

Story 1653 1971 Tape 2)

Narrator: Behçet Mahir,  
mid-60s

Location: Erzurum, capital  
city of Erzurum  
Province

Date:

Fuzuli<sup>1</sup> Offers Words of Wisdom<sup>2</sup>

"You should measure three times and cut only once  
someone once said.

"You should consult three times and talk only once,"  
someone else said.

It is the truth. If you cut material at once, it will  
be either too short or too long. Measure three times but  
cut only once.

Poet Fuzuli was once talking to a large group of  
people. After the session had ended, the poet left that  
place and started to walk home. It so happened that just  
ahead of him were two members of his audience who did not  
see that Fuzuli was coming along quite closely behind them  
One of them was telling the other that this poet was talk-  
ing very well, that he was telling very good stories, that

<sup>1</sup>One of the greatest classical Turkish poets, Fuzuli  
lived during the sixteenth century. His masterpiece was  
his version of the great Middle Eastern romance Leyla and  
Mecnun.

<sup>2</sup>This was an exemplum interpolated into ATON Tale No.  
330. Because it is otherwise extraneous to the plot of  
Tale 330, we have given it independent status. This will  
keep it from being "lost" in the very long Tale 330.

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his way of talking was wonderful. The other one said, "No, I did not like it at all. It was not placed in my head. Whatever he said, I could not learn."

Fuzuli heard both. The next night he saw that those same two men came to the session again. They were listening to him. He gave an example. He said, "I went to a session and watched. I saw that the group responded in different ways. Some of them avoided hearing my words, which never said to bring a cook cooked; and some of them became tailors and cut the cloth without measuring it."

What did he mean? He was saying to the man who liked his talking, "You became a tailor and cut the cloth without taking any measurement. Listening to me only one night, how could you understand my worth? It means that in your tailoring you did the cutting without measurement." To the man who did not like his words he said this: "You did not listen to me. You did not listen to my conversation. How can you judge whether it was good or bad? You could not decide. You were not listening at all."

Yes, until hearing the end of a discussion listen well, for the conclusion of the words comes at the end. There is another truth here. By saying he was talking very well,

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the first man was merely carrying water to a mill. But a mill cannot be made to work that way. The flowing water is needed.