

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

LETTERS

ORGANS AND HALACHA

► **Two years** ago the chief rabbi was quoted in the JC as saying: "We feel the best way forward is that we should inform the community there are voices this way... there are voices that way... ultimately there's a matter of individual conscience." He made a brave and important statement for personal halachic autonomy about whether or not to be an organ donor.

As he said, this is an issue that mandates a serious halachic debate and for individuals to choose which of the valid halachic positions they wish to adopt. The lecture by Rabbi Avraham Steinberg is a major step forward in this debate (*News*, January 11).

What is not acceptable is for members of our community to ignore this issue and not give it the consideration it deserves. To save a life is the greatest act of altruism and the greatest mitzvah a human can perform.

There is room within the halachic spectrum, from the acceptance of brain stem death on the one hand to the insistence of cardio-respiratory cessation on the other, to accommodate every single Jewish person. The Halachic Organ Donation Society enables this. I urge every single Jewish adult to visit www.hods.org and make their halachic decision.

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► **I congratulate** the Sephardi Beth Din on taking a lifesaving stance in favor of organ donation, in spite of pressures being put on them. As a Sephardi, as a rabbi, and as a neurologist, I am proud that almost all major Sephardic *poskim* have publicly stated that they agree with modern medicine that brain death is death and that Jews should donate organs to the general public, Jew and non-Jew alike.

Dr Rabbi Henry Hasson

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