

## **What's My (Back) Story?**

*In this episode, we learn about the earliest documented Jewish play, **Exagoge**. It begins with a character, Moses, telling his own backstory, which covers the history of his family and goes up to his arrival in Midian. This kind of expository monologue serves to help the audience understand who the character is and to have the information needed in order to follow the play. This exercise is designed to guide participants through the writing of an expository monologue.*

- 1.) Instruct each of the participants to list three important events from their own lives. This list could include everything from large public activities to private moments.
- 2.) Ask each person to choose one of those three events to focus on for creating a scene.
- 3.) Next, have the participants make a list of ten occurrences from their own lives that took place before the event they chose. They should be sure to include their point of origin, the circumstances of their birth (place, time period...), as well as turning points in their life.
- 4.) Invite them to write down at least two sensory details for each of the ten occurrences they listed. These can include images, smells, and sounds that are associated with the item.
- 5.) Then, ask all participant to identify to whom they might wish to tell their tale. They could choose a friend, a family member, or someone with whom they want to build a relationship.
- 6.) Using this information, instruct the participants to write a monologue in which they tell their history up to the point of the event they selected in step 2. Invite them to include at least five of the occurrences and, at minimum, one sensory detail for each occurrence.
- 7.) At the end of the monologue, have the participants write one line that introduces the next "scene." For example:
  - a.) "And then I knew what was going to happen..."
  - b.) "It was the most exciting opportunity..."
  - c.) "I walked in and saw..."

- 8.) Encourage the participants to share their work with each other, inviting questions and observations to learn what is being received by the viewers/readers/listeners.
- 9.) If they desire to do, the participants can also write the scene that follows and see how it flows from the monologue.