



# The Oath or Swear Expressions in Shakespeare's and Al-Mutanabbi's Poetic Language: A Syntactic Contrastive Study

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**Abstract:** Oath or swear expression, in one of its meanings, is a formal promise to do something or a formal statement that something is true. It is also a learned form of human behaviour, a culturally conditioned response to the experience of certain conditions and it can be constructed by using certain words like words invest with power of God. The use of oath is to add emphasis to what one says.

This paper sheds the light on oath expressions in English and Arabic. This is a descriptive contrastive study. It aims to : a- appoint the oath expressions in the target data and their forms, b- describe, for the purpose of comparison, the syntactic structures of the oath or swear expressions in the two languages c- show statistically the most frequent expressions in the target works of Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi each aside.

This paper falls into seven sections: section one is an introduction, section two reviews oath in English, section three surveys oath in Arabic, section four concerns with the analyses of oath expressions in Shakespeare's plays, section five reveals the analyses of oath expressions in Al- Mutanabbi's poems and section six is the end of the paper with the conclusions.

**Key Words:** Contrastive Study, English-Arabic Syntax, Swear or Oath Expressions

## I. INTRODUCTION:

The present paper is a descriptive contrastive study, it focuses on the term 'oath' which means that somebody promises to do something or that he/she is telling the truth. This study aims: a- to appoint the oath or swear expressions and their forms in selected plays of Shakespeare and poems of Al-Mutanabbi, b- to describe, for the purpose of comparison, the syntactic structures of the oath or swear expressions in the two languages c- to show statistically the most frequent expressions in the target works of Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi each aside.

This paper hypothesizes three things: First, most of the oath expressions follow the pattern: (i.e. preposition + (sacred) name) in the target works of the two (English and Arabic) languages. Second, the oath by sacred names is the most frequent type in the literary works of this paper. Third, though there are many differences in the two languages, there are some similarities as far as the syntactic structures of the target words in this paper are concerned.

The analyses of this paper are limited to the descriptions of the syntactic structures (the patterns) of the English oath or swear expressions in Shakespeare's plays: (Hamlet, Love's labour's lost, the Taming of the Shrew, King John, A Midsummer night's dreams, King Lear, the Tempest, Much ado about nothing, and Troilus and Cressida) and the description of the syntactic structures (the patterns) of the Arabic oath or swear expressions in Al-Mutanabbi's poems in his 'Diwan' (poetic collection). The paper also reveals, statistically, the most frequent expressions in the literary works of the two languages.

As models in this paper, the analyses of the literary works are subject to Hughes' (2006) and Choundas' (2007) classifications of the oath expressions in English on the one hand, and Al-Saamarai's (2003) classifications of the oath expressions in Arabic on the other hand.

## II. THE OATH EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH:

Oath is a fundamental form of human behaviour, and that its function is a relief producing. Likewise, it is an instrumental and can be effectively played when it is sustained by sufficient amount of feeling (Montague, 2001, p. 68). Besides, oath is a person's statement of intention that he or she will or will not do something, which cannot be breached without incurring severe consequences (Ziegler, 2008, p. 43).

However, swear is the most intriguing of magical uses of the language. One may swear by something sacred, swear that something is the case, and swear to do something, or at somebody, or something (Ronald, 2006, p. 99). Usually, the words invested with power of God, polite words and carrying emotional charge that capable of serving the swearer as ammunition for his purpose. Anything that is of emotional value to one social class or profession and not to another may form the instrument of swear (Montague, 2001, p. 90).

Montague (2001, p. 55) tells that "swear is not a universal phenomenon: American, Indians and Japanese do not swear". The evidence indicates that swear constitutes a learned form of behaviour, a culturally conditioned response to the experience of certain conditions. There is every reason to believe that the earliest men practiced some form of religion at any rate that they believed in supernatural powers to swear (ibid., pp. 56-57).

Oaths are used in two basic contexts to mark promise or contract and to mark assertion or denial, the first guarantees agreement and the second defines dispute (Ober and Hedrick, 1996, p. 230). In other words, swear expression is sometimes used to confirm the promise and also its purpose is the termination of every dispute (Robert, 2011, p. 33). The oaths that bound the citizen, for instance, to the community are of the first type (Ober and Hedrick, ibid.). Oaths are accompanied by ritual and the ritual varies with significance of situation.

Furthermore, Choundas (2007, p.168) asserts that swear expression is used either to warrant the truth of the statement that precedes or follows the speaker's suggests or to express emphasis. So, people do not take the name of God in vain when they swear, they use it on contrary very earnestly and energetically to attest what they wish to say (John, 1998, p.389).

