

From Fatawa Ridawiyyah, vol.21, p.116-119

Question: Is it permissible in the Shari'ah to call Madina Sharif *Yathrib*? What is the ruling for the person who does? Bayyini Tujiru.

Answer: It is impermissible and forbidden to call Madina Tayyiba as *Yathrib*. It is a sin and the one who says it a sinner. RasulAllah sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

“Whoever calls Madina *Yathrib*, it is necessary for him to repent. Madina is *Taabah*, Madina is *Taabah*. [Narrated by Bara' bin 'Azin, Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, 4:285]

‘Allama Manawi writes:

From this hadith we learn that it is Haram to name Madina Tayyiba as *Yathrib*. We are told to repent after calling it so and repentance is only after a sin. [al-Taysir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir, 2:424]

Mulla ‘Ali Qari rahimahu'l Bari writes:

It is reported from some of the predecessors that calling Madina as *Yathrib* is Haram. This is supported by the hadith which is recorded by Imam Ahmad [then he mentioned the hadith]. ‘Allama Tayyibi rahimahullah said that it is evident from this that whoever disrespects anything that Allah has honoured and has given the name *Iman* and this person talks about it in a way that is unbecoming, then he is worthy of being named *'Aasi* [sinner]. [al-Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, 5:622]

When the Qur'an mentions the word *Yathrib*, it is to inform us what the hypocrites would say:

And when a party of them said: O folk of Yathrib! There is no stand (possible) for you, therefore turn back. [33:13]

The word *Yathrib* means fighting and censure. This is why these filthy people referred to it as such. Allah refuted them by naming it *Taabah*. RasulAllah sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

They call it *Yathrib* but it is Madina. [Bukhari, 1:252]

He sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam also said:

Indeed Allah has named Madina as *Taabah*. [Narrated by Jabir bin Sumrah, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, 5:89, Muslim, 1:445]

Mulla ‘Ali Qari writes:

It means that Allah had names Madina Munawwara as Taabah on the preserved tablet or He ordered his beloved Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to name it such. Allah has castigated the hypocrites for reverting to the disreputable name *Yathrib*. [al-Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, 5:622]

He also writes:

Imam Nawawi rahimahullah states that it is reported regarding ‘Isa bin Dinar that whoever calls Madina as Yathrib, he is a sinner. When the Qur’an refers to Yathrib, it is only to let us know of the illness present in the hearts of the hypocrites. [al-Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, 5:622]

Some verses of poetry from the scholars contain this word. Our excuse for them is that they did not know of this hadith and ruling. He who knows the ruling and persists has no excuse, whether it is poetry or otherwise. The Shari’ah governs the poetry, not vice versa. Mawlana Shaykh Muhaqqiq ‘Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawi quddassa sirrahu writes:

The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam names it Madina. This is because people lived and gathered there and loved the city. He warned against calling it Yathrib because this is the name from the days of ignorance or because it is derived from either *Tharb* which means destruction and fighting or *Tathrib* which means reprimand and censure or because Yathrib was the name of an idol or an oppressive and rebellious person. Imam Bukhari narrates a hadith in his *Tarikh* that whoever says Yathrib once, he should say Madina ten times so that he compensates for it. When the Qur’an says, “Ya ahla yathrib”, it is from the tongues of the hypocrites and by saying Yathrib, they wanted to disrespect Madina. Another narration mentions that whoever says Yathrib should repent towards Allah and seek forgiveness. And some have said that he be punished. Amazing is the fact that some leading people have used Yathrib in their poems. And Allah knows well, the knowledge of the glorious is complete and strong. [Ashi'atul Lum'aat Sharh Mishkat, 2:393-394]