The Bull’s Eye

(As told by Peninnah Schram)

A long time ago, the Dubner Maggid was walking with one of his students along the banks of a river. As they walked, the Maggid told a story to explain a certain Jewish tradition.

Suddenly, the student stopped and asked,

“Rabbi, tell me, how do you always know the right story to explain the subject being discussed?”

The rabbi smiled and said, “I’ll answer you with a story.”

Many years ago, a nobleman’s son was a student at a military academy, and one of the sports in which he excelled was shooting bull’s eyes. In fact, he had won many gold medals for his marksmanship.

After he graduated, the young officer rode home on his horse. Passing through a small village, he saw something strange: a hundred circles drawn on the side of a barn—and in the center of each one was a bullet hole.

Astonished, he stopped and shouted, “Who is this expert marksman? A hundred perfect bull’s eyes! Even I could never do that!”

A boy passing by looked up and said, “Oh, that’s Nar, the town fool.”

“I don’t care what he is,” said the officer. “Anyone who can hit the bull’s eye a hundred times must be a genius. I must meet him!”

The boy laughed.

“Oh no, you don’t understand. Nar doesn’t draw the circle first and then shoot. He shoots first… and then he draws the circle around the bullet hole.”

The Dubner Maggid smiled and said,

“And that’s how it is with me. I don’t always know the right subject ahead of time. I read many stories, I listen to many stories. And when I find a story I want to tell… I find the way to lead into it.”

And the Maggid and his student continued their walk.

Connecting to Shabbat: Don’t Take Yourself Too Seriously

> “Sometimes we work so hard to hit the bull’s eye in life—to say the perfect thing, be the perfect parent, host the perfect dinner, observe the perfect Shabbat.
>
> But here’s Nar—the so-called fool—reminding us with humor that you don’t have to hit the mark first.
>
> Sometimes it’s okay to just show up, do your best, and then look back and find the meaning in what you’ve done.
>
> That’s Shabbat. It doesn’t demand perfection. It welcomes whatever we bring.”

Closing Thought

> “Tonight, let’s be like the Maggid. Let’s walk, talk, rest, and share stories.
> Let’s stop aiming for perfection and simply enjoy the gift of this evening together.
> And maybe when the sun sets and we look back, we’ll realize—we drew a perfect circle around something sacred.”
