

Translation:

Rabbi Elazar says: Be diligent in the study of Torah, and know what to answer to the heretic. Know before whom you labor. And your Employer is faithful that He will pay to you the wages/reward for your work.

Maimonides

The meaning of watchfulness is derived

from the language of the verse, "... for I am watchful of My word..." (Jr 1:12) that is to say, [God is] prompt and diligent. Or, its meaning may be, habit and constancy, as [in the verse, "... watching daily at my gates...." (Pv 8:34) *What to reply to a heretic* He

said, it is necessary that you learn subjects so that you may give reply with them to the atheists of idolatrous peoples; you should dispute them and answer them if they question you. They said (Sanhedrin 38b): This applies only to a gentile atheist; however, in the case of a Jewish heretic, [if you were to dispute him] he would certainly advocate heretical opinions all the

more, meaning to say, he will scoff even more. Consequently, one should not speak to him at all, for there is no remedy for him, nor any cure for him whatsoever, as it is said, "None who go to her will return, nor do they attain the paths of life." (Pv 2:19) He said that although you may learn the knowledge of the nations to know how to reply to them, be vigilant lest aught of those disciplines enter your heart, and know

that He before whom you labor is cognizant of what is concealed in your heart, as it was said, *and know before whom you toil*, meaning to say that he should direct his heart to belief in the Lord, may He be blessed.

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר, הוֹי
 שְׂקוּד לְלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה,
 (וְדַע) מֵה שֶׁתִּשָּׁיב
 לְאַפִּיקוֹרוֹס. וְדַע לְפָנַי מִי
 אֶתָּה עֹמֵל. וְנֶאֱמַן הוּא
 בְּעַל מְלֶאכֶתְךָ שֶׁיִּשְׁלַם לְךָ
 שְׂכָר פְּעֻלָּתְךָ :

Rav Chaim of Volozhin

(As Read by Chanoch Levi in "*Ruach Chaim*")

Know before Whom, etc. Know that when you are involved in Torah study, the *Shechinah* stands directly before you. As the Talmud says, "Once the Temple was destroyed, all Hashem has from this world is the area where *halachah*, Torah law, is decided" (Berachos 5a).