Some common oath expressions in English are:

1. By my blood: the speaker swears on his own life, literally his own blood to the truth or certainly of the statement that precedes or follows (Choundas, 2007, p. 161).
2. By the God above us: e.g. "now, I am Captain Adam, you captain and one ye shall obey or by God above us I will be death" (ibid.).
3. By the saints: it is an oath comparable to 'by heaven': e.g. "by the saints ye 're a bold man" (ibid., p.163).
4. By the power: an oath comparable to 'by God' or 'by heaven' e.g. "He begged and he stole and he cut throats and starved at that, by the power" (ibid.).
5. For all the world: It is a mild, but exaggerative oath. The speaker would stake for all world on the truth or accuracy of his statement (Choundas, 2007, p. 168).
6. By God or Fore God: It is an oath used either to warrant the truth of the statement that precedes or follows the speaker's suggests. A person who swears with 'fore God' is swearing before God to his statement's truth or to express emphasis, to convey surprise, disbelief or displeasure, e.g. "Fore God, this a lass of spirit" (ibid.).
7. For the love of mother and child: Mother and child is a reference to Jesus and Virgin Mary, though the phrase love of mother and child serves as broader, more generally emphatic reference something as extreme, powerful or significant as the bond between any mother and child, e.g. "By the love mother and child, Jack what's coming after us" (ibid.).
8. By all what's holy and unholy: It is an oath technically is more comprehensive than either 'by God' or 'by Satan' as the speaker calls on the powers of both good and evil, e.g. "By what's holy and unholy I will have that treasure someday or I be not long John Silver" (ibid., p.161).

9. Moreover, Hughes (2006, pp. 316-17) refers to 'minced oath' which is "a specific kind or disguise mechanism, whereby an offending term or taboo phrase is distorted or "minced", so that it no longer offends". He adds "we still have the idiom (not to mince one's words) meaning to speak frankly".

The good given examples about the minced oaths in English are: the plain forms (Zounds, Swounds, Sblood) which imply (God's wounds and God's blood). These technical evasions of sacred names may seem strange now, but would have had fairly obvious meanings for the contemporary audience (ibid.).

### III. THE OATH EXPRESSION IN ARABIC:

Oath [yameen or qasam] sentence is a syntactic structure whose pattern is: (oath word + complement) which is the core statement, followed by the complement of the oath [jawab al qasam](Abdul-Raof, 2018). Abdul-Raof (2018, p. 256) calls such expressions "cyclical oath clauses" [al-qasam] which are structures followed by the core statement and the complement of the oath. He adds that these expressions are common to the noun and verb, they are propositional.

Al-Saamarai (2003) clarifies that the purpose of oath sentence is to emphasize or strengthen discourse. He adds if you swear for something, you certify it. In Arabic, it may be called swear or an oath, they have the meanings of 'force' or 'energy'. Al-Saamarai (2003, p. 136) verifies that swear means that one may have a thought in his heart [sic.], then it becomes a truth. Al-Saamarai (2003, p.137- 143) classifies [al-qasam] in Arabic into:

a- explicit: this type can be revealed by:

1- the letter of an oath ( وَ ): e.g.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ﴿۱﴾ ۝۱۰۰ وَبِالسَّمٰوٰتِ سَبْعِیْنِ ﴿۱۰۰﴾ ۝۱۰۱ وَبِاللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ﴿۱۰۱﴾ (الذاریات: 7 و8)

"By the sky with (its) numerous Paths, Truly ye are In a doctrine discordant,"

It is worthwhile to mention that all the translations of the ayahs of the glorious Qur'an in this example and the coming ones are taken from Ali (1937).

2- the verb of an oath أُقْسِمُ [auqssimu]:

وَأُقْسِمُ لَأَنْسَاكَ مَا دَرَّ شَارِقٌ \*\*\* وَ مَا هَبَّ أَلٌ فِي مَلْمَعَةِ قَفْرٍ

[Wa auqssimu la anssaqa ma thara shariquun  
Wa maa habba aaluun fii mulama'atuun qafru]

فَأُقْسِمُ لَوْ شِئْتُ أَنَا رَسُولُهُ \*\*\* سَوَاكَ وَ لَكِنْ لَمْ نَجِدْكَ مَدْفَعًا

by Imra al Kais, Then I swear, if anything, meaning any man,  
but thou were such that his messenger had come to us, (we  
would have repulsed him) (Howell, 1911, p. 884).

3- the letter and the verb together:

وَأُقْسِمُ بِأَسْمَاءِ مَا كَانَتْ تُدْعَىٰ بِهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِذْ كَانَتْ تَلْمِزُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾ (الانعام: 109)

"They swear their strongest oaths by Allah, that if a (special) Sign came to them, by it They would believe."

4- it may be included by one of the swear expressions, whether it is a noun or a nominal clause as in Imra Al-Kais:

فَقُلْتُ يَمِينُ اللَّهِ ابْرَحَ قَاعِدَا وَ لَوْ قَطَعُوا رَأْسِي لَدَيْكَ وَ أَوْصَالِي

[fa qultu yameen Allah abrahu qaa'idan  
wa law qatta'u ra'ssi ladayka wa awsali]

b- Implicit: Al-Saamarai (ibid.) illustrates this type in the following three cases:

1- the letter 'لام' [lam] (ل) and what it implies, as in:

(ال عمران: 186) لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Ye shall certainly be tried and tested In your possessions and In your personal selves"

(الحشر: 12) لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"If they are expelled, never will They go out with them"

2- the expression including the meaning of the oath as in:

(مريم: 71) لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Not one of you but will pass over it"

As Al-Saamaraa'i (2003, p. 138-140) classifies, the letters of the oath in Arabic are:

- الواو [waw] (و) : it is the most common letter of swearing, it may be used without the verb of swearing, as in:

(الفجر: 2-1) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"By the break of Day, By the nights Twice five"

(الليل: 1) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"By the night, As it conceals (the light)"

- الباء [baa'] (ب) : it may be used with verb of swearing 'أقسم' [aqssimu] or not, as in:

والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the stars, And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if ye but knew, That This is indeed a Qur'an Most Honourable,"

(الواقعة: 77-75) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"They swear their strongest oaths by Allah that, if only Thou wouldst command them, They would leave (Their homes)."

