*The words "the Al Azif of the Mad-Poet Abdul Alhazred" are certainly meaningful to students of the Cthulhu mythos, but they do not seem to convey much in the way of actual information. However, when they are looked at through the lens of early 8th century Arab culture they seem to reveal a level of significance that is not readily apparent.**

The Mad Poet

Sha'ir majnun (شاعر مجنون) is the Arabic term generally translated as "mad poet". However, in the early Islamic period neither *sha'ir* nor *majnun* would be understood as referring to a "poet" or "madman" in their modern sense.[1] Rather, both terms would have been understood in their more archaic sense as referring to an individual who receives supernatural inspiration[2] and who operates under the control (or influence) of an unseen presence[3]. The term *sha'ir* (شاعر) is the active participle of the verb *sha'ara* (شعر)[4] meaning "to know" or "to perceive", and a literal translation of *sha'ir* is "one who knows". In its original context the term that we now translate as "poet" meant a "possessor of a super-normal knowledge of occult things".[5] The source of this super-normal knowledge was said to be the *jinn* (جن) or *shayatin* (شياطين).

The term *majnun* (مجنون) now generally has the connotation of madness or insanity. However, in the early Islamic period, it referred to a person possessed by *jinn* (جن). To illustrate this one merely needs to note that in all of the many Muslim defenses against the accusation that Muhammad was *majnun*, there is not a single defense of his sanity.[6] Rather, these defenses always focused on proving that the *jinn* were not the source of the Qur'anic revelation.[7] The word *majnun* is created by attaching "*mim*" (م) as a personalizing prefix to *jnun* or *junun* (جنون)[8] which can refer either to the *jinn* themselves or the state of "possession by *jinn*"[9]. However, Dols has suggested that *majnun* might refer to a fairly wide range of altered states of consciousness and ecstatic experiences and uses the phrase "affected or inspired by *jinn*" which seems to capture this broad range better than the term "possession."[10]

* This article has been adapted from my forthcoming _*Alhazret in Cultural Context*_

"Poets", diviners, and sorcerers (as well as victims of pathological-possession) were all considered *majnun*.[11]

Sha'ir majnun seems to be a technical term which developed at a time when at least some poets began composing verse without the perceived aid of familiar spirits. Thus the term is used to indicate those "poets" that still followed the more archaic tradition of being inspired by super-natural agencies within a trance state. However, the tribal role of these "poets" should not be thought of as one of simple artistic expression. Their role within Arab tribes during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic centuries was essentially shamanic. Gilbert Rouget defines the *sha'ir majnun* as a "'poet-soothsayer possessed of the *Jinn'* who performed the function of prophet or augur"[12]. There is considerable overlap in role between the poet-soothsayer and another type of soothsayer called a *kahin* (كاهن). In fact, in the earlier periods it is difficult to distinguish between the *kahin* and the *sha'ir*[13]. Both the *kahin* and the *sha'ir* would function as tribal oracles that would make pronouncements on such matters as settling intra-tribal legal disputes,[14] when and where to strike camp,[15] finding lost or stolen items, wandered livestock,[16] "launching raids, determination of paternity, and especially dream interpretation"[17]. In addition to prognostications relating to the future, or settling matters in the present, they were also consulted for revelations regarding the mysteries of the past[18]

Zwett comments on this parallel function of the *kahin* and *sha'ir* saying that:

> "When performing as such, then, each of the best known mantic figures, the *kahin* and the poet (*sha'ir*), was presumed to be operating under the control of an invisible being that communicated directly and privately to him words that he then repeated verbatim not as his own but as those of his controlling agent, words that he could not have been expected to have produced of his own volition. These words as discourse bore witness to their unnatural or paranormal origin not only by their extraordinary content and often difficult style but above all by their very linguistic medium: rhymed and cadenced periods (*saj'*) for the *kahin*, rigorously rhymed and isometric verse (*shi'r*) for the poet..."[19]

In later times[20] there was a distinction drawn between the rhymed and rhythmic verse called *saj'* (سجع) and the carefully metered types of verse referred to as *sh'ir* (شعر). However, it is

beyond question that *saj'* was originally consider a form of *sh'ir*[21] and that a *sha'ir* would make use of *saj'* in his prognostications and incantations[22].

