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The modern globalized world has brought to the fore the issues of ethnical and cultural identity. Minorities are preoccupied with issues concerning assimilation since they are afraid of losing their cultural heritage which can be forgotten.

Jewish people living in the United States are also preoccupied with the same questions. There are different opinions on the issue. Rachel, a young Jewish woman supports the idea that Jewish people should preserve their traditions and remember their history, but at the same time, there can be no extremism and all people should cooperate. I interviewed Rachel who is 29. She is working for a big company, and she was born in the United States (just like her parents).

I wanted to find out about Rachel's ideas as for cultural and ethnic identity and her attitude to the topical issue of assimilation. So, I wanted to find out whether Rachel was proud to pertain to this cultural background, whether she knew the history of her people and what she thought about Jewish culture. In the first place, it is necessary to point out that Jewish people are proud of their cultural heritage. Rachel, for instance, said: "Of course, I am proud to be a Jew. Jewish people are one of the most ancient nations that have incorporated the wealth of knowledge throughout centuries". She also pointed out that "Jewish culture is a fascinating reflection of human experience". When speaking of knowledge of conventions and the history of Jewish people Rachel spoke about the major book of all Jews, Torah, which contains a lot of information about the history of Jewish people.

Apart from this the book defines the most important rules that every Jew should respect and follow. Rachel stated that existence of this set of rules in one major source (which is more than three thousand years old) enabled Jewish people to remain faithful to their history, culture and religion. Rachel also pointed out that Jewish religion and culture are based on essential concepts of respect to older people and respect to the past.

Jewish people are very supportive and ready to help. They are reasonable and always rely on experience (own experience and that of past generations). All these major concepts make Rachel proud of being a Jew.

When speaking of conventions Rachel expressed her opinion stating that having such rules and conventions, and being loyal to them made it possible to preserve cultural heritage of Jewish people. Rachel said: I would not say I am very religious. I do not go to synagogue too often. However, I know all the conventions of Jewish culture and follow them, not because I want to show off that I am a Jew or because my parents make me do this. I think all these conventions and even rituals help me to live in this world and to be happy. Thus, Jews respect their culture and their customs, because they regard them as guidelines which assist them to find their place in the world. Speaking of identity Rachel stated: " Perhaps, the metaphor about roots is too trite, but I'll say that Jews should respect their roots, and take care of them just like we take care of plant's roots".

She believes that the statement that there can be no future without the past is true to life in the case of cultural identity. Jews understand that, and pay much attention to their history and culture. Admittedly, there are people who

try to preserve their culture in a quite specific way. However, Rachel shares the opinion that it is not the right way to isolate oneself defending one's cultural heritage. When speaking about assimilation she said " I do not think that assimilation is that bad and complete isolation is that good.

" She added that assimilation could affect any culture. Nevertheless, Rachel thinks that assimilation does not mean rejection of one's history and culture. Many Jews understand that it is essential for people to cooperate.

For instance, Rachel says: " I think that sharing experience is an important step to self-development, so there is nothing bad if we take into account some useful experiences of other nations". Thus, many Jews share an opinion that thoughtful assimilation will strengthen their nation and more generally help all people in the world live in peace for the sake of the development of the entire humanity. Admittedly, Rachel is not the only one who thinks so. In fact, her opinion can be regarded as one ideas shared by many Jews and even people of different nations.

On balance, it is possible to point out that Jewish people are proud of their cultural heritage and try to preserve their history and culture. However, in our day there are many issues concerning assimilation of Jews. Many people are afraid of losing their identity in the process of assimilation. Nevertheless, many Jews living in the USA (Rachel is one of them) believe that assimilation is not the evil, but an opportunity to develop.

Of course, it is necessary to point out that assimilation for these people is respecting one's roots, following one's conventions, but at the same time

taking into account cultural peculiarities of other nations, and sharing experiences with other people.