



WELCOME



JUDAISM has long embraced and celebrated argument. The Talmud records not only conclusions but also dissenting opinions and often the full course of the discussion. Dispute, ideally, is not resolved; it endures. It continues to educate us, challenge us, and impose gray in a world that too often seeks the simplicity of black and white.

Coming out of a generational pandemic, the Jewish community must consider its future. This pause was deeply painful, but it has given us an opportunity to reflect, to reassess, to challenge presumptions and default behaviors. While that imperative is true for everyone in the Jewish community, it is perhaps most important for leadership, one of the primary audiences for whom *SAPIR* is intended. A community that does not struggle with larger questions of policy, but instead promulgates “truths” that are accepted unchallenged, is a dull community indeed. Among American Jews, as in America as a whole, we seem to be calcifying into ideological tribes that cannot tolerate dissent. Provocative perspectives are not only not welcomed; they are vilified. Loud voices claim to speak for the whole, and those with thoughtful questions stay silent. This is not the Jewish way.

Over these four issues of *SAPIR*, we hope to engage readers in some uncomfortable discussions. We hope to challenge your thinking. We hope to inspire you to engage with your colleagues and your communities, to ask questions, examine assumptions, and embrace dissent.

In Jewish thought, the blue of the *sapir*—the sapphire—was meant to remind us of the sky, to draw our eyes toward heaven (Exodus 24:10). We hope that *SAPIR* will be another chapter in a long Jewish history of arguments for the sake of heaven. We hope you will join us on this journey, and if you do, these arguments are certain to endure.

— Mark Charendoff, *Publisher*