

The Jewish-American situation seen through the lenses of Goldstein's and Goodman's works bring us closer to understanding the challenges the Jews in America have had to face. American culture provides open possibilities and chances that Jews had not been used to. This change starts the process of gradual assimilation in the forms of new educational opportunities, new views of gender roles, a modern approach to life where all people can be appreciated and successful, women not excluded.

The impact of place and culture shapes the face of traditional Judaism, which needs to find ways to retain orthodox ways and keep Jews united against the possible dangers that might come from the outside. Yet progressive assimilation is inevitable and concerns all American Jews, even those who try to seek shelter in the womb of the orthodox communities.

The changes take place especially in the new generations who do not have much connection to the past and Jewish experience on the far distant continent. They create their own version of Judaism based partly on the ways of their parents and partly on what American society offers. American values are gradually taken into consideration and influence the views of the young Jews. The new face of the religion is no longer what Judaism used to look like in the old shtetls.

New rules are introduced into Judaism in the American context - the traditional holidays are adjusted in favor of gender equality, it frequently happens that the Sabbath is not properly observed, the Jewish heritage is not passed on strictly by a mother but sometimes it suffices to have a Jewish father for the child to feel Jewish, conversions to Judaism take place. All such acts would be resented in traditional Judaism. Since Judaism had to come to terms with the prevailing American culture, its rules needed to loosen.