

THE GENIUS OF JUDAISM

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The genius of Judaism by I. Disraeli

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I. D'ISRAELI

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OF JUDAISM**

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J U D A I S M .

BY
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CHAPTER I.



WITH THE ISRAELITE EVERY THING IS ANCIENT,
AND NOTHING IS OBSOLETE.

THE existence of the "peculiar people" professing the ancient Jewish faith has long been an object of religious conviction, and of philosophical curiosity. The Hebrew separated from the Christian, at a period of the highest civilisation holds an anomalous position in society; and with some truth it may be said, that he exists in a supernatural state. The Genius of Judaism remains immutable, requiring every concession, but yielding none;

perpetuating human institutions, which, from their very nature, passed away, and still cherishing the prejudices of barbarous æras. But that the Christian of the nineteenth century should remain for the Hebrew the Christian of the ninth, is a moral anachronism.

It will not be by taking a popular view of the manners of this singular people that we shall allay the fanaticism of Jew or Christian. We must learn to feel like Jews when we tell of their calamities, and to reason like Christians when we detect their fatuity.

The history of the Hebrews develops those permanent principles which are still operating on their insulated race, and which, through a long series of ages, by separating the Israelite from the Christian, have occasioned a reciprocal ignorance of their modes of thinking, their motives of conduct, their

dissimilar customs, and their irreconcilable differences. Fewer misconceptions and less erroneous opinions are formed of the castes of the Hindoos, than of the actual condition, and of the feelings, and the conduct of a whole people domiciliated among the nations of Europe, and now far more numerous than they were in their land of Palestine.

Christians, who have written on Jewish affairs, frequently describe customs and opinions as if they solely related to the former state of the Hebrews; not aware that customs and rites which are perfectly oriental, are still exhibiting in the domestic day of the Jewish citizen, whether a native of Berlin or Amsterdam, of Paris or of London. The close of the Jewish history is imagined to be the final destruction of their holy city; but this people have survived their metropolis, their kingdom, and their code: and a terrible interval of more than fifteen