(النور: 53) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Iblis) said: "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all In the wrong,"

(ص: 82) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Iblis) said: "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all In the wrong,"

(ص: 82) والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"Iblis) said: "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all In the wrong,"

أقسمت بالله أسقيها وأشربها \*\*\* حتى تفرق ثرى الأرض أوصالي

[aqssamt bil illah assqiha wa ashrabuha  
Hata tufarriqu turbu ilarthu ausali]

"By God I swear, I will not give it (to others) to drink it (myself),  
until the dust of the earth separates my joints (Wright, 1971, p. 305)."

فأقسمت بالبيت الذي طاف حوله \*\*\* رجال بنوه من قريش وجرهم

[fa aqssamt bil bayt allathi taafa hauluhu  
rijjalun banuuahu min qurrayshun wa jurhami]

"The I have sworn by the House (meaning the Ka'ba) that men,  
who built it, of tribes of Kuraish and Jurhum, circled round, because  
they were wont to magnify it." (Howell, 1911, p. 886).

- التاء [taa'] (ت) : it is related or specified to God's name (Allah) or it may have the meaning of exclamation and magnification, as in:

والله لئن لم يكن الله بنا لرحيماً لكانتم من الخاسرين  
"And by Allah, I have a plan for your idols - after ye go away and turn your backs"

"They said: "By Allah. truly Thou art In Thine old wandering mind."

- اللام [lam] (ل) : it is specified to God's name (Allah), as in:

الله يبقى على الأيام ذو حيد  
بمشخر به الظيان و الأس (Al-Saamaraa'i , 2003, p. 140)

3- The following expressions which carry the meaning of the oath (Al-Saamaraa'i , 2003, p. 141-44):

- لَعْمْرُكَ [la'amruka]: it means 'by your life' (أحياتك) 'to swear by your life', or لعمر أبيك [la'mru abiik] 'assuredly thy father's life' (Howell,1911, p. 874):

(الحجر: 72)

"Verily, by Thy life (o Prophet), In their wild intoxication, They wander In distraction, to and fro."

- قَعْدَكَ اللهُ / قَعْدِكَ اللهُ [qa'adaka/ qa'idaka Allah]: it has controversial meanings but the famous one is that: God is keeping your discourse as if He is sitting with you (Al-Saamaraa'i , 2003, p. 143).

- عَمَرَكَ اللهُ [amaraka Allah]: it may be an oath or not, it means one is asking God to give another a long life.

أيها المنكح الثريا سهيلاً  
هي شامية اذا ما استقلت  
و سهيل اذا استقل يمانى (ibid., p. 142)

- لَيْمُ اللهِ [laymnu Allah] and the contracted form لَيْمُ اللهُ [laym Allah] (by God or by the oaths of God) (Wright, 1971, p. 20, 24, 39): the word [yameen] may be related to an Arab tradition who rise their right hands when they swear (Wright, 1971, II). The oaths of the people are true or faithful, about which there is no dispute at all since أَيْمَانُ [aymaan] is a noun plural of يَمِينُ [yameen] 'oath', by common consent; أَمَانَةُ اللهُ [amaantu Allah] (Howell, 1911, p. 874, 878).

فقال فريقُ القومِ لما نشدْتُهُمْ \*نَعَمْ و فريقُ لَيْمِنُ اللهُ ما ندري

"Then said the party of the people, when I entreated them, "yes";  
and a party said 'by God's oath, we know not' (Howell, ibid., p.878).

فقلت يمين الله أبرح قاعداً

"and I said, by God I swear, I will not cease sitting (Wright, ibid., p.305).

Other resources like Wright (1971) and Howell (1911) mention expressions of the oath in Arabic as follows:

- أَحْلِفُ (بِالله) [ahlifu billah] 'I swear by God'

Since these verbs ( أَحْلِفُ , أقسم ) are not self-transitive, they put a preposition, like بِ to convey the idea of swearing to the sworn-by. Al-Khalil says 'you put these prepositions only because by means of them you attach swearing to the sworn-by' (Howell, 1911, p. 874).

و لئن حلفتُ على يديك لأحلفنُ \*\*\* بيمين أصدق من يمينك مُقسم

"And verily, if I swear before thee, I swear with the oath of a swearer which is more truthful than thy oath (ibid., p. 224)."

- أَلَيْتَ [aalaytu]: it means(I have sworn)(Howell, 1911, p. 875), contains the sense of the oath and therefore treated like أَحْلَفَ [ahlifu]. The verb occurring (as a correlative) after them as after وَ اللهُ by God (ibid.).

فَأَلَيْتَ أَسَى عَلَى هَالِكٍ \*\*\* وَ اسأَلُ نَائِحَةً مَالِهَا

[fa aalaytu aassi ala halikin \*\*\* wa assalu naa'ihatun ma laha]

"And so I swear, I will never mourn for one dying, nor ask a mourner what ails her (Wright, 1971, p. 305).