However, unlike the *kahin* the function of the *sha'ir* was not merely divinatory, and while they did serve as oracular channels, they also were spell casters. As Nicolson notes "the poet (*sha'ir*, plural *shu'ara*), as his name implies, was held to be a person endowed with supernatural knowledge, a wizard in league with spirits (*jinn*) or satans (*shayatin*) and dependent on them for the magical powers which he displayed"[23]. The poems of these poet-seers were often spells[24] and poetry itself was considered "legitimate magic" *sihr halal* (سِحْر حلال).[25] The type of poem referred to as a *hija'* (هجاء) was considered an extremely lethal form of curse.[26] For instance, the area of the head called *al qafa* (القفـــا) was linked to a form of imprecatory rhyme called *qafiya* (قافيـــة) that would fatally wound its intended victim's skull.[27] The rhymes of these poetic curses were frequently compared to arrows that shot out from the poet magically attacking their intended victim. [28] Their poem-spells were not limited to aggressive magic and the words of the *sha'ir* could bestow blessings as well as harm. Indeed, their aid was often sought as a healer. Macdonald has suggested that the role of the *sha'ir* as healer was linked to his ability to find lost or stolen objects, in that he may be able to recover lost or stolen "health"[29]. This would seem to suggest that something strongly akin to soul-retrieval was an important part of the *sha'ir's* repertoire.

All this can be taken together to get a good picture of the role of the *sha'ir majnun* in ancient Arab tribal culture. They were diviners, healers, mediators of tribal disputes, cursers, and bestowers of magical blessings, who would operate in a trance-state with the aid of their tutelary-spirits. The *sha'ir* was also the primary preserver of tribal history and lore. Clearly, the role of the *sha'ir majnun* was essentially that of the shaman. Shamanic songs or chants often make careful use of rhythm and assonance or rhyme, and the close connection between the role of poet and shaman is by no means a uniquely Arab phenomenon.[30] Like shamans of other cultures, the *sha'ir* usually did not choose his role, rather he was chosen by the spirits themselves. If necessary these *jinn* spirits would use "physical force to make him the poet of his tribe."[31] These experiences were perceived as real attacks and often resembled the initiatory death-experience of shamans from other areas. Andre describes them this way:

> "The Arabian poet was thrown to the ground by a jinni... To the bystander the attack appears as a falling to the ground, where the victim writhes in cramps, as if he

> were struck by an invisible hand. But the victim himself experiences the spell as a literal attack, in which something frequently chokes or crushes him like a demon. At times he imagines that his body is cut into pieces or pierced."[32]

The theme of being choked by the invisible hand of the jinn is also encountered frequently in some Arabic texts on magic.[33] It is worth pointing out that Abdul Alhazred[34] mentions that the unseen Old Ones[35] can choke or strike with an invisible hand just as mentioned in the quote above[36]. Likewise, the theme of dismemberment by invisible demons is also encountered with respect to Alhazred. Robert M. Price has concluded that the account of Alhazred "being seized by an invisible monster in broad daylight and devoured horribly" is actually a description of Alhazred's poetic call.[37] It thus represents Alhazred's initiatory-death experience rather than his physical death. It would seem that Price is almost certainly correct, considering that the experience of being seized and dismembered by an invisible monster is quite typical of the initiatory call of the "mad poets" (and to some extent shamans generally). That Alhazred experienced his violent poetic call in front of many witnesses doesn't seem to have been particularly unusual (cf. Hassan ibn Thabit حسان بن ثابت).[38] After this initiatory experience the tutelary *jinn* spirit was said to be the poet's constant unseen "companion" or *qarin* (قرين).[39]

Abdul Alhazred

A great deal has been said about the supposedly problematic nature of the name "Abdul Alhazred".[40] Given that Abdul Alhazred is supposed to be a transliteration of a medieval Arabic name (or *nom de plume*) some corruption is to be expected, as is the case with Averroes, Avicenna, or Abulcasis etc. In this context, the name would actually seem to have survived the latinization process surprisingly intact.

The only gross corruption is simply the duplication of the definite article, which is obviously a very minor and easily explainable error. This leaves us with Abd Alhazred. *Abd* (عبد) is a relatively common Arabic name meaning "servent" or "slave"[41] and is closely related to the verb *abad* (عبد) meaning to "worship" or "serve".[42] Alhazred is easily recognizable as a transliteration of Alhazret (الحضرت).[43] The prefix "*al-*" (ال) is the Arabic definite article and is equivalent to the word "the" in English. The word *hazret* (حضرت)[44] means "presence"[45]

and is derived from the Arabic root *hazar* (حضـر) meaning "to be present"[46] or "was/ became present".[47] So Abd Alhazret (عبـد الحضــرت) means "Slave of the Presence".

The name "Slave of the Presence" would seem to imply "a person operating under the control of an unseen presence" and would certainly seem to be an appropriate name for a *sha'ir majnun* living in the late 7th or early 8th century.

The objection that Alhazret is not an orthodox Islamic name does not merit serious consideration. [48] Furthermore, the exact nature of the "presence" in the name "Slave of the Presence" is ambiguous; leaving room for a relatively orthodox interpretation.[49] The liminality of the name accords perfectly with the description of Alhazred as an "indifferent Muslim" (someone who would feign orthodoxy only to the extent needed).

While a relatively orthodox interpretation is possible, for our Mad Poet the true meaning of "Slave of the Presence" would have been that he operated under the influence of an unseen *Jinn*-spirit that inspired his poetry and empowered his incantations.

Al 'Azif

As explained above, the ability of the *sha'ir majnun* to function in his role was dependent on his ability to hear the "voice of the jinn", which was referred to as *'azif* (عـزيف) or *'azf* (عزف).[50] It is known that many early Arab poets would venture into the desert or other desolate and lonely places where they would listen to this *'azif*.[51] Many of the words derived from this same triconsonantal root[52] were directly related to the activities of these "mad poets". Like the shamans of many cultures, the *sha'ir majnun* would enter an altered state of consciousness with the aid of musical instruments[53] and the *jinn* were conjured by means of music.[54] Such musical instruments are referred to in Arabic as *'azaf* (عزاف).[55] Another term for such instruments was *ma'azif* (مَعَازِفَ),[56] which is simply the plural form of *'azif*,[57] and the act of calling-forth the *jinn* was referred to as *ta'zif* (تعــزف).[58] Once this trance-state was entered, and the *jinn* were called, the poet would have been able to hear the *'azif* or "voice of the *jinn*".[59] Generally, the *sha'ir* would create his poetic compositions by repeating or

transcribing this voice. These compositions would often be "sung with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument" (*'azf* عزف),[60] either by the poet himself or by his reciter.[61] This type of performance was so common that there is actually an instrument named "the poet's viol."[62] It is interesting that these linguistically related terms (*'azif*, *'azaf*, *ma'azif*, *ta'zif*, and *'azf*) would also nexus closely around the activities of the Arabian "mad poets"

Al-'azif (العـــزيف), the voice of the jinn, was perceived as an ominous humming sound[63]. Such a humming sound appears to have been commonly heard by the mantic practitioners of ancient Arabia. Ibn Khaldun (ابـن خلـدون) has a discussion of prophecy and soothsaying in his _*Muqaddima*_ (مقدّمة). Khaldun admits that prophecy and soothsaying are essentially the same type of phenomena with the former simply being the purer channel of transmission. Khaldun discusses the humming sound heard by the Arabian mantic practitioner saying that he "hears a humming sound, as though it were a suggestion of speech, from which he may take the sense which has been brought to him, and the humming sound does not cease until he has retained it and understood it."[64] It would appear that the humming heard in the trance-state (*'azif*) undergoes a sort of internal translation process by which the sound becomes understood as a concrete message. Similar phenomena are documented in the literature on ecstatic states from around the globe[65].

Given how their compositions were attributed to the voice of the jinn, and how the عزف root was closely related to so many of the activities of the *sha'ir majnun,* it seems natural that a "mad poet" might choose a title like _*kitab al 'azif*_ (كتـــاب العـــزيف) for his magnum opus.

As a final note on *al 'azif*, there are two mild misconceptions which can be succinctly addressed. There is a widespread belief that the ominous humming sound heard in the desert ('azif) is a noise made by nocturnal insects. This belief traces to a note by Samuel Henley in_ *The History of the Caliph Vathek*_.[66] However, Henley is wrong about the source of this noise. It is in fact a sonic effect created by the vibration of silica sand in certain atmospheric conditions and is usually triggered by the wind (although walking near the crest of certain sand dunes can also trigger it).[67] To the best of my knowledge, the idea that the humming of this desert *'azif* was caused by insects is a modern Western notion. It appears to be totally absent from Arab sources. Rather Arab sources tend to either posit a supernatural origin or they correctly identify the true source of the sound. For instance, in the 8th century Al-Asma'i (الأصـــمعي) suggested that the sound was caused by a friction or

falling of sand particles, which was triggered by the wind.[68] Several scholars and esoterists[69] have speculated about the significance of *al 'azif* being a buzzing or humming sound based on the belief that it is an insect noise. As it would happen, *al 'azif* -is- a buzzing or humming sound, but in the one case it is caused by entrance into a trance-state and in the other it is caused by vibrating sand. Surely this is a peculiar but fortuitous synchronicity.

