

Ephraim Katzir Honored on his

80th

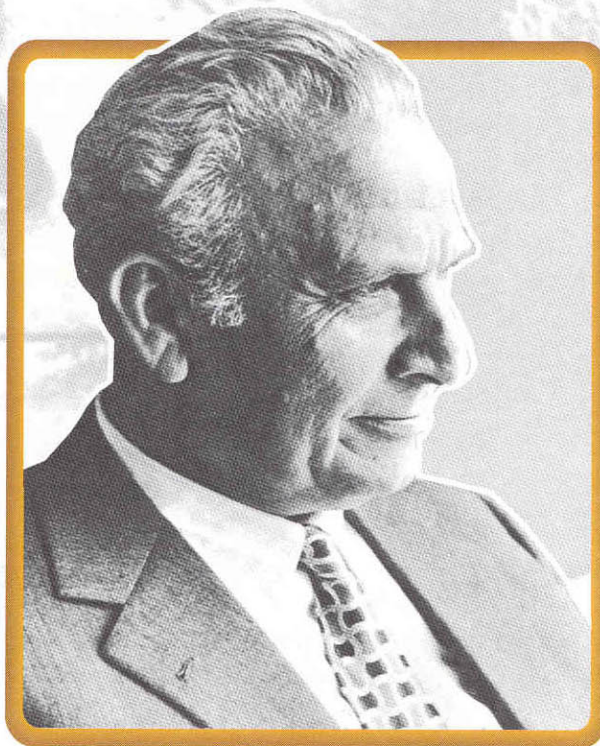
B i r t h d a y

On May 13-16 the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities held a major international symposium to honor one of its most distinguished and beloved members, Prof. Ephraim Katzir, on his 80th birthday. The symposium, "Perspectives in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology" was attended by numerous world famous colleagues, including five Nobel Prize Laureates.

Internationally known for his pioneering work on polypeptides and - equally important - encouraging a whole generation of young Israeli researchers interested in biotechnology, Katzir arrived in Israel from Kiev, Russia in 1922.

He entered the new Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1932 and received his Ph.D. in Macromolecular Chemistry in 1943. He, and his older brother Aharon, left for the Weizmann Institute in 1948, at the personal urging of Prof. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel and a fellow chemist.

Katzir enjoys reminiscing about his many visits to Weizmann's laboratory and how Weizmann once told him, "Young man, I think you'll be a good chemist. But I warn you. Don't become



involved in politics, or you'll end up like me!

Katzir didn't listen and, after many years heading the Weizmann Institute's Department of Biophysics, became Israel's fourth President in 1973. Returning to research at the Institute, he also set up a new Center for Biotechnology at Tel Aviv University and was known for his generosity in helping Israeli science in all its forms. His recent interests include protein-protein interactions and pattern-recognition approaches to 3-dimensional protein structure.

In 1987 Katzir was highly instrumental in founding the Israel

Academy's Endowment Fund for Basic Research which, with the help of the Revson Foundation (USA) and other international donors, catalyzed the revolution that led to the creation of the Israel National Science Foundation in 1992 (see *The Forum*, Spring 1996). His many awards include the highly prestigious Japan Prize.

The AFBRI joins Prof. Katzir's numerous friends in wishing him many more years of success.