- أَشْهَدُ [shahida Allahu] Allah testify.
- يَعْلَمُ اللهُ / عَلِمَ اللهُ [alima/ ya'lamu Allah] "God has known/ God knows" (Howell, 1911, p. 874).
- عَاهَدْتُ اللهُ [aahdtu Allah] (ibid., p. 874, 879).

In Islam or Arabic language, the sayings 'I swear, I vow or I testify', whether the words 'by God' are superseded or not, constitute an oath, because such words are commonly used in swearing. Now swear by the name of God is customary and comfortable to divine ordinances, but without the name of God is forbidden (Hughes, 2001, p. 438). The expression such as "by the age of God or the existence of God" can also be regarded as an oath, because the age and existence of God signify His eternity which is one of His attributes (ibid.).

#### IV. THE ANALYSES OF THE OATH EXPRESSIONS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:

##### A- Hamlet:

1. Hamlet to Horatio: "Never to speak of this which you have seen swear by my sword" (Shakespeare, 1992, p. 163).

This oath or swear expression 'by my sword' structurally follows the pattern (prep. + n.), but the noun is not a sacred one as in the usual expressions. In traditions of Denmark, the oath upon the sword hilt was preserved in a spirit of deep solemnity (ibid.).

2. "Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio  
And much offence too" (ibid., p.174).

Structurally speaking, like most swear expressions, 'by Saint Patrick' follows the norm (prep. + sacred name).

3. Ophelia: "Indeed, la without an oath, I'll make an end on 't  
By Cis and by Saint Charity  
A lack! And fie for shame!  
Young men will do 't,  
By cock, they are to blame" (Shakespeare, 1992, p. 294).

It is necessarily here to pay the reader's attention to the strange words in the quotation above like: (La) is the contracted form of Lord, By Cis is by Jesus, By Saint Charity- in the middle ages charity often mistakenly was taken to be a Saint, and By cock is by God (ibid.). Syntactically speaking, the swear expressions above follow the pattern: (prep. + sacred names).

4. Hamlet: "... I will remove from the table of my memory all trivial and stupid things, all learning of books, all images, all impressions that were recorded by my youth, and your teachings alone shall exist within the limits of my brain, free from lesser matters. I swear this by heaven..." (ibid., p.176).

5. "... He was so loving towards my mother that he would

not allow the winds of heaven.  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth..." (ibid., p. 254).

The two quotations above contain two swear expressions by 'heaven', the first follows the pattern (prep. + n.), whereas the preposition is implicit in the second expression.

6. "Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if  
Philosophy could find it out" (ibid., p. 235).
7. "Swounds, show me what th'owt do  
Woo't drink up easel, eat a crocodile?" (ibid., p. 189).

The two expressions 'Swound' and 'Sblood' were claimed by Hughes (2006, p. 317) as "minced oaths", plain forms of "God's wounds" and "God's blood". The idea that the researcher stands against, finding that (Christ's wounds) and (Christ's blood) are nearer to historical and religious reality. Moreover, these two expressions are structurally following the pattern: prep. + sacred name implicitly.

8. ".....that I the son of a dear father murdered  
prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell," (ibid., p. 192).
9. Horatio to Hamlet: "Not I, my lord, by heaven..." (ibid., p. 188).
10. Polonius to Hamlet: "Fore God, my lord well spoken with good 460 accents and  
discretion" (ibid., p. 280).
11. Polonius: "By Virgin Mary, sir here is my point, and I believe  
It is a device..." (ibid., p.193).
12. Second Clown: "By Virgin Mary now I can tell" (ibid., p.322).  
"Mass, I cannot tell." (ibid., p. 318).

The quotations above include the usual pattern of swear expression in English (i.e. prep. + n.) as in: by heaven (and hell), fore God, and by Virgin Mary. This word, especially in the Roman Catholic Church, means a ceremony held in memory of the last meal that Christ had with his disciples. It is an oath related to a sacred event.

#### **B- Love's Labour's Lost:**

13. Behon: "By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest" (Shakespeare, 2009, p.44).

It is an oath by unsacred things following the usual pattern: (prep. + n.). Also, 'ye' and 'nay' are the old uses of 'yes' and 'no' (Hornby, 2005, p.1773).

14. King: "Saint Cupid, then! And soldiers to the field!" (ibid., p. 43).

Syntactically speaking, 'by' is implicit in the direct quotation above and followed by the sacred name 'Saint Cupid'. Thus, the oath above follows the pattern: (prep. + sacred name).

#### **C. The Taming of the Shrew:**

15. Gremio: "Ay by gogs-wouns" quoth he..." (Shakespeare, 1990, p. 60).

'Gogs-wouns' means 'God's or Christ's wounds' just like 'Zounds' and 'Sblood'...etc.(Richardson, 2014, p.137). Syntactically speaking, this English oath follows to the pattern (prep. + sacred name).

#### **D- King John:**

16. King Phillip: "And by this hand I swear,

That sways the earth this climate overlooks,  
Before we will lay down our just-borne arm" (Shakespeare, 1990, p. 137).

17. "... Zounds! I was never so be thumped with words  
Since I first call'd my brother's father dad" (ibid., p. 54).

