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Source Sheet Class 18-“2000 Years of Jewish History”-Rabbi Menachem Levine

Source 1

“No Christian community in history identified more with the People of the Book than did the early settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who believed their own lives to be a literal reenactment of the Biblical drama of the Hebrew nation... these émigré Puritans dramatized their own situation as the righteous remnant of the Church corrupted by the ‘Babylonian woe,’ and saw themselves as instruments of Divine Providence, a people chosen to build their new commonwealth on the Covenant entered into at Mount Sinai.”

Gabriel Sivan in “The Bible and Civilization” (p. 236)

Source 2

When Morris was appointed Superintendent of Finance, he turned to Solomon for help in raising the money needed to carry on the war and later to save the emerging nation from financial collapse. Salomon advanced direct loans to the government and also gave generously of his own resources to pay the salaries of government officials and army officers. With frequent entries of “I sent for Hayim Solomon”, Morris' diary for the years 1781–84 records some 75 transactions between the two men.

The Congressional Record of March 25, 1975

Source 3

“The most striking similarity among Hollywood Jews, however wasn’t their Eastern European origins. What united them in deep spiritual kinship was their utter and absolute rejections of their pasts and their equally absolute devotion to America...The Hollywood Jews embarked on an assimilation so ruthless and complete that they cut their lives to the pattern of American respectability as they interpreted it...but by its lights the Jews were to be seen and not heard...”

Neal Gabler “An Empire of their Own-How the Jews Invented Hollywood.

Source 4

“It is not the mere revealed Bible that is the first importance to the Jew but the Bible as it repeats itself in history. In other words, as it is interpreted by tradition. Another consequence of this conception of tradition is that neither scripture nor primitive Judaism but general custom which forms the real rule of practice. Liberty was always given to the great teachers of every generation to make modifications and innovations in harmony with the spirit of existing institutions. Hence a return to Mosaism [Orthodoxy] would be illegal, pernicious and indeed, impossible.”

JTS Dean, Solmon Schechter, in “Catholic Israel”

Source 5

Is the Conservative movement halakhic? Not “Should it be halakhic?” not “Would the world be better, would my job be easier, more gratifying if it were?” But “Is it?” And the answer is that it obviously is not. Conservative Judaism is not halakhic because Conservative Jews are not halakhic, and increasingly even Conservative rabbis are not halakhic.

Harold Kushner, “Is the Conservative Movement Halachic?” in the Proceedings of the 1980 Conservative Rabbinical Assembly