

Sammy Davis Talks About His Jewish

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For Sammy Davis, Jr. it was a triple celebration -- Hanukkah, his 53rd birthday, and the 25th anniversary of his conversion to Judaism. So when he made an appearance before 5,000 persons at New York's Congregation B'nai Jeshurun recently, it's no wonder he was moved almost to tears when Rabbi William Berkowitz presented him with a menorah (candelabrum). Davis responded by declaring that he was "proud to be a Black Jew," and noted: "The Jewish people have endured incredible suffering. They share that in common with Black people. My own great-great grandparents were slaves."

"Mr. Wonderful," internationally acclaimed entertainer Sammy Davis, expressed his joy in being Jewish by laughing, crying, and frequently jumping out of his seat to emphasize a point, or to embrace Rabbi William Berkowitz as the two engaged in "Dialogue" at Temple B'nai Jeshurun in New York recently.

An exuberant Davis, responding to Berkowitz' introduction, confided that being in a temple made him "humble", admitting that he doesn't feel that way often.

In his first question, Rabbi Berkowitz, citing the statement of a French writer that "man defines himself by what disturbs him," asked Davis what he finds most disquieting, to which the entertainer replied: "Man's inhumanity to man." Noting the constant pitting of "Jew against Jew, Black against Black, and Gentile against Gentile," Davis implored, "Why can't we co-exist?"

HIS VISITS TO DACHAU

Recalling several visits to Germany, and his reaction to visiting the Dachau concentration camp site, Davis acknowledged that he is prone to be "as prejudiced about Germans as some people are about Blacks," but that he had listened when two "terribly bright" young Germans described their country today.

As for Dachau, being there brought two things home to him: That his great-great-great grandparents had been slaves and that Jews have, over the centuries, endured the "suf-

fering of the dam

Citing this bond, Davis advocated that Blacks and Jews should always be "locked in," entwining his fingers for emphasis. Noting that he had seen too many people "wiped out either emotionally or by bullets," he stressed the responsibility people should have towards one another, adding, "If you let one (injustice) slide by, and think it won't touch you, you are absolutely insane!"

Turning to other topics, Rabbi Berkowitz asked if it is better to be loved or respected, and Davis, searching for an answer, replied: "Only a rabbi would ask that question," adding that he would opt for love, which to him includes respect. Nodding his agreement, Rabbi Berkowitz added that love is "the higher dimension," and turning to Davis, exclaimed: "You are lovable." To much applause, Davis jumped up and embraced the rabbi.

HIS CONVERSION TO JUDAISM

Of his conversion to Judaism, Davis recalled his difficulty in convincing skeptical acquaintances and close friends that he needed a reason to exist "beyond the applause." After much reading soul searching, and an automobile crash that cost him an eye, he concluded that Judaism was essential to his survival -- a decision that subjected him to cruel, tasteless jokes about Jewish "Niggers."

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The Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County (EOB) will ask the Nevada Legislature to expand its Anti-Crime Program to a state-wide operation and finance it with a \$250,000 State funded grant, EOB Executive Director, David Hoggard, said Tuesday.

The agency also plans to expand several other programs during fiscal 1979-1980, Hoggard noted.

The Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) allocated in 1978 a \$250,000 grant to the EOB to operate the program Clark County as part of a national experiment.

The EOB used most of the grant to fund subcontractors to bring the anti-crime methods to the grassroot communities.

Hoggard said the agency funded six community and service groups to conduct crime prevention and victim assistance projects. They served 1,905 clients in 1978.

They were:

*The Nevada Association of Latin Americans, which assists residents in addressing crime concerns where language is a problem.

*Operation Life, which teaches low-income residents how to protect themselves and secure

their property.

*The Low-Income Tenants Organization. It works closely with the North Las Vegas Police Department in providing activities which are constructive alternatives for youths in a neighborhood where crime is high.

*Community Action Against Rape, which provides counseling and assistance to victims of rape.

*And Retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Program works with seniors to make them less vulnerable to crime.

The EOB also plans to expand in Clark County the operations of its Alcoholism Rehabilitation program to target women and youth; Westside School Complex to develop it as a historical site; revamping of the Jefferson Recreation Center as an Energy Conservation and Transportation facility; Handicapped and Senior Citizens Transportation; Maternal and Infant Health Care and create a Community Crisis

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