

JEWISH LATIN PRINCESS
CHANA WEISBERG, EDITOR OF THE JEWISH
WOMAN.ORG
EPISODE 57

You're listening to Jewish Latin Princess Podcast by Yael. Every week get your dose of inspiration from the world's most uniquely talented Jewish women and from Yael herself. Seeking profound and practical ways to live a joyful, richer Jewish life? Welcome to Jewish Latin Princess Podcast.

And now, Jewish lifestyle expert and bilingual blogger at www.jewishlatinprincess.com, your host, Yael.

Yael Trusch: You're listening to Jewish Latin Princess, everyone, I'm Yael Trusch, your host. So happy to be on the show. We've talked about living a mission driven living life many times on this podcast. Many of my guests have told us that the path they're on is really larger than themselves and that because they are doing things with a higher purpose, that is really the secret to them being an achieving whatever it is.

Well, today I have the pleasure to introduce you to a woman I look up to as an influencer and a communicator of the beauty of Jewish life. Someone who's work again reflects this idea of being mission driven and doing things for a higher purpose.

I have Chana Wiesberg on the show. Chana is the Editor of The Jewish woman.org, the most popular Jewish educational site for women and satellite for chabad.org, a satellite of chabad.org. You might have seen some of my article there, in The Jewish woman.org, as I try to contribute regularly.

So I've had the pleasure of working with Chana in the past. She is again, the editor of the website and she is also the author of five books, now

actually six books, because her sixth book, Shabbat Delights, is about to come out right in time for the high holidays, so stay tuned for that.

Chana is a sought after inspirational speaker, a wife and mother of six children, and Chana now have four grandchildren.

We talked about having it all, what is that mean? And Chana has a different perspective which I think many of you will appreciate.

What about feminism? How do we look at it from a Jewish perspective? What is it lacking? Did Chana think she would be in a position of influence? Was that the plan? How did that come about? Listen to what she has to say about talents and the different stages of our lives as women. As the editor of The Jewish woman.org, Chana hears from women from all over the world. What are some of the most common things she hears? What are Jewish women looking for? And does she ever hear from people who she's impacted and she wouldn't otherwise know about it.

Wait till you hear this story. Listen to Chana's message and practical tips on staying positive. This and so much more from the inspiring, Chana Weisberg.

[THEME MUSIC]

Yael Trusch: Chana Wiesberg, welcome to Jewish Latin Princess!

Chana Weisberg: I'm so happy to be here Yael, thank you so much for having me.

Yael Trusch: My pleasure, such an honor to connect with you in this. Well, I tell you, when I had the macro vision of launching this podcast over a year ago, I said okay, so who is really going to be here? Who's on my list? And of course you are one of the top five names I was – okay, Chana Weisberg, and so here we are today.

Chana Weisberg: I'm flattered, very flattered. Thank you.

Yael Trusch: Chana, you are –

CHANA WEISBERG: It's really nice. Amazing what with you're doing with this. I think it's a great thing –

Yael Trusch: Thank you.

CHANA WEISBERG: To introduce so many people to so many interesting Jewish woman and that's a great thing to be doing.

Yael Trusch: Thank you. You're a highly sought after speaker and a bestselling author, a columnist, you're the editor of The Jewish woman.org, which is the most popular Jewish educational site for women and for listeners who might not know, I'm not sure how anybody doesn't know, but, thejewishwoman.org is a satellite of chabad.org, so that should be enough. That is big. And now you are about to publish your sixth book, so a lot of accomplishments and a lot for us to talk about.

I want to go back to the early days, when you were being shaped for all of this. I know that your parents were pillars in the community in Toronto, very influential community leaders, so you grew up with many opportunities to be a leader yourself and vocal about a Jewish education, about women, about sharing a feminine perspective from a Torah lens from a very early age probably.

Did you even think back then, in those formative years that this was a career path for you? That you were going to become this influential voice in the Jewish world?

CHANA WEISBERG: Oh, that's an interesting question. Honestly no, I didn't. Sometimes people say, what's your five year plan? Because nowadays everyone's supposed to really be doing a five year plan and figuring out what and where they're going to be in five years? And I just laughed, because God has His plan for us and –

Yael Trusch: Yes.

CHANA WEISBERG: I think it's just a matter of being available and ready and feeling like, “God, give me the opportunity, please, to use whatever talents I have in a perceptive way.”

But no, I didn't envision it in anyway. You know I did have a lot of opportunities growing up to speak and to be in a leadership position because my father was the Rabbi of the Lubavitch community. We moved to a new way area, and I remember as a young girl, and my heart pounding as I would just do a Shabbat share for a woman who was like twice my age. But I wasn't like this; I'm actually a very private person, contrary to what others might think. I'm a very private, more introverted kind of thoughtful person.

Yael Trusch: I know same here.

CHANA WEISBERG: Same there, right? So you can understand that.

