חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

BERDITCHEV · LECH LECHA, KEDUSHAT LEVI

Why good intentions count but evil intentions don't

Kedushat Levi

A person who sets out to bless Avraham is accounted righteous even for the intention itself, since Hashem (G-d) credits good intentions as part of the good deed, which is why the verse places the blessing before the act of blessing is even described; one who curses, by contrast, is judged only for the curse actually carried out, for evil intentions are not reckoned as deeds, as taught in Kiddushin 40. AI SUMMARY

Genesis 12,3. "I shall bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I shall curse." At first glance it seems strange that the Torah changed the order of subject and object when speaking of anyone who would curse Avraham. Why would people who bless Avraham be given a blessing before they had actually done so? We find here an example of the principle that G'd considers good intentions as part of the carrying out of such intentions, i.e. the party carrying out a noble intention, is retroactively rewarded not only for the deed but also for the thoughts that led up to the deed. When planning something wicked, G'd does not take this into consideration even after the wicked act has been carried out. (Kidushin 40.)

Translation: Kedushat Levi translated by Rb. Eliyahu Munk