Note from the Editor

Joseph H. Prouser

As this issue of *Masorti: The New Journal of Conservative Judaism* was in the final stages of preparation for publication, the Rabbinical Assembly, the JTS community, and the people of Congregation Beth Sholom of Teaneck, New Jersey were left bereaved by the untimely passing of Rabbi Eliezer Diamond, the Rabbi Judah Nadich Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS. Rabbi Diamond was, at a very early stage in his long and distinguished career, my own teacher of Mishnah and Codes at JTS. As this issue of our journal is devoted to the theme of "Teaching Halakhah in the Conservative Movement," we remember Rabbi Diamond not only as an academician skilled at teaching rabbinic texts, but as a personal exemplar of joyful Halakhic observance and spiritual devotion to generations of JTS students and aspiring rabbis. May his memory be a blessing.

The articles in this issue include the perspectives of seminary leaders, academics, congregational rabbis, religious educators, camp enthusiasts, leaders of Conservative Movement affiliated organizations, and Conservative laity. I am particularly grateful that the teachings and leadership of our teachers, Rabbis Mayer Rabinowitz and Joel Roth are represented in these pages. Both provide extended and detailed insights into our subject matter through interviews and discussions conducted with devoted students. No examination of "Teaching Halakhah in the Conservative Movement" would be complete without them.

We read in Pirkei Avot 6:3 that "One who learns from another one chapter, or one halakhah, or one verse, or one word, or even one letter, is obligated to treat that individual with honor." How much greater is our debt of honor to the contributors to this special issue of *Masorti*, as well as to those masters whose work they describe and explore.

It is my hope and prayer that the discussions and essays in this special issue of *Masorti* will help embolden Conservative Movement leaders at all levels and of varying perspectives to rededicate ourselves to the teaching of Halakhah as the very heart of Conservative Judaism. As Rabbi Susan Grossman observes in these pages:

"Engaging in the teaching and communal learning of halakhah from a Conservative/Masorti perspective can foster a depth of reflection and

consideration that helps us all become better individuals, better Jews, and a better People, contributing to the building of a kinder, better world."

Or, to paraphrase the saintly teacher of a very different religious tradition: "Teach Halakhah at all times; use words when necessary."

Rabbi Joseph H. Prouser is editor of this journal. He has served on both the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards and on the Joint Beit Din of the Conservative Movement.