Yael Trusch: Yes, and people are shouting that I'm like – I totally get you, totally.

CHANA WEISBERG: Totally! I think it took a lot of pushing myself to say, okay, I'm going to do it or meet the challenge... it's a lot about growth, personal growth and just pushing yourself that, no, I didn't envision anything, I still don't envisioned anything. I just lead each day in the best way that I can, and ask for Hashem that opportunity should come my way that will be something that I can serve God, with my talents in a way that He'll be happy with me. That's basically what I ask for.

I think every person loves to use their talents, every person has a tremendous amount of talent, and I think it's just a matter of finding those talents and really sometimes pushing ourselves to the limit when it's a little uncomfortable but actualizing ourselves.

Yael Trusch: Right.

CHANA WEISBERG: And actualizing ourselves as woman, I think means so many different things and there are so many different stages especially as woman that we're constantly recreating ourselves.

You know, different stages when our kids our young, as they're getting older. With different opportunities we see different things that fit. What will fit with our family life and it's not just about us; it's about so much that goes on around us –

Yael Trusch: Right.

CHANA WEISBERG: And so many people that we're constantly nurturing and taking care of at every stage of our lives and it's readjusting – readjusting our priorities, readjusting our schedules, readjusting our goals, readjusting what we do, and really recreating ourselves to fit the new world that are put for us for that new stage in life.

Yael Trusch: Right, because like you said, it's different stages and it evolves. It's different when our kids are little, it's different when you have teens and maybe you have more . . . It's just really evolves –

CHANA WEISBERG: Absolutely.

Yael Trusch: And the opportunities present themselves depending on what else is going on, you take them in different ways and you adjust.

CHANA WEISBERG: Absolutely. I think if women were constantly doing that, I don't think it's a bad thing. I think we're very flexible, we're very creative and to become new selves and I think that's a big part of our lives, because there are so many stages. I know many women come to me and they say, well as little children and I can't really be doing it at this stage and you know, you don't look at it as like, uh, this is for the next—no! Not my entire life I'm going to be changing diapers, because the time just goes by so quickly.

Yael Trusch: Right.

CHANA WEISBERG: That we need to just enjoy each stage and enjoy the opportunities that we have at each day so it doesn't mean that we can't take time for ourselves or can't take time to grow in terms of personal development, but it's going to be different when your children are young and when your children are older.

Yael Trusch: Right, and I should say here that you're the mother of six children and so –

CHANA WEISBERG: Right.

Yael Trusch: You're speaking from experience.

CHANA WEISBERG: Right. That was funny because I actually got involved with chabad.org when I had my youngest.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

CHANA WEISBERG: And I was running an outreach center in Toronto at that time and I remember my older girls were teenagers, I was out in the evenings and here I was out in the mornings and here my youngest was born, and I don't want to do that anymore. I wanted to be home with my teens in the evening and I wanted to be with my youngest in the morning, and so things changed. Things evolve, you develop, and you change what you need to be doing.

Yael Trusch: Right. You tweak. You reprioritize

CHANA WEISBERG: Exactly! Exactly.

Yael Trusch: So, do you think this whole concept of women having it all, do you think it's in a sense accurate or is it just a lie that we're all feeding ourselves?

CHANA WEISBERG: I don't know what it means to have it all. I think we can all give it our all. We do give it our all. I think we very much every day, we're giving our all. Having our all? No. I don't think anyone – do you feel like you have it all?

Yael Trusch: No.

Chana Weisberg: Even on the best day, even on the most successful day, even when everything seems to be going just right – the sun is shining, your work is going, your kids are behaved; everything is going right – do you feel like you have it all?

Yael Trusch: No.

Chana Weisberg: It's hard to and we miss so much that we all want – spiritually, emotionally, there's so much that we... but I think we can give our all. I think we can give it our all, and every moment that we give our all, it might be a different giving our all. Sometimes giving our all means a lot less in other times, but that's okay.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Chana Weisberg: You know as long as we're giving our all in terms of what we can achieve.

Yael Trusch: I love that perspective. I guess and I think in many ways just that whole concept is a myth because whatever we're doing we're saying no to other things, like back to the earlier conversations.

Chana Weisberg: Absolutely.

Yael Trusch: So, however in one's entire life span, yes, we can achieve many, many, many things and there's time for a lot of us to give it our best shot at whatever it is important to us, but we're going to be excluding a bunch of other things or not. They don't fall in the priority list I guess.

Chana Weisberg: A 100%, and that's why it's always important to consider what you're doing and why you're doing it because like you said, your giving to one thing something else is gonna lose, there is no such thing. If something is going to lose out and you just want to make sure that where you're giving your all is where you really want it to be your all.

Yael Trusch: Yeah. Chana, your work and your message has been very much centered on the role of women within Judaism and the expression or the manifestation of the feminine dimension, both macro and micro, when it comes to each of our personal lives and by extension how that is manifested in the world at large.

