

Chief rabbi's 'supreme moment'

By George Cornell
The Associated Press

Britain's Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits has become the first Jew to win the \$800,000 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, the world's richest award.

On receiving the news Wednesday, Jakobovits called the award "the supreme moment of my life."

"Only through the power of religion," he said, "will we learn how to place the value of human life above the profits from the trade in arms, and teach us that the care for the disciplines of decency must supersede the pleasures of lustful indulgence."

However, the rabbi said that religion is in crisis and "has a lot to answer for," including conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Middle East and "the ultimate obscenity of a 'holy war,' " as Iraq's Saddam Hussein called the Gulf war.

Jakobovits, 70, was cited for his "moderation and compassion on Arab-Israeli issues," his "enlightened approach to interfaith relations, and his originality in interpreting traditional values of Judaism."

The Templeton was founded by American investment manager John M. Templeton, a former Englewood resident. First given in 1973, it is kept larger than the Nobel Prizes in science, literature, and other fields to show that religion is more important.

Past winners include Mother Teresa, writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and evangelist Billy Graham. The Templeton has gone to Protestants, Roman Catholics, Hindus, and an Eastern Orthodox, a Buddhist, and a Muslim.

Jakobovits, born in Konigsberg, Germany, fled the Nazi terror as a teenager. He was chief rabbi of Ireland from 1949 to 1958.

He was appointed chief rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth in 1967. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1981 and made a titled member of the House of Lords in 1988; the first rabbi to hold a seat there.

While rabbi of New York's Fifth Avenue Synagogue from 1958 to 1967, he broke ranks with fellow Jews in condemning the 1962 U.S. Supreme Court decision banning Bible readings and prayers in public schools.

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Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits

