

Emory University Center for Ethics and
Tam Institute for Jewish Studies

present

*Philosophical Reflections on Israel's
New Transplantation Law*



with

Noam Zohar, Ph.D.
Bar-Ilan University, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Date: Tuesday, April 12th

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Center for Ethics Room 162

Israel's new Transplantation Law directs the National Transplantation Center to accord additional points toward the allocation of cadaver organs to persons who have signed a donor card (and some – though fewer – points to their close relatives). This issue is especially poignant in Israeli society, as some Orthodox rabbis eschew the notion of brain-death and thus prohibit donation, while not explicitly forbidding receiving a cadaveric organ. Some philosophers have denounced the new rule, arguing that it violates a fundamental principle of medical ethics, namely that treatment decisions should be based solely on medical need and must disregard any nonmedical distinctions (such as moral desert or social worth). Some proponents of the new law grant that this is a regrettable departure from received medical ethics, but assert that it is justified by the necessity of increasing Israel's notoriously low consent rate for organ donation. Dr. Zohar will argue instead that the new rule involves no ethical violation; rather, granting such priority is entirely justified and ought to be adopted everywhere.

Noam Zohar, Ph.D. is a member of the Department of Philosophy at Bar Ilan University and Director of its Graduate Program in Bioethics, and Senior Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. He teaches Rabbinics, Philosophy of Halakhah, and Moral and Political Philosophy, with an emphasis on applied ethics -- particularly Bioethics and ethics of warfare.

Professor Zohar has been a visiting Member at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and a Faculty Fellow at Harvard University's Center for Ethics and at its Center for Jewish Studies.