So over the years you've seen feminism, that's a very broad term, evolve, and now we have things going on in the world like Me Too and everything that's going on with women, you must have perspective on how we should view all of it from a Jewish lens. Do you have some light to shed on what's going on globally from a Torah perspective?

Chana Weisberg: I think what the feminist movement was lacking and what I think the world in general is lacking is of more feminine perspective. We look at things really from the eyes, so often of the masculine, and we kind of try to evolve ourselves into that masculine role and so what the world is in need? I remember I read years ago, this book that was called, Same Differences. And the premise of the book was about, we're all the same, men and women we're really all the same.

Yael Trusch: Oh, yeah.

Chana Weisberg: And therefore, and the reason why she wrote this, she says very clearly, is because she was afraid that woman wouldn't be able to get certain positions or certain jobs if she accentuated what was different about women. So she really writes for, we're basically all the same, men and women. And I read that and I just laughed sadly, in a sad way because what she's really trying to do is tell women to be men.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Chana Weisberg: And that's not what the world needs. The world needs the feminine perspective – men want to hear it, men need to hear it, and women need to hear it.

So we can't change ourselves to be men, we can show the world what being a woman is.

Yael Trusch: Is.

Chana Weisberg: I think that what's really lacking let's say in the Me Too Movement is that, let's just try to show the world from a feminine perspective what being a woman is all about, not by trying to impress a man or trying to become like a man, or trying to attract the man, but really show what a woman is supposed to be.

And woman wants that privacy, a woman wants that boundary, a woman wants those... the feeling of there's a difference between the outside world and the inside world and this internal world of her own – physically, emotionally in all way, and those boundaries are being breached, but the reason why those boundaries are being breached is because men and women are both trying to accommodate themselves to what the man wants and the man's role in this world and that doesn't serve anybody.

Yael Trusch: Right, and it feels to me it's slowly evolving to more women kind of owning their femininity and again not in a man's role, but really just being more comfortable in what female qualities are and what value they add to the world, both and business in any setting.

Chana Weisberg: Absolutely. I think that we need more of that, we need of women voices, we need more to – I mean that's really what I tried to do in some of my earlier books. I explored what were female role models for us in the past. And how can we take this role model, this strong woman, potent woman, women who knew who they were, women who knew what they were all about, and yet they took a very strong leadership position.

Lets emulate them, let's find out about them and it's interesting when I started to do the research for my very first book, the Crown of Creation, there weren't any English book available about these women role models, and I'm talking about the *Imahos*, women in *Tanach*. There was really very

little translated English words are available for the public. And I start to do a lot of research to find out to teach, to explore and it was fascinating what we came up with, but I felt that it was so necessary for a woman and subsequently for men and women to understand that, to understand what her positions were, what her role was, what her feelings were, what her thought process was.

Yael Trusch: Right, right. And I understand back then you even faced some resistance in the Jewish publishing world when you went to publish that first book, yeah?

Chana Weisberg: Right! Correct. I remember when I first went to a *frum* publisher. They said this is a really profound book, very well researched. I have like hundreds of footnotes or sources that we're afraid it's too profound for women. On the other hand, maybe their husbands will read it. I know, so, no. I didn't publish with them.

Yael Trusch: Wait! Wait... are you serious?

Chana Weisberg: Unfortunately, I am. And I think that's something that has evolved though over time.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Chana Weisberg: This is only a couple of decades ago, and I think since then women are showing that they are very much interested in these kinds of work. They're interested in intellectual works, women are interested in studying and growing, and we need to open up more of these opportunities for women, because women want that.

Women are growing, they're growing in all areas, and they want this level of intellectual understanding and emotional understanding of their heritage.

Yael Trusch: You know what? That's a perfect segue to my next question which is, you must get a lot of messages, you must hear, as the columnist and the Editor of thejewishwoman.org and as a speaker, you must hear a lot from women about what's on their mind, what are they

searching for. What are those questions that are pressing with regards to Judaism? What are some of the most things, the things you hear most often?

CHANA WEISBERG: We get questions really from women all over the world. And that's something that I really love about thejewishwomen.org is, we'll get someone who feels very isolated in her Judaism in Belfast, Ireland or in Alaska. Really, I just got this week's two of them, that's why I'm in to those two places.

And this is the way of connecting to them, this is a way of them tapping into their heritage and learning more about it, and learning and connecting to other women, and seeing other women's challenges and how they're overcoming it.

So, this is part of what I love about my work, is that we're connecting to women from all over. Women from large communities, where there's so much going on and women in isolated communities where unfortunately, there's very little going on. And this is their opportunity to connect with others to learn more about their heritage and to understand it better, and that's the fascinating part.

So as far as what are women searching for and looking for, I think from a religious perspective, women are trying to understand the role of women in Judaism, I think that's a big question. It's a big question not only for women, but for men as well.

