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# ***Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal***



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both in Arabic and English

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## *Complaint in the Glorious Quran*

*Prof. Dr. Wayees Jallud Ibrahim<sup>(\*)</sup> &  
Lect. Ameer Sulaiman Saleh<sup>(\*\*)</sup>*

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### *1. Introduction*

Speakers employ a variety of communicative acts, or speech acts to achieve their communicative goals such as apology, requests and complaints( Kasper and Rose, 2001) Few studies on complaint have appeared in the literature. Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), Beebe et al (1990), Chen (1996), and Murphy and Neu (1996) represent this research. The speech act of complaint occurs when a speaker reacts with displeasure or annoyance to an action that has affected the speaker unfavorably(Olshtain and Weinbach,1987).It is a face-threatening act for the listener, and often realized through indirect strategy.

"Not every complaint is bad, what is a bad complaint is that which comes in the form of impatience, anger and discontent"(AL-Suhaim, 2012).

### *2. Definitions*

**Complaint:** To complain of something, to somebody about something is to say that one is not satisfied, that something is wrong, and that one is suffering. A complaint is a statement of dissatisfaction. One may also complain from an illness or disease (Hornby, 1977: 172) and (Milton, J., 1974)

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**Invocation:** Invocation is to call upon God, or call the power of the law for help or protection, to request earnestly, and call down from heaven.

### ***3. Procedure***

The ayas of complaint are identified in the Glorious Quran and linguistically analysed. The analysis includes complaints as speech acts, the one complained to, complained against, and the complainant. The language structures are also analysed and tabulated.

### ***4. Functions of Complaint***

1. to express displeasure, disapproval, annoyance, blame, censure, threats, or reprimand as a reaction to a perceived offense/violation or social rules (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1987; Trosborg, 1995).
2. to suggest or request a repair.
3. to confront a problem with the intention to improve the situation (face-threatening activity) (Brown and Levinson, 1987)
4. to share a specific negative evaluation, obtain agreement, and establish a common bond between the speaker and the addressee (trouble sharing)
5. to vent anger anxiety (Boxer, 1993a)
6. to open or sustain conversation (Boxer, 1993b)

### ***5. Complaint Strategies***

a. explanation of purpose/warning for the forthcoming complaint, e.g.,

I just came by to see if I could talk about my paper.

I think the grade may be a little too low.

b. Request for solution/Repair, e.g.,

I could appreciate it if you would reconsider my grade.

c. The use of the pronoun **We** to show that both parties share the blame. I hope **We** could sit down and discuss the paper.

d. Use of questioning, e.g.,

Do you have a minute so that we go over the paper together?

Sometimes we use upgraders to increase the impact of the complaint like frightfully and absolutely )

## ***6. Severity Scale***

a) Least severe:

The speaker avoids mentioning the offensive event, e.g.,

The kitchen was clean and orderly when I left it last time.

b) somewhat severe:

Neither the offense nor the complaineer is exactly mentioned but general annoyance at the violation is expressed,

e.g., Look at these things all over the place.

c) Fairly severe:

The speaker threatens the complaineer's face by making a direct complaint but does not say that there will be any other consequences:

You should not postpone this type of operation.

d) Severe:

The speaker explicitly accuses the complaineer of the offense directly and hints that there may be consequences for the offender, e.g., Next time I'll let you wait for hours( Oshtain and Weinbach,1985, PP.200-201)

e) very severe:

The speaker immediately threatens the complaineer by attacking him/her.

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Now, give me back the hat you have stolen or I'll call the police.

(OLshtain and Weinbach, 1985, PP..200-201).

## ***7. Indirect Complaint***

Indirect complaints usually begin with an introductory expression like one of the following:

There 's no way---, the problem is..., I can't stand ..., It drives me crazy!, unfortunately Indirect complains center on three themes:

1. Self (Oh, **I'm** so stupid)
2. Other (**John** is the worst manager)
3. Situation (I feel, in a way, **boxed in**, you know? Why did they have **raise tuition**?) (Boxer, 1993a, PP..30-31)

## ***8. Complaint in the Glorious Quran***

١-(وقال الرسول يارب ان قومي قد اتخذوا هذا القرآن مهجورا) (الفرقان ٣٠)

(And the Messenger (Muhammad) said: "O my lord! Verily, **my people deserted this Quran**) (AL-Furqan, 30)

"When the unbelievers refuted and defamed the Quran, the prophet was annoyed and complained to Allah. He said: O My Lord the tribe of Quraish disbelieved in the Quran, they left it and didn't listen to it. The purpose of this complaint is to threaten his people because if the prophet complains to Allah against his people they will be immediately punished.

(الصابوني ٧٦٤:١٩٩٩)

His people neither listened to the Quran nor acted on its laws and teachings. The aya shows that the prophet complained to Allah Almighty that the nation of Islam has deserted the Quran in spite of the emphasis to read it. The words of the complaint are expressive and have deep implication. Allah knows the complaint of the prophet and the story of his people with the Quran. He exerted his



efforts but his people didn't listen to the Quran. They didn't make it the constitution of their life which leads them to the most straight way. The response to the complaint is "But sufficient is your Lord as a guide and helper."

(المقبل: 2012)

٢- (وايوب اذ نادى ربه اني مسني الضر وانت ارحم الراحمين)(الانبياء ٨٣)

"And remember Ayyub when he cried to his lord: "Verily, **distress has seized me**, and you are the most merciful of all those who show mercy."

(AL-Anbiya', 83)

It is a complaint from the created to the creator. He called his Lord humbly and submissively that he suffered from grief. He lost his property and children and described himself as physically weak, and unable, his Lord is the most merciful.

Allah Almighty **responded** to the complaint (الصابوني ، ١٩٩٩ ، ٦٩)

by saying "We removed the distress that was on him and we restored his family. " (Aya, 84).It is a request for mercy and repair.

The complaint is direct and explicit.

٣- (واذكر عبدنا ايوب اذ نادى ربه اني مسني الشيطان بنصب وعذاب) (صا، ٤١)

3. (And remember our slave Ayyub when he invoked his lord saying: "Verily, **Satan has touched me with distress**" (by ruining my health Sad,41). Allah Almighty **responded** to him:"Strike the ground with your foot: This is water to wash in, cool and a drink." (Sad, 42),"and We gave him back his family."(Sad, 43) (compensated for the harm)

٤- (قال إنما أشكو بثي وحزني إلى الله وأعلم من الله ما لا تعلمون) (يوسف ، ٨٦)

4. Prophet Ya'qub complained to Allah and said: "I only **complain** of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you know not." (Yusuf, 86)

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The verb "complain" is explicitly used to express his sadness to his Lord, he didn't complain to his sons but to Allah.

(الطبري، ٢٠١٢)

Muhammad Hassn (2012) in a lecture about "Ayyub patience" stated that a complaint to Allah does not contradict with patience. It is a complaint to the creator against the created. (Islamweb.net, 2012) Ayub lost all his wealth, all his sons died and was suffering from an illness made him stay in bed but he remained patient. His heart was filled with the love of.

Allah. Allah Almighty **responded** to him and in Aya 99. Yusuf took his parents to himself and said "enter Egypt, if Allah will, in security." This is a request to remove the sufferings and improve the situation. There is no blame or offense from the complainant to Allah Almighty. It is a request to solve the problem, looking for support from Allah.

٥- (قال رب اني وهن العظم مني واشتعل الرأس شييبا ولم اكن بدعائك رب شقيا)

(مريم، ٤)

5. He said: " My Lord ! Indeed **my bones (grew) feeble, and grey hair spread on my head** and I have never been unblest in my innovation to you, O My Lord) (Maryam, 4)

He called his lord submissively and humbly that his bones became feeble and lost power because of old age and grey hair spread on his head. He asked his Lord not to spoil his invocation and to accept his calling .

