

Igros Moshe, Chosehen Mishpat: Siman 72

RE: Heart Transplants

Erev Shabbos, 2nd day of Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5738 (March 10, 1978)

My friend the illustrious Rabbi and Gaon Kalmen Kahana Shlita, Shalom Uvracha and only good forever.

Due to my weak health, unfortunately my response was delayed by a few days. In terms of the law, I responded by telegram that it is prohibited, and it is as if one has committed a double murder with his own hands, as I already wrote in 1968 and it is also printed in my book Igros Moshe 2nd Volume of Yoreh Deah, Siman 174. As I wrote there, we should not elaborate with lengthy argumentation in order not to give room to those who might make a mistake to be lenient here. I am writing now since I have confirmed the issue with my son-in-law Rabbi Moshe Tendler *shlita* who read all the medical journals on the issue, and they report there is no medical benefit for the one who receives the transplant who doesn't even live a few extra years. Even the few months he does live, the recipient lives in pain and agony and he needs the doctors to tend to him. In the United States of America they have prohibited it, except for one State which has permitted one doctor to perform such transplants since they consider him an expert... and it's without any reason but the gentiles are not concerned with murder. Many nations have prohibited it since it's murder without any purpose, therefore, what the doctors say that the recipient is better off is a lie. On the contrary, we should punish the doctors who do these transplants as intentional murderers since they know that the situation of the recipient has not changed.

I remain your friend,

Moshe Feinstein