A man doesn't want to feel like he is being chauvinistic against these women. I remember lecturing once and a man staunchly stood up and he's like, I don't understand the whole mechitza issue.

It just instill well with him as a modern man of today, how he can make his wife sit behind it. So I think a lot of men and women today are searching and need a greater understanding of a woman's role in Judaism. Why are there's restrictions? What is the difference? Why are there differences? How do we understand it? Is it evolving? Is it changing? Should it be

changing? How can we make her role more significant? Or more... or should we? These are the questions and I think a lot of people are facing. I think that's going to be a big one in today's time and that we really need to address.

And then on a personal level, I think people in general are just looking for, you know, people are going through so many challenges in life. You look around, there's a lot of pain, a lot of suffering. Maybe we're just more aware of it nowadays, or maybe it's just we live on a crazy world that I think everywhere you go people are looking for answers in terms of how to cope, how to live through a tragedy, how to overcome a tragedy, how do you use a difficult experience from their past and really grow from that? How to take these challenges and really turn them into successes.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, that is definitely a big one. Chana, do you ever hear from women anything regarding how your work helped them? Maybe they had a transformation? Stories that left you, wow, and humbled at the same time about how your work could be having such an impact in somebody's life. Any poignant stories that you have?

Chana Weisberg: What I do is, everyone has bad days, right? Everyone has those days when they really need to get that reinforcement so—

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Chana Weisberg: Every once in a while, I get a really nice letter or something or a few lines that someone dropped. I just – once in a while I copy paste it and put it in this folder of mine, and on those bad days, I'll read it. I mean, yes.

Yael Trusch: Oh!

Chana Weisberg: It is just so nice to read, sometimes it gets lonely when you're working, sometimes you feel overwhelmed, sometimes you feel like—

Yael Trusch: I love it.

Chana Weisberg: Yeah. And this just helps you to really see, hey, like hold on, your making an impact.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Chana Weisberg: It makes something positive and people really are appreciating it and just continue. Just keep going. Today is a hard day, but tomorrow will be better.

Yael Trusch: The positivity folder, I love it! I'm going to copy this one, Chana.

Chana Weisberg: Right, but I do have a little story. I actually met, we're moving to promote in New York and we were staying by my daughter, and I went to a shul that wasn't a shul that she usually goes to, but it was the new one in the neighborhood that I wanted to see. And as I was sitting in the shul davening there's this lady there and she's like keeps looking at me and then at the end of davening, she turns to me and she said, Chana?

And I was like creped out. How did this person know my name? And she bragged, you know, I can't tell you, I watch you all of the time. I watched your videos, I feel that... I can't believe that I'm seeing you in person.

Anyways, to make a long story short, this is a woman who was – she was not originally Jewish, nor was her husband. They had a long, long, path towards Judaism. He was pastor, he was learning more and more about the Bible and eventually he realized that the truth of the Torah and truth of Judaism. And eventually the couple converted and they moved to Florida and this woman had just recently lost her husband, the one who she had taken this long spiritual path with.

And here she was, in this shul. She said she wasn't meant to be in the shul because she's from Florida and here she was in Pomona. She wasn't meant to go to visit this person who she was visiting that week, but it ended

up happening, like a whole other sequence of events which I'm not going to elaborate on here.

And she happened to go to that shul and happened to be there that Shabbos there, and she said, just seeing me there, who's someone – not because it was me of course, but because of the inspiration that she got from the teachings that I teach, it was like God smiling at her, and it just gave her this renewed strength and this renewed ability to just keep on going even after her husband had just passed away and even though she was going through a very, very difficult time.

And as for me, I was also having a hard day that day, you know?

Yael Trusch: Wow.

Chana Weisberg: It was a hard week. It had been a hard long week. And just hearing that, it was kind of like God had given both of us a hug and saying, just keep going. It's good. But these are the kinds of things that inspire us to continue and inspire us to keep going, and to try harder and to retire, because that's what living is all about.

Yael Trusch: Wow! What a powerful story, amazing. So Chana, tell us about your newest book?

Chana Weisberg: So the newest book is actually based on, I have been doing over the last year, short videos on Parshah. Very, very, short inspirational. I feel like our life are very busy, so we need that little punch of inspiration without long windedness, something that's relevant to our life and that's relevant to the Weekly Torah portions.

So these were very short video weekly videos and it was on the Parshah. And after awhile of getting a lot of great feedback, I decided you know what we really should compile all of these plus a lot more articles that I had written over the years and to above on the Parshah for women and men to just give inspiration to be that weekly shot of, you can do it, you are great, you are amazing, you have so much power and infinite abilities that God

gives you that you can do so much with, and really, that's what the book is called. It's called, Shabbat Delight, and it's little nuggets of inspiration on the Weekly Torah portion, that really show the power of the soul, the power of the individual, our connection to God, our infinite capabilities and abilities to really retire and become more, and do more and how the Weekly Parshah shows that.

