EMUNA, the name Abinu, our father (Part 3)

Previously, we explained that one of the names by which we refer to HaShem is ABINU, our father. We said that this particular way to call HaShem remind us that He is "our Father" in the sense of "our Creator", He is the one Who gave us our lives. We also explained that Abraham discovered (or uncovered) another layer of this word "ABINU": That God loves us as a parent love his or her children. He is interested in our well being. He cares about us.

Visualizing HaShem as a loving parent is also useful to understand what the Tora is in this context. The rabbis have always indicated the connection between HaShem's love and the fact that he gave us the Tora, for example, in the two Blessings that we say before the Shema, every morning and every evening.

Let us see this in the berakha "Ahabat Olam", which we say in the mornings

AHABAT OLAM AHABTANU…
"You love us with an eternal love", this means that God's love for us is not conditional. That, like a loving parent, even when we misbehave, and even when we are punished for our misbehavior, HaShem still loves us. He might be "angry" at us, but His love for us is eternal, i.e., like a parent, He will never reject us.

VATELAMEDEMO HUQE HAYIM…
" You taught [our ancestors] the laws of life, so they will do Your will wholeheartedly". Aristotle used to say abut his god that he created the world but abandoned it. Aristotle meant to say that his god behaved with cruelty, because he left his creatures without any direction, or indication of what to do,

what is right in his eyes or for what purpose he created humans. Our berakha expresses that HaShem gave us “the laws of life”, the Tora contains all the indications we need to live a life according to His will. Thanks to the Tora we know what God wants from us, and what our purpose in this world is. We Jews regard the giving of the Tora as an act of love, the biggest gift we got from HaShem.

VETEN BELIBBENU BINA…
Now, after we acknowledge that HaShem gave us His Tora, we ask Him to grant us the necessary intellectual tools to study His Tora. “Grant us in our hearts [=minds] intelligence, to discern, to comprehend, to understand, to learn and to teach, to keep and to perform all Your commandments with love”. In the same way You love us, we are eager to love You. You love us Your children, we love You as our Father. We declare that our ultimate is to get closer to You, by knowing and living by Your will. We understand that You gave us the Tora, because the role of a parent does not end when he brings a child to this world. A parent must educate his children. He must show them the way to live life, and do the right thing. The giving of the Tora (described in detail in this week’s Parasha) is a “paternal” act of love.