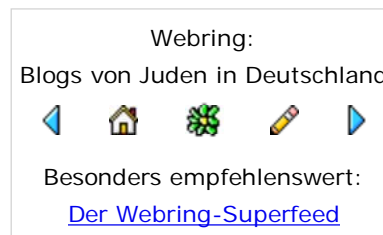
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• Recommended Links

- [Aish haTorah](#) – See the Crash Course in Jewish History, as well as R. Ken Spiro’s “WorldPerfect” history of civilization.
- [Negiah.org](#) is a new forum for teenagers to ponder the wholesome Jewish life.

• Recommended Torah Websites

- [Bar Ilan U. Parashat Hashavua Torah Study Center](#) BIU professors utilize their respective academic disciplines to better understand the weekly Torah portion. Torah uMadda’ in action.
- [Jewish Pathways](#) by Aish HaTorah, for those who want to continue advancing in their Jewish knowledge.
- [The Aishdas Society](#) is the home of the Avodah mailing list. Also check out the articles by Aishdas members and “Torat Emet.
- [TorahWeb](#) hosts Multimedia Divrei Torah (lectures), mostly by RIETS roshei yeshivah (Yeshiva University), but also by others, such as the similarly famous psychologist Rabbi Dr. Aaron Twersky.
- [YU Torah](#) hosts Multimedia Divrei Torah by RIETS (YU) Roshei Yeshiva, also includes the Torah uMadda Journal

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