Yael Trusch: Wow! Sounds amazing. When is it going to come out, God willing?

Chana Weisberg: God willing we're hoping that it will be ready for Tishrei. This coming Tishrei and right before the new year, that would be the most appropriate time to really release it.

Yael Trusch: That's so great. Oh, I can't wait to get my hands on it.

Chana Weisberg: Thank you.

Yael Trusch: I've read your other works and I watch the videos regularly, so this book is for me, I'm there.

Chana Weisberg: Thank you. You know, thank you. I think we need positivity in our lives.

Yael Trusch: Oh, totally.

Chana Weisberg: Everyone needs that positive and everyone needs that pat on the shoulder and that's the way you grow as a person, not by putting down and thinking of how much there is to do and how much there is to grow, because there always is that. But realizing, it's okay, you're doing great, and of course we can do better, but God loves us all and God has given us the power to really do more, and the powers that we have, even though we have the challenges, the power are so much stronger.

Yael Trusch: Right, and this idea that the Torah is really speaking to those challenges and the human experience, the universal human experience that we all share.

CHANA WEISBERG: Exactly. I often open my email and I'll get, you wrote this just for me.

Yael TRUSCH: Yep, I know those.

CHANA WEISBERG: You know, I needed to hear this today, exactly today! Like this is, I don't know, its God talking to me through your words and that's the power that every individual has, everyone of us has that power to really shine and to really affect others and to affect our surroundings and those around us.

Yael: Right. You mentioned before what I called the positivity folder which I'm going to build one right very soon after we get off the phone.

CHANA WEISBERG: So you have a lot of things to put in there, Yael.

Yael TRUSCH: Thank you. Baruch Hashem also, I do you have a lot that I copied in there.

CHANA WEISBERG: Okay.

Yael TRUSCH: But at the end of the day, Baruch Hashem, your work, you have a lot of it not just quantitatively speaking, you're very busy, but also qualitatively, what you're busy with is a lot, and it's a huge responsibility. Are there ever days through – have there even been days throughout this journey where you think to yourself, what am I doing?

My shoulders are not broad enough to carry this responsibility, and if so, other than the positivity folder, where do you find strength to keep on with this huge responsibility as an influencer?

CHANA WEISBERG: Are there ever any such days? Yes, almost daily. I think we all feel that way. My father, Rebbe Lubavicher he would always encourage me to, he will always encourage me to – he would always say that we're an emissary from God. The position that we're in is. He has some remarkable stories of really miraculous things that has happened to him and sometimes I went over to him, and said, come on daddy, how were

you able to do that? Give me the behind the scene as your daughter like how did you managed to pull that off?

Yael Trusch: What's the trick?

Chana Weisberg: Yeah, what's the trick? Whether it's a blessing that he gives to somebody that actually happens or like a solution to something, he's very humble. I don't hear it from him but I'll hear it from the person who will say to me like, your father is amazing. So as his youngest, I approached him very many times and say, come on, what's the trick? How were you able to really do it?

And he says, Chana, it's not about us, it's about the position that we're given. And when you're being put in a position, Hashem just widens your shoulders, Hashem, just enables you to do it. So when you don't look at it as just you, I remember times that I would go up to speak, tell large audience and my heart will be pounding and I'd be thinking, as I've said I'm a very private person, I'd be thinking, there's no way I can do it. And then I'd remember, no, there's no way that you can do it, but it's if it's not you who's doing it.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Chana Weisberg: So, when we look at it in that way, that it's not us who is doing it, it's not our powers, it's not our intelligence, it's not our talent, it changes the whole perspective. It's not about me. It's about being put in the position where I can just try my best. And it's God, it's in God's hands, not my hands

Yael Trusch: Right.

Chana Weisberg: And that kind of changes the entire perspective. You do your part and God does His.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

CHANA WEISBERG: And God's part is way more than yours, so you're in a good partnership.

Yael Trusch: Yes. I love it. Chana, you've talked about your father, I'm curious any Jewish woman who has inspired you, who continues to inspire you?

CHANA WEISBERG: I'd have to say that would be my mother.

Yael Trusch: Tell us about her?

CHANA WEISBERG: My mother is an incredible woman. She's an extremely elegant woman, very down to earth, very intuitive when it comes to people, just really a lot of common wisdom in just appreciating situations and things. Until today, if I'm not sure on what to wear to something, like this is a woman in her 80's, I'll still call her and say, mom, what do you think? She's got impeccable taste. She's also a woman who grew up in communist Russia and the stories that she tells us from her childhood are unbelievable.

Yael Trusch: Wow.

CHANA WEISBERG: It was a different time period, like it's not something that we can even relate to. She talks about every Shabbat, every Shabbos, they... she used to have to go to school, that was the communist rule. And she would have to, her and her parents will have to come up with excuses every single week, in order for to avoid the work.

