

Publisher's Note



WE CHOOSE to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.” President Kennedy’s declaration, delivered in 1962, seemed incredible at the time. But he set a specific timeline, captured the imagination of the American people, and inspired them to take action. Not quite seven years later, two Americans walked on the moon.

For this issue we asked ourselves, “What is a Jewish moonshot?” We wanted our moonshots to be audacious but also achievable, with a reasonable, but not immediate, timeline; disruptive, but not utopian. We invited a diverse group of authors to send us their—realistic—dreams.

When we founded SAPIR a year ago, we had a simple notion. We wanted to shift the focus of the Jewish communal leaders to the day after the pandemic. Once the immediate crises were in our rearview mirror, what ought Jewish leadership to be thinking about?

At a time when Twitter and texting are forcing people to speak

in shorthand, we wanted to give people an opportunity to discuss ideas in long form. At a time when much of the focus is on calling out problems, we wanted pieces that offered solutions. And at a time when we were becoming more polarized as Jews and Americans, we wanted readers across the political spectrum to experience ideas both comfortable and uncomfortable, to be challenged intellectually and ideologically.

We imagined that four issues would allow us to flesh out key themes that Jewish leaders needed to consider—and that it would take four issues to get your attention. We were wrong on both counts. The march toward normal is taking more than its share of twists and turns—there’s a lot more we need to discuss. And we seem to have gotten your attention right out of the gate. We’ve appreciated your feedback, both laudatory and critical.

We were wrong about something else, too. We assumed that if we put out good literature, we could foster conversations among our readers and their fellow travelers. What we didn’t anticipate was the role we’d be asked to continue to play in unpacking these ideas. You told us how you were using these articles in your teaching, with your trustees, and with your employees and colleagues. You asked for our permission to reprint articles (and in several languages!). You asked for events with the authors and peppered them with questions. You didn’t just want to read; you wanted to engage.

So while our intention was to declare our mission accomplished at the end of 2021, we have decided to keep at this a while longer. We will also be experimenting with other ways to keep the conversations going—new features, events, and gatherings. Let us know what you think of them.

This moonshot issue is an experiment for us, one that we hope will foster a new round of discussions. What are we hoping for as a Jewish community? Let’s snap out of reminiscing and focus on the future. Bill Clinton once said, “When our memories outweigh our dreams, it is then that we become old.” Let’s get back to dreaming. It is what our community deserves. *