



( Page No: 325)

**Ruling on stopping mechanical ventilation and circulatory support at cessation of heartbeat**

**Q 1, 2:** In such cases where the condition of the patient requires a defibrillator and mechanical ventilator, and there is a flat EEG (electroencephalograph) reading following a twenty-four-hour observation period, which means that the brain has stopped completely and ceased to function, and indicates the death of the patient clinically. In such a case, is it permissible to stop mechanical ventilator? We want to remind you that death will be declared only after ascertaining that the heart has stopped irreversibly through investigating it after removing these apparatuses to detect the signs indicating death according to Shari'ah (Islamic law).

**A:** If the situation is as you have described, then it is permissible to stop the mechanical ventilator and circulatory support devices, provided that the heart is no longer beating and that the patient breathes only through these apparatuses, since this means that the patient is dead and that the movement of the heart and respiration are due to the apparatuses and not to the fact that one is alive. Yet doctors must ascertain of their death after removing the apparatuses and before declaring their death in order not to cause them the least harm.

**Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'**

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Deputy Chairman                      | Chairman   |
| <a href="#">`Abdul-Razzaq `Afify</a> | <a href="#">`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz</a> |

(Excerpt from the Fatwas of the Permanent Committee) Questions (1,2) of Fatwa no. (6619).

**Source: Fatwas on Medical Issues and Patients**