Yael Trusch: Wow!

CHANA WEISBERG: So sometimes she would come to school with a bandage on her finger and that the doctors would always be bribed, the nurses and the teachers, and sometimes she would just walk to school with her father and they would stay outside in the playground all day so that when they would come home, neighbors would see them coming home and no one would be suspicious. Imagine like a young child living through that

kind of phenomenon day in day out, day in day out; just in order to keep Yiddishkeit.

She tells us stories how she used to go to from miles and miles on end, she must have been a girl about 7 or 8 years old, and she would ride this donkey to go to the wheat mill in order to get wheat for Pesach, could be used for Pesach, because as a young child, the authorities once suspect her. So she would be riding this donkey for miles on end going to this mill getting the flour that she needed, hiding it back into her coat, you know this bulky coat, pretending as if she was just going for a stroll in the afternoon and bringing it to her family.

And she knew that this was what was entrusted to her, she was mature beyond her years, and she knew she had to do it for the sake of her family. In terms of friends, she always had to be extremely careful, she can never have like the regular kind of friends that we all have because people would be reporting on her.

So the kind of self-sacrifice that she had in her childhood just embedded with her this really deep-seated faith that in what she's doing in what she is. She was a Rebbetzin alongside my father and she's constantly... her arm is constantly open. She's constantly at the service of others, but this aspect of her youth gave her a wisdom beyond years, an intuitive awareness in sense of people, and just a real dedication to everything that so is important. So I would have to say, she is definitely my female role model, 'til today. She's an incredible woman.

The stories of her past and she continuous to be an incredible woman, and how she inspires all of us with her kindness, with – I mean as a mother she was always there with the cookies and cake, all the years, as soon as I come home from school, very loving and very...

When I got older I started hearing her stories, the stories from her past and it was really, it was a different time period, a different time zone. We can't even imagine what she went through.

Yael Trusch: Wow! What a powerful story. I mean at Shabbos, we take for granted, like I can't even imagine not to have a regular Shabbos, have to go through this week after... as a child, our children, Baruch Hashem –

Chana Weisberg: As a child.

Yael Trusch: Have the freedom to enjoy this.

Chana Weisberg: And the stories like the one and – I mean, I have incredible stories in my book about her like when they escaped from Russia, how her father wanted to save her Torah, there's an incredible story with the Torah, like non-stop, it's just almost like reading from hundreds and hundreds of years ago, you know!

Yael Trusch: But it wasn't.

Chana Weisberg: She's from a different time.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Chana Weisberg: But it wasn't. This is what she lived with and this was what she lived with day in, day out. It's really incredible. And her father knew that, he said he left Russia not because of her, not because his children want to keep Yiddishkeit, cause he knew his kids were brought up in that kind of environment that there was no way that they felt it so deeply in their roots, but he said he left for the sake of his children's children. You know me, really me!

Yael Trusch: Wow.

Chana Weisberg: My cousins, you know for us because he didn't know what would be in communist Russia for us so he risked his life, he risked the family's life, and they risked being shot at the border in order to really leave, in order to maintain this connection with his descendants.

Yael Trusch: And also what amazes me about this stories is that the Emunah and the love for Yiddish guide because one could say, well if you

lived under those circumstances you could become despondent and certainly many—maybe there's people who did, but more than that, I hear stories of people who in spite of these conditions, the love, the deep love that they continue to have for Yiddish guide it's something that it's so inspiring and I almost wish like we had it, you know?

CHANA WEISBERG: It's true, it's true. Like my mother often says, you know Pesach was like a different experience. We were hanging them—we did it. We did it all. We we're hanging the Matzo by the ceiling so it wouldn't get wet days before Pesach. Like you felt it in the air which is so much a part of you. And yet you had to do it so secretly so that others wouldn't know. So it was something that they really lived Yiddishkeit.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

CHANA WEISBERG: Today, we study. We study a lot and hopefully we live it, too, but here they really experienced so much of it in such a rich way.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, they treasured it. They treasured those details that maybe we take for granted, maybe.

CHANA WEISBERG: Right, yeah! Just go to the store and you pick up whatever you need it. You order your Matzo and you order – here, they really lived with it so that's she's really an inspiration to me in so many ways. Her past, her present, who she is, the elegance that she has as a woman and just really an incredible woman.

Yael Trusch: Beautiful.

CHANA WEISBERG: There are just so many women out there that you just gained so much from in different ways, each one in their different ways. There's the intellectual woman, there's the most warm... I think we all have such intelligences I don't think there's any such thing as even IQ, EQ, social IQ. There's so many different ways that people give and it's just a matter of looking at these people and saying, wow, that's impressive! I can learn from that.

Yael Trusch: You can learn from that, yeah. Yeah! Beautiful! Chana, let's do the JLP fill in the blanks. And this is the part of the show, all my guests do this, where I'll give you an open ended sentence and you finish it with the first thing that comes to mind, okay?

