

THE JEWISH JUDGE

With the Wisdom of Solomon

As recalled by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

This instructive story was told to the monks of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts by the eminent theologian, Father George Florovsky in the 1960's.

In pre-revolutionary Russia, a Jewish rabbi was acting as an arbiter between two members of his synagogue who had a legal dispute between themselves over some financial matter.

First, the rabbi listened to the man who was, so to speak, the “prosecutor” in the case. After the man presented his side of the case, the rabbi began to applaud and commend him loudly. “You are right!” shouted the rabbi enthusiastically. “You win the case!”

At that point, the defendant interrupted, and said, “Wait a moment rabbi. How can you say that this man is right? You haven’t even heard my side of the story yet.”

The rabbi said, “You are correct. Alright, let’s hear your side of the story too.”

After the defendant had presented his side of the facts, the rabbi began again to clap his hands loudly and to shout, “Congratulations! *You* are right! *You* win the case!”

A bystander present in the room was watching all these proceedings. At this point he interjected himself into the “trial” and protested to the rabbi, “Just a moment, rabbi. How can both men be right? This is impossible!”

Turning to him, the rabbi said, “You know what? You’re right too!”

The moral of the story: Do not be quick to judge, because that, too, may be the right thing to do.