

Organ Transplant

Is organ transplant ethically allowed? When a transplant happens between two living people, it would be an act of love if the removal of the organ doesn't cause a real and direct danger on the donor. He should also not take a cost or price in exchange because this means that we are selling something from our body and this wouldn't be an act of love. A living person might decide to donate an eye out of his two eyes or a kidney for a relative or friend. However, if one of the kidneys was ill and the healthy kidney was given, the donor might die.

The common question concerns heart donation (and the heart donation surgery was successfully done in Lebanon recently). Donation happens within few hours after death. I can say that there is no religious obstacle regarding this issue, and there is no need to argue saying that the body will rise in the last day. Man might be burned or eaten by whales or completely destroyed. However, he still rises in the last day. A corpse is something different than the spiritual body that we will turn into. The removal of the eye, kidney or liver from the body will not change anything in the human entity that is looking for eternal life.

For the apostle has said: "you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else... So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable... it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body". Paul the apostle also continues by saying: "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15).

We believe that the earthly body will be transformed because it inherits the divine glory, and this means that it doesn't remain a biological entity exposed to food and reproduction (people will neither marry nor be given in marriage). If the whole body vanishes in earth and is still sent by God in a miraculous unknown way, then what prevents the donation of an organ that will be transferred into another person that will also vanish in earth eventually?

On the contrary, I recommend organ donation as a mercy towards those with ill bodies. They are our brothers, and we are able to save them from large disabilities or from death. Human sharing continues this way. You make people that need help become thankful and give them happiness.

Donation requires the presence of a written will. Without this will, it would be a violation of the sanctity of the dead. If you had this in your will (donation), you shall become an offering. This is better than the money you leave for the inheritors. You would be ending your life with obvious love.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon