

Letters

Organ Sales

The suggestion by Robert Berman of the Halakhic Organ Donor Society (Back Page, Oct. 17) to legalize the sale of organs reminded me of two other modes of selling one's body: slavery and prostitution. In fact, many of his arguments could equally apply to both of those as well. He says that there is an illegal trade in organs anyway, something that is equally true for slavery and prostitution. He claims that legalizing organ sales will make it safer; one can use the same argument for almost everything illegal, including prostitution and drugs.

Berman further argues that we can help poor people provide for their families by letting them sell their organs. I think that it is safe to say that poverty is the source for a good deal of the reasons for slavery and prostitution as well. Finally, he makes the absurd comparison with selling one's hair and sperm, and reasons that if we allow those, selling organs is no different. But hair grows back and the human body produces millions of sperm cells, which can hardly be said for one's kidneys.



COURTESY ROBERT BERMAN

I used to think that HODS served as the moral conscience of the Modern Orthodox community. Now it seems like it is the other way around.

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The juggernaut that goes by the name of Robert Berman has singlehandedly started a sea-change in the Jewish community's perception about Judaism's support for organ donation. His advocacy of legalizing the purchase of organs is admittedly daring. But since some medical ethicists agree with him, and those in Israel who need organs silently await their death due to the dearth of donors, Israel should be the first nation to step forward and implement Berman's call.

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