٦- (وزكريا اذ نادى ربه رب لا تدرنى فردا وانت خير الوارثين)(الانبياء ٨٩)

6. (And remember Zakariyya when he cried to his lord:" O My Lord! Leave me not single (childless), though You are the best of inheritors.

(AL-Anbiya', 89) Zakariya asked Allah Almighty to give him an heir. In Aya 7 his Lord responded to him saying, " O, Zakariya, Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, whose name will be

Yahya. He is annoyed and complaining against the situation asking for support and request for repair, there is no anger or accusation against his Lord.

Zakariyya called his Lord submissively not to leave him without children. "Allah is the best of inheritors." (AL-Sabuni, 1999, 692) In Aya 90, Allah Almighty responded to his complaint saying, "So We answered his call, and We bestowed upon and cured his wife (to bear children)"

٧- (وذا النون اذ ذهب مغاضبا فظن ان لن نقدر عليه فنادى في الظلمات ان لا اله انت سبحانك اني كنت من الظالمين) (الانبياء ٨٧)

7. (And remember Dhun-Nun, when he went off in anger and imagined that We shall not punish him! But he cried through the darkness. None has the right to be worshipped but You (O, Allah), Glorified you are! **Truly, I was of the wrong-doers.**" (AL-Anbiya', 87) This aya is an invocation mixed with complaint, confession and asking for forgiveness. He called the people of Ninevah to believe in Allah. He left them then regretted that. Allah responded to his invocation and his sufferings when he was swallowed by the whale. He was not angry with Allah but with his people ( Sabuni,1999, P..691) "Mention to your people the story of Yunis who was swallowed by the whale. He angrily left his city, angry with his people whom he called to believe but they refused. He called his Lord in the darkness in the mouth of the whale and Allah responded to his call and saved him from sufferings.

٨-(قال رب ان قومي كذبون) ( الشعراء، ١١٧)

8. Noah said:" My Lord! Verily, **my people have denied me.**"

(AL-Shu'ara', 117)

Noah said that his people didn't believe him. His lord saved him. The response is " and We saved him and those with him in the laden ship" (119).He is complaining from the situation to Allah Almighty looking for help and support.

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٩- (وقيله يارب ان هؤلاء قوم لا يؤمنون) (الزخرف ٨٨)

9. Prophet Muhammad said: "O my Lord! Verily, these are a people who believe not !" (Az- Zukhruf, 88)

Allah Almighty asked him in Aya 89 to "turn away from them and say (peace), but they will come to know." He is presenting the situation to Allah though Allah is the best knower. It is a complaint from prophet Muhammad to Allah. He is dissatisfied with his people, humbly requesting Allah to make them believe in his call.

١٠. (فدعاه ربه اني مغلوب فانتصر) (القمر، ١٠)

10- Then he invoked his lord: I **have been overcome**, so help me!

(AL-Qamar, 10)

Noah is complaining directly against his people to his lord that he has been overcome. The purpose is that he is looking for help and support. In

Aya 11, the response came: " So We opened the gates of the heaven with water pouring forth." Another response is in aya 12: "and We caused springs to gush forth from the earth." And in aya 13: " And We carried him on a ship made of planks and nails."

١١- (اذ تستغيثون ربكم فاستجاب لكم اني ممدكم بالف من الملائكة مردفين) (الانفال ٩)

11- "Remember when you **sought help** of your lord and He answered you saying, " I will help you with a thousand of angels each behind the other. (AL-Anfal, 9)

Remember when you asked victory against the unbelievers and they were thousand and your companions were three hundred. He called his lord and He responded to his call. The complaint is that the number of Muslims was few looking for (Request) a solution for the problem.

