



Buy Blue & White

Most people don't go to the post office anymore. With email, Instagram, WhatsApp, who would waste time sending snail mail? What people do go to the post office for is to pick up their packages that arrive with their purchases from places such as Next, AliExpress, or Assos. It's amazing how many Israelis buy things online that are made in different countries from around the world. They may not be practicing BDS, but they are for sure not buying "blue & white", Israeli made products.

Are the words "buy blue and white" just a nice slogan to boost the Israeli economy and increase national pride, or is it based on a verse in the Torah with halachic significance?

The verse in our portion states:

V'CHI TIMKARU MIMKAR LA'AMITECHA O KANO MIYAD AMITECHA AL TONU ISH ET ACHIV (25:14). This verse forbids us from deceiving or cheating others when buying or selling.

But the midrash teaches us something more from the verses use of the word AMITECHA - Your fellow, and suggests that the verse is instructing us to buy and sell to AMITECHA - to your fellow Jew. This

halacha is not brought down explicitly in the Rambam or Shulchan Aruch but questions like "does one have to buy from a Jew even if a non-Jew is selling the same product much cheaper?" are discussed in the halacha.

To some people this might sound like a racist halacha. But don't we all give preference to buying products made by friends or family members (even if a certain piece of artwork, jewelry, or cosmetic product isn't our real favorite or sold at the best price? This verse is reminding us to give preference to buy from "one of the family" - any fellow Jew.

So you must be wondering what recipe fits with this week's column? I myself was wondering what typical Israeli recipe could I include? Most things like pita, falafel, chumus were imported from other middle eastern countries. I decided to go with a recipe for Petitim, or what's called Israeli couscous, or "Ben Gurion's rice." In the 1950s, during the time of austerity (tzena), Ben Gurion asked Osem to create a wheat based substitute for rice, which was scarce in the country at the time. Nowadays you can even get whole wheat or spelt Petitim.

CURRIED PETITIM

2 cups Petitim

4 cups Vegetable or chicken Broth

2 Tbsp olive oil

½ cup onions, chopped

½ cup each red and yellow peppers,
diced

½ cup raisins

1 Tbsp curry powder

1 cup Broth

Salt & pepper to taste

1 bunch cilantro, washed and
chopped

¼ cup Almonds or walnuts, chopped

Place Petitim in broth and bring to
boil. Lower heat and simmer covered
about 10 min. Remove from heat and
fluff. Let sit 5-10 minutes. In another
pot saute the onion, peppers, raisins
and curry on low heat for 5 min. Add
1 cup broth and spices. Cook till
heated through. Pour curry mixture
into petitim and stir well. Serve with
cilantro and nuts on top.