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OF GREATER WASHINGTON

24 Teves 5781

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Dear Friends:

Much has been written lately about the COVID-19 vaccine which is now becoming available throughout the world as well as in our own community. Simply stated, it is our opinion that a person who gets vaccinated fulfills the *mitzva* of *venishmartem me'od lenofshoseychem*, the Torah's directive to be diligent about preserving one's health.

Only Hashem knows what the future may bring. Rarely in life are we 100% sure that our decisions will engender positive outcomes. Rather, we are constantly engaged in weighing the risks versus the benefits associated with a given course of action. Along these lines, it is clear that the medical establishment believes that the benefits to be had from getting vaccinated far outweigh the risks associated with suffering from or transmitting a COVID-19 infection. (Please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>).

In addition to being responsible for one's own health, getting vaccinated also promotes and facilitates a healthy community. The more of us who take the vaccine, the safer we all are. There are individuals, for example, who cannot get vaccinated and must rely on herd immunity to be safe from infection. When we vaccinate, we serve Hashem, both in terms of performing the *mitzva* to protect our own health, and in terms of doing a *chesed* for all those who come in contact with us.

Those of us with unique medical conditions should, of course, be sure to consult with their health care provider before taking the vaccine.

May Hashem watch over and protect us all in these turbulent and difficult times.

With Love and Respect,

The Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington