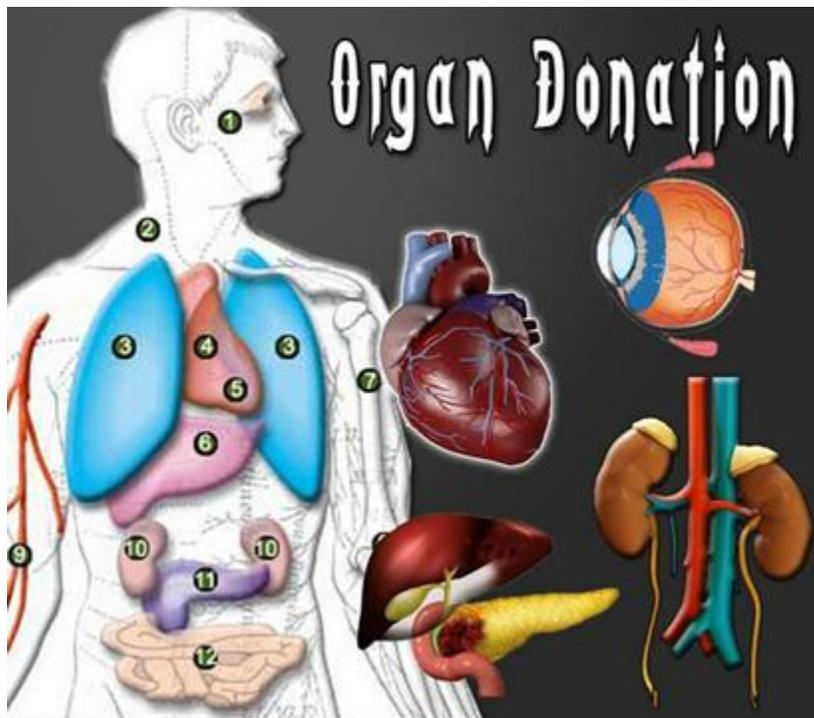


Religious scholars encourage organ donation and transplants

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FILE - Organ Donation.

BEIRUT: Organ donation and transplants are encouraged by the church and Islamic Shariah, so long as they take place voluntarily, two leading Muslim and Christian scholars said during a lecture held Monday at the American University of Beirut.

The lecture, which took place at the AUB Medical Center, brought together Sayyed Ali Fadlallah, president of the Mabarrat Society and Father Abdo Abou Kasem, director of the Catholic Center of Information, to discuss the ethical and religious perspectives on organ donation.

Thalia Arawi, the director of the Salim al-Hoss Bioethics & Professionalism Program at AUB, which organized the lecture, said the scholars had been invited to discuss the issue after recent developments in the fields of organ donation and transplants introduced new hope for the treatment of serious diseases.

“Yet, this promise has been accompanied by several ethical issues, and religious opinions on these matters have often been solicited,” she said.

Both religious scholars said that organ donation and transplants are encouraged by the church and Islamic Shariah as long as they are done with full consent and awareness of the potential risks.

Sayyed Fadlallah said that Islam promotes giving and sacrifice in general, adding that the recipients’ or donors’ religion or race should not affect the process, to which Father Abou Kasem agreed.

Fadlallah added that Islam also approves of doctors who perform organ donation or organ transplant operations. However, Abou Kasem said the church has reservations on the donation of certain organs, and forbids the donation and transplant of the brain and of reproductive organs.

He voiced hope that preachers would raise awareness about organ donation, and encouraged schools and universities to do the same. “Organ donation should be encouraged because it helps humans forgo their selfish nature,” he said. “In the end, the body disintegrates, and the earthly body stays in the ground, while we are given a new body in the afterlife.”

Abou Kasem also noted that the church categorically bans the sale and purchase of organs, while the issue is still a debate within Islam.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on February 21, 2012, on page 4.

Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Feb-21/164049-religious-scholars-encourage-organ-donation-and-transplants.ashx#ixzz1n6VAqv1J>
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