The first oath expression above "by this hand" follows the pattern: (prep. + n.), whereas the second is a 'minced oath': "Zounds" by altering "God's wounds" into "Sounds" or "Zounds" as Hughes (2006, p.317) claims.

18. King John: "Now by the sky that hangs above heads, I like..." (Shakespeare, 1990: 73).

This expression represents the pattern: (prep. + sacred name), the sky connotes heaven which relates to God.

#### **E. A Midsummer Night's Dreams:**

19. Hermia to Lysander: " I swear to thee by Cupid's strong bow,  
By his best arrow with the golden head,  
By the simplicity of Venus doves,  
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves and by that fire which  
knitteth burn'd the Cathage queen,  
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,  
By all the vows that ever men have broken" (Shakespeare, 1992: 6).

This is the only quotation from the "Midsummer Night's Dreams", which involves six swear or oath expressions. Some of these expressions follow the pattern: ((prep. + (sacred) name)) like: "By the Cupid's strong bow, by his best arrow, by the simplicity of Venus doves", others follow the pattern (prep. + relative clause) as in: ' By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves" and "by that fire which knitteth burn'd the Cathage queen".

#### **F. King Lear:**

20. Lear: "By Jupiter, I swear, not" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 149).  
21. Kent: "By Juno, I swear, ay" (ibid.).

Syntactically or structurally speaking the two swear expressions above are subject to the pattern (prep. + sacred name) or (prep. + n.).

#### **G. The Tempest:**

22. Stephano: "By this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth" (Shakespeare, 1990, p. 86).  
23. Caliban: "I say, by sorcery he got this isle" (ibid., p. 42).

Structurally speaking, the two swear expressions above follow the pattern (prep. + n.).

#### **H. Much Ado about Nothing:**

24. Benedick: "By my sword, Beatrice, thou lov'st me" (Shakespeare, 1995, p. 146).

There is only one oath or swear expression in this play "by my sword", it follows the pattern: (prep. + n.).

#### **I- Troilus and Cressida:**

25. Pandarus: "... by God's slid, it does one's heart good" (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 147).



The present quotation has only one oath (by God's slid) which is subject to the pattern (prep. + sacred name).

Table (1): The Frequency of the expressions of the oath in the English data:

No.	Expressions of the oath in English	Frequency	Percentage
1.	By my sword*	2	6
2.	By Saint Patrick*	1	3
3.	By Cis (Christ)*	1	3
4.	By Saint Charity*	1	3
5.	By cock (God)* + Fore God*+ God's slid	3	9
6.	By heaven* + heaven and earth* + by heaven and hell*	4	12
7.	By Virgin Mary*	2	6
8.	Mass	1	3
9.	By yea and nay*	1	3
10.	Saint Cupid* + By Cupid's strong bow* + by his best arrow*	3	9
11.	By this hand*	2	6
12.	By the sky that hangs above heads*	1	3
13.	By the simplicity of Venus doves*	1	3
14.	By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves*	1	3
15.	By that fire which knitteth burn'd the Cathage queen*	1	3
16.	By all the vows that ever men have broken*	1	3
17.	By Jupiter*	1	3
18.	By Juno*	1	3
19.	By sorcery*	1	3
20.	Sblood+ Swounds+ Zounds+ By gogs-wouns*	4	12
21.	Total	33	99

#### V. THE ANALYSES OF THE OATH EXPRESSIONS IN AL-MUTANABBI'S POEMS:

This section is devoted to the analysis of the oath expressions in Al- Mutanabbi's poems as far as the grammar of Arabic language and the model (Al- Saamaraa'i, 2003) are concerned. All the Arabic texts of Al- Mutanabbi's poems and their translations into English are taken from Wormhoudt(2002).

The letters of the oath in Arabic are (ل, ت, ب, و) [wa, bi, ta, li]:

- الواو [waw] (و) : it is the most common letter of swearing, it may be used without the verb of swearing, as in:

1. فَوَمَنْ أَجِبُ لِأَعْيُنَيْكَ فِي الْهَوَى  
قَسَمًا بِهِ وَبِحُسْنِهِ وَبِهَائِهِ

By one I love I'm no rebel to your love  
Swearing by him and beauty and elegance (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 335)

Syntactically speaking, the two lines above reveal two explicit swear/ oath expressions. The first line includes an oath letter in Arabic [wa] and the noun sworn by is the 'one I love'. The second oath letter comes after the word 'swearing' which is [bi] and repeated three times connected to the (pro)nouns: him, beauty, and elegance of the person whom the poet sworn by. This type of oath follows the pattern (prep. + n.).

2. وَأَمَّا وَحَقِّكَ وَهُوَ غَايَةُ مُقْسِمٍ  
لِلْحَقِّ أَنْتَ وَمَا سِوَاكَ الْبَاطِلُ

O by your truth! the highest oath, you  
Are truth and another than you is false (ibid., p. 175)

The first line of this quotation involves the letter of an oath in Arabic [wa] and is followed by the noun 'your right' whom the poet swears by. Thus, this oath type is subject to the pattern (prep. + n.).

