Rabbi Ya’akob Hajez (1620-1674)

Rabbi Ya'aqob Hajez (aka Hagiz) was born in Fez, Morocco in 1620. In 1657 and after living in Livorno (Italy) for a few years, Rabbi Hajez settled in Jerusalem as the head of a new Bet haMidrash (=Yeshiba) founded and supported by the Vega brothers, two Jewish philanthropist from Livorno who supported the Jews living in Jerusalem. The name of this Bet Midrash was Bet Ya'aqob but it was also known as "Yeshibat haHesger" (=the enclosed Yeshiba) because its Rabbis and students would never leave the premises of the Yeshiba unnecessarily. In that Yeshiba the students also learned foreign languages, mathematics, engineering and other secular studies.

Rabbi Hajez was known for his bright mind and critical thinking. He was one of the main (and few) strong opponents to Shabbatai Zevi, the false prophet. Shabbatai Zevi came to Yerushalayim in 1665 and the rabbis of the city, led by Rabbi Hagiz, excommunicated him until he was forced to leave Jerusalem.

Rabbi Hajez was a very prolific writer. Among his works we can mention:

Etz haHayim: A commentary on all treatises of the Mishna

Halakhot Qetanot: A book on Rabbinical response dealing with multiple subjects. See for example **his responsa** on the kashrut of the "Scincus scincus" a reptile/fish creature (Hebrew).

Tehilat Hokhma: A book on the methodology of the Talmud.

Orah Mishor: A very short book on the appropriate conduct of Rabbis and Torah Scholars. In the introduction he mentions that he writes this book as a reaction to comments made by people complaining about the unethical behavior of certain Torah Scholars. Instead of denying the accusations, rabbi Hajez wrote this treatise demanding from those who dedicate their lives to study Torah to raise their standard of behavior (=noblesse oblige). He explains that Torah scholars are exposed to a higher degree of accountability: "*talmid-hakhamim, shegagot na'asot lo kizdonot*", a mistake made by a Torah Scholar or a Rabbi is considered negligence or even a willful offense.

Rabbi Moshe Hajez, his son

https://henryabramson.com/2016/03/15/who-was-r-moshe-hagiz/

To Download the books of Rabbi Ya'aqob Hajez go to www.hebrewbooks.com (□□□□ □□□□□)

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