Well, I must confess, that I never answered Sam when he was alive and I regret that the understanding came so late.

This is how our life-long friendship began. I was once asked to write an evaluation of Sam. Here is what I wrote: "The request to write a letter in behalf of Dr. Samuel Sutton is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, I hold him in the greatest esteem for his creativity, scientific rigor, devotion to science and a multitude of other virtues, but on the other hand, he and I have developed in the course of the last two or more decades a scientific symbiosis which makes it as difficult to write about him as to write about myself. As a matter of fact, much of what is credited to me were originally his ideas, so that much of my reputation was an unearned increment due to his serving as the Deputy Director of the Biometrics Research Unit."

Nevertheless, I suppose I need to break through this symbiotic knot and tell you how I feel about Sam as a scholar, researcher, teacher, administrator and friend. I shall leave to others to describe his fine record of social responsibility to his fellow man.

1. Sam the scholar

His scholarship was so outstanding that he was called upon to serve as a member of the Clinical Psychopharmacology Study Group of the NIMH, as an ad hoc member of the Behavioral Science Study Group of the NIH, Consultant to NSF, regularly refereed grants as well as articles for publication in Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology, Science, Perception and Psychophysics, Journal of Biological Psychiatry and many others.

He has co-edited several books and has _ __ articles to his credit.

2. Researcher

  a. Mendeleev - like table
  His jump from the inner ear to schizophrenia did not take very long. We were involved in a long-term prognostic study which had been initiated by Sol Kugelmann and me, and when Sol left for Israel, Sam took over. Sam, Gene Burdock and I had realized that the then current clinical psychological tests were neither reliable nor valid for prognosis so we harked back to the fundamental tests of behavior -- psychophysiological, sensory, perceptual, psychomotor and conceptual responses to controlled stimulation and prepared a Mendeleev-like table for systematizing the rubrics of such responses in relation to energy and symbol stimuli.
Thus, Sam probed physiological responses by means of pupillography with Gad Hakerem and Stuart Steinhauer; sensory, by means of critical duration for energy integration with Mitch Kietzman and Pat Collins; perceptual, by delayed auditory feedback, with Richard Chase; psychomotor by cross-modality reaction time, with me; conceptual and cognitive by ERP -- the best example being the endogenous response to absent stimuli with Dan Ruchkin and Pat Teuting.

The most exciting outcome was the discovery by Sam of P300. The serendipitous nature of this discovery has been covered elsewhere and all of us who were present at its birth experienced a thrill not unlike what probably happened at the discovery of penicillin or the energy release of the atom. It was certainly the most creative moment I ever experienced. But the circumstance of this discovery are worth commenting on. It depended on a series of propitious borrowings: Amplifiers, from Roy John, the CAT (computer of average transients) from Manfred Clynes, the space from Brooklyn State Hospital Catacombs (a real Ratskeller salvaged from the cats and rats of the neighborhood), the time borrowed from activity presumably with immediate payoffs. Never has so much been accomplished with so little!

b. Creativity

I do not need to give any further evidence of his creativity, but perhaps Karl Pribram in a letter has presented it most cogently.

"He has the rare ability to perform imaginatively and at the same time extremely rigorously. The work has been instrumental in taking psychology from the stimulus response behaviorism of the first half of the century to a new cognitive plane in which essential problems that had been ignored earlier have become researchable. In neurophysiology the experiments breathed new life into gross potential recording which had until then been used largely to perform what I once called electroanatomical experiments. At a time when the majority of neurophysiologists look to unit analysis by microelectrode it has been crucial to show that some functions of aggregates yield more readily to gross than to microanalysis...Even at this point in time, I am convinced that the full impact of Sutton's work has not yet been felt. This is in part due to the fact that he is a careful and essentially a (modest) person. Despite this reticence, Sutton makes a strong opponent when he has reason to disagree and a superb teacher when he is explaining his views."
From my own perspective, he combines the rigor of the scientist with the compassion of the clinician, and this makes him most sensitive to the basic problems facing both the patient and the scientist. For example, in his own compassionate way he realized what a bore it must be to the patient to continue responding to the repetitive task in reaction time experiments. Furthermore, the lapse in attention due to the boredom reduced the scientific value of the results. He, therefore, instituted the principle that some kind of socially attractive task should be involved in all laboratory experiments. This was the basis for introducing guessing of the forthcoming stimulus. This guessing game not only interested the patient but introduced a new dimension — that of uncertainty — into our reaction time work and our evoked potential work which proved to be differential on its own account.

3. As a teacher

Participated for many years in the course on Structure and Function of the Nervous System in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, courses in Sensation and Perception at Columbia University Graduate School and directed the Biometrics Training Grant for 8 years and raised a generation of followers.

4. As an administrator

He was Deputy Director of the Biometrics Research Unit — keeping a firm hold on the purse strings and preventing me from spending our funds more than once, something which he claims I was adept at doing. Throughout his career I have never heard negative comment about him administratively or otherwise.

5. As a friend

a. friendship pattern — a private person
b. modesty — last paper
c. what we will miss — Perception of one's difficulties even before one is aware of them — anticipating misunderstanding and preventing it, devotion to the search, the joy of seeing and participating in an intellectual adventure.
d. Edwin Boring use to say in the middle of a perplexing thought — I wonder what Titchener would do in this case. I find myself saying the same thing about Sam — and will probably continue to do so.
e. happy capacity of sharing your feelings even without need for expression - often intimate problems which without discussion seemed to emerge with a solution in his presence - an innocent therapist without meaning to be one.

SUMMARY

One scientist whom Sam resembles is Heinrich Kluver, both of whom were incisive, ingenious students of the brain and mind, and both of whom shared a modesty beyond anyone's imagination. They both belonged to the class of lamed vovnicks -- the 36 righteous men upon whose shoulders the world rests according to legend, but whose presence the world was hardly aware of.

In short - We will have to wait a long long time before a second Sam comes along!

Meantime, all of us who feel the bereavement, especially his wife Connie, his sister, and his son, David, can find consolation in the fact that they are not alone in their mourning. This audience attests to the veneration and affection and esteem in which we all hold him, and celebrate him.

In reading the Kaddish to see what appropriate prayer one could end with, I discovered to my amazement that the prayer ending the ceremony was, "Blessed be the dayan (judge) of truth." I can find no better way than to end with this prayer, the sanctification of truth which Sam searched for and lived by. "Boruch dayan emet."