- الباء [baa'] (ب) : it may be used with verb of swearing 'أقسم' [aqssimu] or not, as in:

3. لَمَّا رَأَتْ وَجْهَهُ خُبِرَتْ  
أَقْسَمَ بِاللَّهِ لَا رَأَتْ كَفَلَهُ

If their horsemen look on his face he  
Swears by God they'll not see his back (ibid., p. 245)

The second line of the quotation above has an explicit expression of the oath 'swears' and is followed by the letter of the oath in Arabic [bi], combined to the name of the almighty God [Allah] the name sworn by (i.e. prep. + sacred name).

4. لَهُ مِنْ تَنْبِي النَّاءِ كَأَمَّا  
بِهِ أَقْسَمْتُ أَنْ لَا يُؤَدَّى لَهَا شُكْرُ

His is a bounty destroying praise as if  
Thanks swore he could not be repaid for it (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 67)

The second line of this quotation includes the letter of the oath in Arabic [bi] and the attached pronoun [hi] which includes an implicit meaning of the person who is sworn by. This type of the oath follows the pattern (prep. + n.)

5. أَوْ حَلْفُوا بِالْعَمُوسِ وَاجْتَهَدُوا  
فَقَوْلُهُمْ خَابَ سَائِلِي الْقَسْمِ

Or swear a solemn oath and keep it  
They say, as an oath: May my client fail! (ibid., p. 95)

This quotation has a letter of the oath in Arabic [bi] and combined to the name 'الغموس' [al-ghamus] to denote a 'solemn oath' (i.e. an oath in which a perjurer falls into sin (Al-Waahidi, n.d, p. 146)). This type of the oath follows the pattern (prep. + n.)

- التاء [taa'] (ت) : it is related or specified to God's name (Allah) or it may have the meaning of exclamation and magnification, as in:

6. تَاللَّهِ مَا عَلِمَ امْرُؤٌ لَوْلَاكُمْ  
كَيْفَ السَّخَاءِ وَكَيْفَ ضَرْبِ الْهَامِ

By God! Men would not know but for  
You what bounty is or striking off heads (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 393)

The letter of the oath in Arabic [ta] is combined, in the first line of the quotation above, to the sacred name of God 'Allah'. This is the only expression in Al-Mutanabbi's poetic collection 'Diwan' which contains the letter of the oath in Arabic [ta]. This type of the oath follows the pattern (prep. + sacred name).

- اللام [lam] (ل) : it is specified to God's name (Allah), as in:

7. وَاللَّهِ سَيْرِي مَا أَقَلَّ تَنْبِيَّةُ  
عَشِيَّةَ شَرْقِي الْخَدَالِي وَغَرَبُ

By God! How small delay in my trip  
Evening at Hadali and Gurrab to the east (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 441)

The oath or the swear expression in this quotation is constructed by the use of the letter of the oath [li] and combined to the sacred name of God to show the oath for the purpose of emphasis (i.e. prep. + sacred name).

8.      الله قَلْبُكَ مَا تَخَافُ مِنَ الرَّدَى  
          وَتَخَافُ أَنْ يَدْنُو إِلَيْكَ الْعَارُ

By God your heart can fear no death  
It only fears lest some shame come to you (ibid., p. 269)

Like the preceding analysis, the oath expression in this example is made of the letter of the oath in Arabic [li] and combined to the sacred name of God 'Allah' (i.e. prep. + sacred name).

9.      نَالَ الَّذِي نَلْتُ مِنْهُ مِنِّي  
          لِلَّهِ مَا تَصْنَعُ الْخُمُورُ

It got of me what I got of it  
By God what drunkenness does! (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 153)

The letter of the oath in Arabic [li] is also combined to the sacred name of God 'Allah' in the second line of this quotation for certain function may be a 'surprise' (i.e. prep. + sacred name).

10.     قَبْلَهُ وَقَتُّ دَوْبِ الْعَيْشِ نَارُهُ  
          فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا صَارِمٌ أَوْ ضَبَارِمٌ

By God, a time for fire to melt sword  
Nothing remains but the lion's blades (ibid., p. 367)

11.     مَهْلًا أَلَا لِلَّهِ مَا صَنَعَ الْقَنَا  
          فِي عَمْرٍو حَابٍ وَضَبَّةِ الْأَعْتَامِ

Slowly, O by God what has lance  
Done to Amr Haba and poor Dabba? (ibid., p. 393)

12.     لِلَّهِ خَالٌ أَرْجَبِيهَا وَتُخْلِفُنِي  
          وَأَقْتَضِي كَوْنَهَا دَهْرِي وَيَمِطُنِي

By God I hope for a thing denied me  
My fate wants it to be and puts me off (ibid., p. 167)

The first three lines of the three quotations above are constructed by the use of the letter of the oath in Arabic [li] which is combined to the sacred name of God 'Allah' (i.e. prep. + sacred name). This quotation represents the last example of the letters of the oath in Arabic in the poetic collection of Al-Mutanabbi 'Diwan'. The coming examples involve the expression of the oath in Arabic in the Diwan of Al-Mutanabbi.

3- The following expressions carry the meaning of the oath or idiomatic expressions, as it were:

-      عَمَرَكَ اللهُ [amaraka Allah]:

13.     عَمَرَكَ اللهُ! هَلْ رَأَيْتَ بُدُوراً  
          طَلَعَتْ فِي بَرَاقِعِ وَعُقُودِ

Your life in God! Have you seen such  
Moons rising among veils and necklaces? (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 25)

This is another construction of the oath in Arabic by using, as it were, an idiomatic expression 'عَمَرَكَ اللهُ' [amraka Allah] which means the oath expression in Arabic 'your life in God'. This is the only example in the Diwan which contains such expression of the oath.

