

Jain community encourages organ donation

The Jain community is urging everyone in the UK to think about organ donation after death, For all Jains, it is important to reflect on their actions and to think about compassion, saving all lives and forgiveness. Jains are generally very positive about organ donation and the change in law to opt out in England in May 2020 is a wonderful opportunity to talk about organ donation.

A special film to highlight the Jain message on organ donation was launched on 15 August 2020. This is being shared extensively within the Jain community and has been produced in partnership with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT).

Nemubhai Chandaria, OBE, Co-ordinator of OneJAIN said:

“Organ donation is possibly the biggest act of compassion we can perform. Giving someone else a part of your body is to make them more complete and to have a more fulfilling life”. There is a desperate need for more organ donors in the UK. In particular, we need more donors from the Asian community. In March 2019, there were 1006 Asians waiting for an organ transplant and in the year 2018/19, there were only 56 Asians who donated their organs after they died. Asians on the organ donor register, on average, have to wait longer to receive a transplant and regrettably many people die while waiting for an organ donation. Organ donations were understandably severely affected throughout the UK from March 2020 because of COVID-19. Thankfully, they are now beginning to take place. However, many patients, particularly kidney patients who would have had an organ transplant otherwise, are on dialysis.

Manharbhai Mehta, Chairman of Vanik Council UK said:

“Jains view donation as an act of willingly parting with their organs to help others. Compassion towards all living beings can be achieved by donating organs to save lives (Jiv Daya). In the context of the change in law on organ donation in England this year, it is important to record your positive wishes to register to donate organs and to tell your family.”

The Jain community has been proactive in promoting organ donation for a number of years, and it is remarkable that a number of organisations have been successful in securing funding from NHSBT to undertake this work. Vanik Council UK, Oshwal Association UK, Jain Network UK and Veerayatan UK are doing amazing work to increase awareness about organ donation in the Jain community, with the support of NHSBT.

Mr Hiren Vora, President of Jain Samaj Manchester

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“Organ donors exemplify unconditional love towards another. A donor's impact is felt for many years and also helps to follow the virtue of Aparigraha - non possessiveness in Jainism. Be someone's guardian angel today”

This important message is for everyone within the Jain community in the UK; particularly young Jains. We know the crucial importance of discussion within the whole family about organ donation. Close family members will continue to be involved in discussions about their loved ones donating their organs at the critical time in hospitals. These discussions with the specialist nurse for organ donation will be greatly assisted if family members have discussed this beforehand.

NOTES:

1. The law on organ donation after death changed in England from 20 May 2020 to "opt out". This means that, all adults in England will be considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they have registered a decision not to donate or are in an excluded group. Please register your decision: visit [How do I Register for Organ Donation Page](#) or phone 0300 303 2094.
2. In Jainism, repentance for the acts of the previous year to shed one's accumulated Karmas is considered as an important Avashyak. Jains endeavour to exercise self-discipline and do penance to purify their souls to the best of their individual capacities.
3. Six videos, specifically aimed at the Jain community have been produced in the context of the change in law and they are available at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjI4wHu2TagOmDOR-8D90Z8_gNApfGxza