١٢- ( قد سمع الله قول التي تجادلك في زوجها وتشتكي الى الله والله يسمع تحاوركما ان الله سميع بصير) (المجادلة، ١)

12. " Indeed Allah has heard the statement of her (Khaula bint Th'laba) that disputes with you (O Muhammad) concerning her

husband (Aus Bin Assamit), and complains to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Verily, Allah is All-hearer All-seer" (AL-Mujadila,1)

Khaula Bint Tha'luba complains against her husband to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and says: He consumed my youth and I gave Birth to children for him, when I grew old and stopped giving birth to children he repudiated me (you are to me like my mothers back) O My Lord I complain to you. The penalty is that her husband has to free a slave before they touch each other so that they may not repeat such an ill thing.(Aya 3).In Aya 4 or "must fast two successive months before they touch each other."( Request to solve the problem)

١٣- (قال رب اني دعوت قومي ليلا ونهارا فلم يزد هم دعائي الا فرارا) (نوح ٥)

13.Noah complained against his people to Allah Almighty. He said: "O My Lord! Verily, **I have called my people night and day** (secretly and openly) but all my calling added nothing but running away (from the truth) (Noah, 5 ) His people disobeyed him. Aya 25 is a **response** to his complaint "because of their sins they were drowned, then were made to enter the fire." Allah Almighty punished them and saved him in the ship.

١٤- (فلما دخلوا عليه قالوا ياايها العزيز مسنا واهلنا الضر وجئنا ببضاعة مزجاة فاوف

لنا الكيل وتصدق علينا ان الله يجزي المتصدقين ) (يوسف ، ٨٨)

14. "Then, when they (the brothers of Yusuf) entered to him, they said: "O ruler of the land ! A hard time hit us and our family, and we brought but poor capital, so pay us full measure and be charitable to us. Truly, Allah does reward the charitable." (Yusuf, 88).

They complained to Al-Aziz of Egypt that they were hit by hard time. The complaint is from lower to higher status. The **purpose** is to pay them a full measure and to be charitable to them, asking help from the lord of the land because he is an authority.

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In aya 92 Yusuf said to his brothers, "No reproach on you may Allah forgive you." He was charitable to them.

١٥- (قالوا ياذا القرنين ان يأجوج ومأجوج مفسدون في الارض فهل نجعل لك خرجا على أن تجعل بيننا وبينهم سدا ) (الكهف ، ٩٤ )

15. They said: " O Dhul Qarnain ! Verily! Ya'juj and Ma'juj ( Gog and Magog) are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might build a barrier between us and them!) (AL-Kahf, 94)

A complaint from the people in the eastern part of the earth to Thu-AL-Qarnain who is in power, a request to repair the damage caused by y'juj and ma'juj, who committed all sorts of evil acts, and protect them by building a wall. They asked him to allocate part of their property as tributes so that he might build a dam to protect them, and politely asked him to accept that. Thu-Al-Qarnain responded to their complaint in Aya 95. He said, "So help me with strength, I will erect a dam between you and them. He is in power and authority and not in need of money.

١٦- (فلما جاوزا قال لفته اتنا غداءنا لقد لقينا من سفرنا هذا نصبا ) (الكهف ، ٦٢ )

16. So when they had passed further on, Musa said to his boyservant: "Bring us our meal ; truly, **we suffered** much fatigue in this our Journey." (AL—Kahf, 62)

In Aya 63 Moses remembered the fish and in Aya 64 they went back retracing their footsteps. Hunger and fatigue are shared between Moses and his boyservant through the use of the pronoun WE. The complaint is against the situation and suffering from tiredness. The problem is solved by having the meal. The fish made them remember the appointment.