- أيمان الله /يمين الله God's oath [aymaan Allah/ yameen Allah]

14. عُقْبَى الْيَمِينِ عَلَى عُقْبَى الْوَعَى نَدْمٌ  
مَاذَا يَزِيدُكَ فِي إِقْدَامِكَ الْقَسْمُ

End of an oath in battle's end is truth  
Can such a vow increase your courage? (ibid., p. 399)

This quotation has two expressions of the oath in Arabic are [yameen] in the first line and [qassam] in the second line.

15. وَفِي الْيَمِينِ عَلَى مَا أَنْتَ وَاعِدُهُ  
مَا دَلَّ أَنْكَ فِي الْمِيعَادِ مُتَّهَمٌ

Won't such an oath since you vowed it  
Show you, as to reliability, to be rotten? (ibid., p. 399)

16. يَمِيناً لَوْ حَلَفْتَ وَأَنْتَ تَأْتِي  
عَلَى قَتْلِي بِهَا لَصَرَبْتُ عُقْبِي

If you swore by the right hand, insisted  
On my death with it, I'd strike off my head! (ibid., p. 205)

The two quotations above contain the oath expression in Arabic [yameen] too.

- اُحْلِفَ (بالله)/ اُحْلَفَ [ahlifu or halifa billah]:

17. أَتُحْلِفُ لَا تُكَلِّفُنِي مَسِيرًا  
إِلَى بَلَدٍ أَحَارُولٍ فِيهِ مَالًا

Have you sworn not to permit me to go  
To the country to take care of my things (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 461)

18. حَلَفْتُ إِذَا بَرَكَاتُ غُرَّةِ ذَا  
فِي الْمَهْدِ أَنْ لَا فَاتَهُ أَمَلٌ

One's best blessing was sworn to other  
In the cradle: May hope never leave them (ibid., p. 517)

19. وَفَاعِلٌ مَا اسْتَهَى يُغْنِيهِ عَنِ حَلْفِ  
عَلَى الْفِعْلِ حُضُورُ الْفِعْلِ وَالْكَرْمِ

A doer is one who avoids an oath to be  
Sufficient in the acting and the dispensing (ibid., p. 399)

20. أَوْ حَلَفُوا بِالْعُمُوسِ وَاجْتَهَدُوا  
فَقَوْلُهُمْ خَابَ سَائِلِي الْقَسْمِ

Or swear a solemn oath and keep it  
They say, as an oath: May my client fail! (ibid., p. 95)

21. وَحَلَفَتْ أَلْفَ يَمِينٍ غَيْرَ صَادِقَةٍ  
مَطْرُودَةٍ كَكُعُوبِ الرَّمَحِ فِي نَسَقِ

Not true to a crony's right hand vow  
Cast off like spearpoints [sic.] one after other (ibid., p. 229)

.22  
لَوْ تَنَكَّرْتِ فِي الْمَكْرِ لَقَوْمٍ  
حَلَفُوا أَنَّ ابْنَهُ بِالطَّلَاقِ

If you evil yourself in attacks on men  
They swear you are his son indubitably (ibid., p. 235)

.23  
أَتَخْلِفُ لَا تُكَلِّفُنِي مَسِيرًا  
إِلَى بَلَدٍ أَحَاوَلْتُ فِيهِ مَالًا

Have you sworn not to permit me to go  
To the country to take care of my things (ibid., p. 461)

.24  
حَلَفْتُ إِذَا بَرَكَاتُ غُرُودِذَا  
فِي الْمَهْدِ أَنْ لَا فَاتَهُ أَمَلٌ

One's best blessing was sworn to other  
In the cradle: May hope never leave them (ibid., p. 517)

.25  
وَفَاعِلٌ مَا اشْتَهَى يُغْنِيهِ عَنِ حَلِيفٍ  
عَلَى الْفِعْلِ حُضُورُ الْفِعْلِ وَالْكَرْمُ

A doer is one who avoids an oath to be  
Sufficient in the acting and the dispensing (Wormhoudt, 2002, p. 399)

.26  
أَبَيْنَ الْبَطَارِيْقُ وَالْحَلْفُ الَّذِي حَلَفُوا  
بِمَفْرُقِ الْمَلِكِ وَالزَّعَمُ الَّذِي زَعَمُوا

Where are participants and vows sworn  
By hair of the king and a lie they lived? (ibid.)

All the ten quotations above have the most common expression of the oath in Arabic [halifa or halifu], they may include the implicit meaning of swearing as the different situations related to the different sayings or poetic lines reveal.

.27  
أَوْ حَلَفُوا بِالْعُمُوسِ وَاجْتَهَدُوا  
فَقَوْلُهُمْ خَابَ سَائِلِي الْقَسَمِ

Or swear a solemn oath and keep it  
They say, as an oath: May my client fail! (ibid., p. 95)

This quotation has been explained before in the analysis of the letter of the oath in Arabic [bi] and it is repeated here for it contains other expressions of the oath in Arabic are: [halafu] and [qassam] (swear) and (oath) as explained in the above translation into English.

