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Subject: a draft of the promised translation guidelines
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Dear Colleagues,

Here's what I've come up with for the guidelines for translators. IT'S A DRAFT. (I put this in capitals because it's easy to forget, and I myself always tend to forget it when considering other writers' drafts.) I'm presuming that the next step is for us to discuss this and tinker with it. It's my sense that we were largely in agreement on most of these matters, so I'm hopeful that we can reach a consensus on a text speedily and in our days.

I also wanted to echo what Joseph Sherman said in a recent message - it was an extraordinary pleasure to meet with you all in New York, to meet those of you I hadn't met and to get to know better those I had.

All the best, Larry Rosenwald

TAKONES FUN IBERZETSN SHOLEM-ALEYKHEMEN (Guidelines for Translating Sholem Aleykhem)

We do not mean, by setting out these guidelines, to imply that there is a single right way to translate Sholem Aleykhem. We do, however, think that there are ways of translating him that foster the purposes of this edition, and others that are at odds with it. We want the books of the Sholem Aleykhem Library to present, and thus to preserve, as much as possible of the Jewish culture that Sholem Aleykhem is depicting. We also want these books to offer the common reader an experience of intense pleasure and surprising insight. We think that the particular guidelines we set out below will help achieve these purposes.

I Full Measure

No human author is perfect, even Homer nods, and not every word of Sholem Aleykhem is pure gold. But he is a great writer, and almost all of his words *matter*. Translations for this edition should give readers a full rendering of the original text. They should not arbitrarily cut, reorder, or elaborate what Sholem Aleykhem has written.

II Cultural Competence

Sholem Aleykhem himself and most of his characters are competent speakers of Yiddish, and thus competent members of the culture of yidishkayt. Much of this competence is articulated through two sets of terms: a set of quasi-technical terms for naming things (e.g., rov, kazyoner, melamed, makhzor, siddur, kest, meshumed) and a set of interjections for taking attitudes towards things one has said or is about to say (e.g., keyneynhore, nit do gedakht, nit oyf keyn yidn gedakht, khas v'kholile, khas v'sholem, lehavdl, tsu lengere yor). Translations for this series need to give a thoughtful rendering of both sets of terms. Translators may choose to retain the terms; they may choose to devise individual or systematic equivalents for them. But they should not just eliminate them. The translations, like the original texts, need to present the reader with a gallery of Jewishly competent speakers.

III Multilingualism

Sholem Aleykhem depicted a multilingual world multilingually. He represents Yiddish and Hebrew, the Jewish community's two internal languages. He also represents Russian, the most important external language for that community in eastern Europe; and English, the important external language for that community in America. And in particular sketches and stories, he represents other languages also.

Translations in this series should be as richly multilingual as the originals. They need not be multilingual in the *same* way; but they should be multilingual in *some* way.

IV Orality

Sholem Aleykhem's greatest accomplishment is his creation of living voices. Translations for this series, especially translations of monologues and speeches, need to create living voices also.

Creating a living voice on the page is little short of a miracle, and we are not claiming that we know what will bring it about. We would, though, make two observations. 1) The diction of a particular character must be psychologically and linguistically coherent. It cannot be a magpie's nest of geographically and chronologically diverse colloquialisms. 2) There is a tendency to confuse orality with short-breathed speech. The living voices Sholem Aleykhem creates, however, often speak in large and complex sentences, and translations of these sentences should aim at a comparable heft and complexity.

In this connection, we would encourage translators to work with actors and dramatists.

This English Sholem Aleykhem that we are aiming at

will be a more difficult and more complex writer than he has sometimes been taken to be. But readers are ready for such a writer. Readers of Jewish writing in English have admired Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Cynthia Ozick's "Envy, Or, Yiddish in America," and Everett Fox's translation of the Torah. We believe they are ready to admire Sholem Aleykhem's full Jewish and literary intensity.