Chana Weisberg: Ooh, that's sound scary.

Yael Trusch: It's fun! It's not scary.

Chana Weisberg: Okay!

Yael Trusch: It's a little challenging, but it's fun!

Chana Weisberg: Okay, I will take a deep breath.

Yael Trusch: Let's redefine it. Breathe! Okay! I'm Chana Weisberg and I feel most spiritual when?

Chana Weisberg: When I'm giving to others.

Yael Trusch: Hm... beautiful and it connects so much to your career. Beautiful. My favorite mitzvah or one I feel most connected with is?

Chana Weisberg: Lighting Shabbos candles and just that moment of holiness when you just pray for your family and you pray for [inaudible00:36:22] and you pray for those that really need it. It's just a moment of connection and a moment quiet from the whole week, a moment of solitude, a moment where you just feel there's a change in the environment and there's a change in you. And it's that moment that kind of look inside rather than constantly be looking outside.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

Chana Weisberg: And just connect to with most meaningful to you. And when you say those prayers after you bench the candles and you're asking for what's most important to you in your life, you know, those around you and those that you love and what you feel each one needs, what you feel you need.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, I had a beautiful experience the other day. One of my girls said, mommy, what is it—what do you pray for? What's going on behind your hands? You know, as my hands are covering my face and they just looked up and stare at me, you know? It's really very beautiful.

Chana Weisberg: It's funny because whenever I go to look, I look at the Rebbe, I always cry. I'm always crying there.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

Chana Weisberg: And you know my kids always see me crying and crying and davening for just the most, like I say, the deepest things in our lives.

Yael Trusch: What's really important at the end of the day.

Chana Weisberg: What's really important, exactly! So one of my daughters who, she had her own daughter, my beautiful granddaughter, she said to me, you know, before I had my baby, I never understood why you were always crying and crying there, but now I get it.

Yael Trusch: Wow!

Chana Weisberg: I know, it was the cutest. Yes, it was cute.

Yael Trusch: Wow! And the truth is if we think about it, Judaism as a way of life has embedded within this way of life, is this availability of us being able to really focus and tap into—really focus on these really essential and important things. I mean if we take advantage of it throughout what Judaism requires of us really for—allows us the ability to focus whether be by lighting candles—

Chana Weisberg: Right.

Yael Trusch: Whether be through prayer, whether be through emersion and a mikveh. There's so many of these moments that really we take them in a deeper level, really forces us to do this, to really go into what's really at the end of the day the most essential.

CHANA WEISBERG: Yeah, no! I think Judaism is really like a classroom, you know and it's a very hands-on classroom and it's constantly giving us opportunities to be mindful of things.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

CHANA WEISBERG: So we're constantly doing things to just awaken us. You know, we dip the challah into honey, do we really think that's going to give us a sweet year? But it makes us stop and think and say, you know, this is really what we want that sweetness in our life.

We take the chicken and we do comparison, really makes you think, this chicken is going to that. You know this is something that I need to ponder over.

Yael Trusch: Exactly.

CHANA WEISBERG: We go to Tashlich, we throw like at the river and we're throwing away our sins. We really think we're throwing away our sins, but you know it's to make us stop and think and ponder and just realize what life is about? Whether it's in the foods that we're eating or in the actions that we're doing, but Judaism is a very much learning-based, classroom-based almost. Like what does an effective classroom teacher do? So make the experience very hands-on for her students. And this is the way that the students learn best. And that's what Judaism do with us, be more mindful.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

CHANA WEISBERG: Because we go through life so mindlessly that unfortunately sometimes we just say the bracha before we eat, so mindlessly too.

Yael Trusch: Exactly!

CHANA WEISBERG: Mumble it off. We do what's so automatic to us and that's why I think you know the holidays come and God says, okay, you're getting into the routine now, just stop with your routine!

Yael Trusch: Wake up.

CHANA WEISBERG: Wake up! It's a different opportunity. It's a completely different mindset. It's a different kind of level that you're living on and we have that weekly for Shabbat, that's the time to really remember things and realize that we have to live more mindfully.

Yael Trusch: Yeah. You reminded me that not long ago, a couple of months ago, I was teaching a class and somebody asked me okay, fine, Yael, if you had to find Judaism in one word, what would it be?

And I told her what did you said? Mindfulness, even though now it's such a trendy word and –

CHANA WEISBERG: Right.

Yael Trusch: I didn't want to choose that word just because it has but the truth is that's how I felt, that's what I think Judaism is or gives us.

CHANA WEISBERG: Right.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

CHANA WEISBERG: Like say bracha after you go to the bathroom.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

CHANA WEISBERG: Say it before you – every little thing that you do in your day is supposed to be, you have to stop and smell the roses.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

CHANA WEISBERG: And really appreciate what life is all about and what your gift is to her.