- قسم / أقسم بالله [qasamun billah] 'I swear by God':

.28  
وَتَرَاهُ أَصْغَرَ مَا تَرَاهُ نَاطِقًا،  
وَيَكُونُ أَكْذَبَ مَا يَكُونُ وَيُقْسِمُ

He seems smaller when he talks  
Most of all false when swearing an oath (ibid., p. 227)

.29  
أُقْسِمُوا لَا رَأُوكَ إِلَّا بِقَلْبٍ  
طَلَمَا عَزَّتِ الْعُيُونُ الرَّجَالَا

They swear not to see you but in  
Fancy only thus eyes deceive men (ibid., p. 389)

30. وَأَقْسِمُ لَوْ صَلَّحْتَ يَمِينِ شَيْءٍ  
لَمَا صَلَّحَ الْعِبَادُ لَهُ شَيْئًا

I swear if you were on the right  
Men would not be fit for the left of it (ibid., p. 135)

31. وَأَقْسِمُ لَوْلَا أَنْ فِي كُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ  
لَهُ ضَيْعَمًا فُلْنَا لَهُ أَنْتَ ضَيْعَمٌ

I swear if each hair of him were not  
A lion we'd say of him: You are a lion (ibid., p. 111)

32. حُبَيْبٌ مِنْ قَسَمٍ وَأَقْدِي مُسَيِّمًا  
أَمْسَى الْأَنْامُ لَهُ مُجَلًّا مُعْظَمًا

You greet with an oath, I ransom a witness  
Mankind is existing for his glorious greatness (ibid., p. 205)

All the five quotations above contain the expression of the oath in Arabic [qassam, yaqssim]. Thus, they are clearly translated into English as oaths according to the different situations they are used for.

- أشهد [shahida Allahu] Allah testify.

33. فَمَتَى يُكَدِّبُ مَدْعُكَ لَكَ فَوْقَ ذَا  
وَاللهُ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ حَقًّا مَا أَدْعَى

If one denied claims for you beyond it  
God accepts the truth of what is claimed (ibid., p. 115)

34. فَتَمَلِّيكُ دَلِيلٍ وَتَعْظِيمُ قَدْرِهِ  
شَهِيدٌ بَوَّخْدَانِيَّةِ اللهِ وَالْعَدْلِ

Dallar's authority and his great rank  
Are witness to God's unity and justice (ibid., p. 491)

The Arabic words *yashhad* [yashhad] and *shahiid* [shahiid] in the two quotations above may carry the meanings of swearing implicitly.

Table (2): The Frequency of the letters and the expressions of the oath in the Arabic data:

No.	Letters and expressions of the oath in Arabic	Frequency	Percentage
1.	الواو [waw] (و) [wa]	2	5.8
2.	الباء [baa'] (ب) [bi]	3	8.8
3.	التاء [taa'] (ت) [ta]	1	2.9
4.	اللام [lam] (ل) [li]	6	17.6
5.	عَمَرَكَ اللهُ [amaraka Allah]:	1	2.9
6.	أَيْمَانُ اللهِ /يَمِينُ اللهِ God's oath [aymaan Allah/ yameen Allah]	3	8.8
7.	خَلَفْتُ (بِالله) /أَحْلَفْتُ [ahlifu or halifa billah]:	11	32.3
8.	قَسَمْتُ /أَقْسَمْتُ بِالله [qasamun billah] 'I swear by God':	5	14.7
9.	أَشْهَدُ اللهُ [shahida Allahu] Allah testify.	2	5.8
10.	Total	34	99.6

## VI. CONCLUSIONS:

The analyses of the target literary work reveal the availability of the oath or swear expressions in them. On the one hand, most of the oath or swear expressions in Shakespeare's plays follow the pattern (prep. + n./ sacred name) which amounts 90% and some expressions are 'minced oaths' which amount 9%. On the other hand, most of the oath or swear expressions in Al-Mutanabbi's poems are of the idiomatic expressions which amount 64.5%, whereas the others 35.1% are of the (prep. + sacred name) pattern. In addition, the analyses of the English and Arabic literary works, in this paper, show to some extent the religious influence in the two languages by using the sacred names for swearing to show emphasis and insurance.

Syntactically speaking, the analyses of the oath expressions in the data of the two languages reveal a similarity in using the pattern (prep. + n.). Few English oath or swear expressions follow the pattern (prep. + relative clause) as in: 'By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves" and "by that fire which knitteth burn'd the Cathage queen". This pattern (prep. + relative clause) may be found in other works in the Arabic language but it is not found in the target Arabic data of this paper.

Moreover, the English language differs syntactically from the Arabic one in that the earlier has some 'minced oaths' such as: (Sblood, Swound, Zound), whereas the Arabic has some (idiomatic) expressions such as: عَمَرَكَ اللهُ [amaraka Allah], البيت [aalayt] which is exemplified in the literature review of this paper and which has no example in Al-Mutanabbi's poems. One more, ايم الله [aymu Allah] may be regarded, to the researcher, as a 'minced oath', since the word [aym] is a contracted form of [aymaanu Allah] ايمان الله or ايمُن الله [aymun Allah] which is a plural form of ايمين الله [yameen Allah] God's oath.

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