١٧- (قالوا اودينا من قبل ان تأتينا ومن بعد ماجئتنا قال عسى ربكم ان يهلك عدوكم ويستخلفكم في الارض فينظر كيف تعملون ) (الاعراف ، ١٢٩ )

17. They said:" We (children of Israel) had **suffered troubles** before you came to us, and after you have come to us."He said: " It

may be that your Lord will **destroy your enemy** and make you successors on the earth, so that he may see how you act." (AL-A'raf, 129)

Troubles didn't leave them. Their enemy, Pharoah, was destroyed and drowned. Allah Almighty **responded** to their complaint and destroyed their enemy. In aya 130 "We punished the people of Pharaoh with years of drought and shortness of crops."

Table (1) summarises the complaints, complainants, complained of and complained against with the structures used to express complaints in the Noble Quran

Sura, Aya	Complaint	Complainant	Complained against	Complained To	Structures
1.AL Furqan,30	Deserted the quran اتخذوا هذا القرآن مهجورا	Prophet Muhammad	His people	Allah Almighty	Past(v.) اتخذوا هذا القرآن مهجورا Deserted
2.AL-Anbiya', 83	مسنى الضر Distress seized me	Ayub	distress	Allah Almighty	Past(v.) يـمـسـنـي Suffered distress
3.Sad,41	مسنى الشيطان بنصب وعذاب The Satan touched me with distress	Ayub	The Satan	A Allah Almighty	Past(v.) مـسـنـي Touched me
4.Yusuf, 86	اشكوا بـي وحزني الى الله Complain of my grief and sorrow	Ya'qub	Grief and sadness	Allah Almighty	present اشكوا Complain
5.Maryam,4	وهن العظم مني واشتعل الرأس شيبا My bones grew feeble,	Zakariya	Old age And weakness	Allah Almighty	Past spread وهن – اشتعل

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Sura, Aya	Complaint	Complainant	Complained against	Complained To	Structures
	grey hair spread on my head				
6.AL- Anbiya',89	لا تذرني فردا Leave me not single(childless)	Zakariyya	Loneliness	Allah Almighty	Request, invocation , present تذرنني
7.AL- Anbiya',87	اني كنت من الظالمين He has been of the wrong doers"	Thun- un(prophet Yunis)	Suffering when he was swallowe d by the whale	Allah Almighty	Past was كنت
8.AL- Shu'ra,117	ان قومي كذبون My people denied me	Prophet Noah	His people	Allah Almighty	Past Denied كذبون
9.Az- Zukhruf,88	ان هؤلاء قوم لا يؤمنون His people didn't believe him	Prophet Muhammad	Complai ned of his people	Allah Almighty(hi s lord)	Present Believe يؤمنون
10.AL- Qamar,10	اني مغلوب فانتصر I have been overcome He is helpless	Prophet Noah	Complai ned of his people	Allah Almighty	adjective overcome مغلوب
11.AL- Anfal,9	seek help of your Lord تستغيثون ربكم	The Muslim believers	Complained of their few number, asking for victory	Allah Almighty	Present Seek help تستغيثون ربكم
12.AL- Mujadila,1	تشتكي الى الله Complains to Allah	Khaula Bint Tha'laba	Her husband, Aus Bin Assamit	Complains to Allah Almighty	Present, Complai ns تشتكي
13.Noah,5	دعوت قومي ليلا	Prophet	His	Complains	Past



Sura, Aya	Complaint	Complainant	Complained against	Complained To	Structures
	ونهارا I called my people...but my calling added nothing but running away from the truth	Noah	people	to Allah Almighty	Called دعوت
14.Yusuf, 88	مسنا واهلنا الضر A hard time hit us and our family	Yusif's brothers	Hard time	AL-Aziz of Egypt	Past, hit مسنا
15.ALKahf 94	ان ياجوج ومأجوج مفسدون في الارض Gog and Magog did mischief in the land	The people of Thu-AL-Qarnain in the east of the land	Gog and Magog	Thu-AL-Qarnain	Adjective Corrupted مفسدون
16.AL-Kahf,62	لقينا من سفرنا هذا نصبا Suffered much fatigue in this our journey	Prophet Moses	hunger	boy servant	past suffered لقينا
17. AL-A'raf, 129	قالوا اوذيونا من قبل ان تأتينا-- We suffered troubles before you came to us--	The people of Israel	Their enemy	Moses	Past suffered اوذيونا