Yael Trusch: My fondest, sweetest Jewish memory is?

CHANA WEISBERG: Pesach Seder at my father's table.

Yael Trusch: Wow! Very, very, nice.

CHANA WEISBERG: Yeah, sitting up there as a little child, and asking him all kinds of questions and him patiently, patiently explaining it to me, and I thought I was such a smart girl, like thinking back the way, you know? He was so patiently explaining and he would try to get to be in a more scholarly discourse with my older brother and I'm always interjecting, making them explain exactly what they're talking about to me. And they did! Patiently, beautifully.

Yael Trusch: How many siblings are you, Chana?

CHANA WEISBERG: We're four, I'm the youngest, and one boy and three girls.

Yael Trusch: Beautiful. Something I wished I learned about Judaism growing up is? This is a hard one because you had such a strong foundation, but maybe there is something that in hindsight?

CHANA WEISBERG: That's a hard one. I guess what I think we need to stress with our children and with our children growing up, and it's hard to remember if I had it or didn't had it but in our education system I think we need to keep stressing to our children how much God loves us and cares about us. Because I think we demand so much from our children and we talked about the laws and you know them and these are important. And Torah has laws that kids need to learn, and there's laws for everything with the do's and the don'ts and the when's and the how's and there so many details involved and I once said, a child might really getting like nervous about those things and I said hold on a sec, just realize these are just laws to improve your life, to make you live a better life, and the main thing that you need to remember is that it's okay to make mistakes.

Don't worry about making mistakes, God loves you and that he's not ending there, with the whip trying to catch you at a bad moment. He's

there to just love you and to teach you about a meaningful life that you can live. So, I think we need to stress that.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

Chana Weisberg: More maybe in our educational system.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, and as parents, true, very good advice. When I give Tzedakah or charity, I like to give to?

Chana Weisberg: To someone that I do not know, someone who I feel needs it. Someone who – I remember years ago I was in Israel and I was going around to one of the [Tzedakah 00:42:58] Organizations. They take you around, and I just seeing the situation of others, the poverty that they were living into, I still remember that to this day. It just had such an impact. Just realizing that there's so many that are living with little means. Everyone needs our help, everyone needs our giving, we're here not because, that's why we're here, that's what Tzedakah is, giving its righteousness, it's not matter of charity, it's not a matter of being charitable.

They're there so I can have the ability of giving to them, that's what our perspective has to be. They're giving me the opportunity to do something positive, that's why there's this disparity in terms of financial situations from people.

Yael Trusch: Right. Finally, I'm Chana Weisberg and today I'm most grateful for?

Chana Weisberg: For being here, being here with you this very moment. I think every moment we have to be grateful for. I'm grateful for my family, I love my family, I love husband my children. I'm grateful for the opportunity God has given me. I'm grateful for being alive. I'm grateful for all the goodness in my life, and I'm grateful that God doesn't get upset with all the things that I keep on thinking I need, I need, I need! Okay. Despite all the things that I have or haven't have and that's something that I got to remember.

Yael Trusch: Yes, we all do. Chana, thank you so much. Everyone the book is called Sabbath Delights, and lighting insights on the Weekly Torah portion and it will be available for purchase right before Rosh Hashana, so stay tuned for that.

And meanwhile, go subscribe to www.thejewishwoman.org if haven't and if you haven't, why haven't you? Go to it right now.

Chana Weisberg: Great!

Yael Trusch: And you can follow, right?

Chana Weisberg: Absolutely!

Yael Trusch: And you can follow Chana's beautiful videos and her writing, you'll get all that there and of course you could follow Chana on Facebook, because you have a lot of your content there, you definitely have your videos there, so Chana, I thank you, we thank you and I personally thank you for being an inspiration for me personally as well as for many out there and you're also a delight to work with.

We've gotten a chance to work here and there on some things for Chabad.org, so I truly appreciate you, your work and may you have so much success, continued success and come visit me again. I'm sure we'll have plenty more to discuss and chat.

Chana Weisberg: Yes, it's lovely to chat with you. Really, as in person, I mean, almost person, but yeah. It's great in person more so even in an email. So that is wonderful thank you so much for having me.

Yael Trusch: Thank you.

[THEME MUSIC]

Yael Trusch: Thanks again to Chana Weisberg for stopping by. Her latest book coming out around the high holidays is Shabbat Delights and again, she is the Editor of The Jewish Woman.org, where you can find her

writing, her videos, as well as so much incredible Jewish educational content. Thanks again for being here.

Stay tuned to the content coming out on www.jewishlatinprincess.com for a bunch of give a ways that I have coming up, and subscribe to my new letter @jewishlatinprincess.com to find out more about that and everything else that's going on. And let me know if you know of a uniquely talented Jewish woman whom you'd like to be featured on the show, you know where to find me. Have a great week.

[THEME MUSIC]

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