Table (2) Complained to

Allah	AL-Aziz	Thu-AL-Qarnain	Moses Boy servant	
13	1	1	1	1
76%	6%	6%	6%	6%

## Complaint in the Glorious Quran

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The above table shows that 76% of the complaints are humbly directed to Allah Almighty from the prophets, from lower status to superior authority. One complaint is directed to The Aziz of Egypt (Yusuf) who is in a superior status to his brothers. The speech act is that of request. In the case of Thu-AL- Qarnain, he is in a superior position to the people in the east land. They need his help and support but Thu-Al-Qarnain doesn't need them. Another complaint is from Moses to his boy servant. The people of Israel also complained to Moses against Faroah.

**Table (3) Complained against**

Prophets against Their people	Unfavoured situation	The Satan	A woman against her husband	Y'joj And Ma'joj	Their enemy
5	8	1	1	1	1
29%	47%	6%	6%	6%	6%

The above table shows that (47%) are complaints about unfavoured situations and hat (29%) of the complaints are from the prophets to Allah Almighty against their people who didn't believe in them.

**Table (4) Structures**

Past	Present	Adjectives
11	5	2
61%	28%	11%

Most of the verbs (61%) are in the past while (28%) are in the present, both of them are used to express past events about stories. Two adjectives are used, **corrupted** and **overcome**.

## ***9. Conclusions***

Complaint is a communicative act. When a speaker is affected by an unfavourable situation, he feels annoyed and complains to an authority of a higher status, either to his lord or the ruler. Sometimes people complain to each other of equal status seeking help and relief from anxiety. Complaints can be achieved through different strategies. A complaint is different from invocation. They are usually about something happened in the past to express annoyance or disapproval and request for repair or to vent anxiety. Prophets complained to Allah to request Him for a solution. Most of the complaints in the Quran are direct looking for help and solutions for problems. All the complaints in this study are positively responded to. Complaints are usually directed to authority and to those in power. Moses complained about his sufferings from the journey to his boy servant not because his servant is of higher or equal status but to relief himself. Besides, his boy servant is the only one with him to talk to. Most of the complaints in the glorious Quran are directed to Allah Almighty, others are directed to people of power. People usually complain of unfavorable conditions looking for support. Prophets complained of their people to Allah looking for positive responses. Most of the events are expressed in the past. The adjectives are also described in the past. The adjective **corrupted** means did corruption. Even the present form happened in the past time. Finally, complaints should be directed to Allah Almighty, the most powerful.

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## الشكوى في القرآن الكريم

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### المستخلص

الشكوى وظيفة لغوية تستخدم لتحقيق أهداف تواصلية للتعبير عن عدم الرغبة أو الانزعاج من عمل اثر على المتكلم بشكل غير مفضل ليقول بأن شخصاً ما غير راضٍ أو أنه يعاني وفي هذا البحث تمّ تشخيص آيات القرآن التي تحتوي الشكوى وتم تحليلها لغوياً وشمل التحليل الشكوى والمشكو إليه والمشكو منه والمشتكي. وتم تحليل التركيب اللغوي للآيات وجدولتها كما تمّ دراسة وظائف الشكوى واستراتيجياتها. فالمتكلم المتأثر يشكو عادة إلى سلطة ذات منزله أعلى إما إلى الله أو إلى الحاكم وقد يشكو أحياناً إلى أناس مكافئ لمنزلته بحثاً عن المساعدة. وتبين إن جميع الشكوى في هذه الدراسة قد استجيب لها ايجابياً وان معظمها موجه إلى الله أو إلى أناس ذوي قوه كما إن معظم الإحداث تم التعبير عنها في زمن الماضي.

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