William J. Hamblin and Pierre Crapon de Caprona are both noted scholars and have contributed valuable studies on the mythos. However, both appear to have conflated the term *al-azif* (الازف) with *al-'azif* (العـــزيف). The word *azif* (ازف) means "approach" or "come suddenly"[70] but *'azif* (عـزيف) refers to the "voice of the jinn". William Hablin suggested that "Kitab al azif" can be translated as "book of the Approacher"[71] clearly indicating that he has "كتـــاب الازف" in mind. Likewise, Pierre Crapon de Caprona notes that *al azif* means "the coming" and has a distinctly eschatological or apocalyptic feel, as its feminine adjectival form *al azifa* (الآزفـــة) is an extremely common term for "the coming (day)", meaning the end of the world.[72] However, the words *azif* and *'azif* are near homophones and any Arab poet discussing the *jinn,* and exploring apocalyptic themes, would surely be tempted to exploit this fact. So, while the two words are essentially unrelated, the apocalyptic connotations of *azif* could certainly be -poetically- extended to *'azif*.

Conclusion:

We have seen that both the term *sha'ir* and the term *majnun* refer to a person who operates under the influence of an unseen presence. *Majnun* means "possessed of the *jinn*", and can refer to numerous phenomena and cultural roles. The *sha'ir* is the "knower (of occult things)", and was a poet-shaman whose incantatory verses were inspired and empowered by his unseen tutelary spirit. The name "*Abd Alhazret*" means "Slave of the Presence" in Arabic. This name also seems to imply a person operating under the control of an unseen influence.[73] It would appear to be a fitting name for a *sha'ir majnun*, and the "presence" would (in this context at least) be the *qarin*, the constant but unseen "companion" who acts as the *sha'ir*'s tutelary *jinn*. This spirit would provide special privileged knowledge to the mad poet. These privately perceived communications from this unseen presence were sometimes called *al-'azif*.

And thus we perhaps gain insight into the possible esoteric significance of the "Al-Azif of the Mad-Poet Abdul Alhazred" . . .

[1] Hameen-Anttila, Jaakko. 2000. "Arabian Prophecy" In *_Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives_* ed. Martti Nissinen, page 120. Richard Bell's unsupported assertions to the contrary are addressed in my forthcoming *_Alhazret in Cultural Context_*.

[2] Hameen-Anttila, Jaakko. 2000. "Arabian Prophecy" In *_Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives_* ed. Martti Nissinen, page 120

[3] Zwettler, Michael. 1990 "Mantic Manifesto: The Sura of "The Poets" and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority. In *_Poetry and prophecy: the beginnings of a literary tradition_* ed. James L. Kugel page 77

[4] Izutsu, Toshihiko. 1956. *_Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech_* page 131. Robert Irwin has noted that the shin-'ayn-ra' (ش - ع - ر) triconsonantal root also gives us Arabic words for grain/barley (*sha'iir* شـــعير) and the star Sirius (*shi'ra* شـعري) which he sees as illogical. See: Irwin, Robert. 1999. *_Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature_* page 3. However, members of the Esoteric Order of Dagon may well see a certain poetic logic behind this linguistic oddity, remembering the connection between grain and the cult of Dagon (دَاجُوْنَ). Likewise, the name of the goddess *Ishara*, a consort of Dagon, is likely derived from the very same linguistic root-word. See: Feliu, Lluis. 2003 *_The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria_* page 246. The connection of Dagon to those ancient mystery cults relating to the star Sirius has already been discussed by several authors. Interestingly, the Qu'ran mentions the "Lord of Sirius" (*rabbu ash-shi'ra* رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى) in connection with the "Destroyed Cities" of *'Ad* (عاد) and *Thamud* (ثمـود), the most notable of which is "*Iram* of the Pillars" (*iram dhat al-'imad* إرَم ذات العمـاد). The linguistic and mythological connections of this triconsonantal root to the mad-poet, Dagon (via *Ishara* and grain), the star Sirius, and the city of *Iram* are certainly fascinating even if it is difficult to know exactly what to make of them.

[5] Izutsu, Toshihiko. 1956. *_Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech_* page 131

[6] Bosworth C.E. et al. 1991. "Majnun" in *_The Encyclopaedia of Islam_*(2nd edition, Vol. 6) page 1101

[7] Bosworth C.E. et al. 1991. "Majnun" in *_The Encyclopaedia of Islam_* (2nd edition, Vol. 6) page 1101. See also Dols, Michael Walters . 1992. *_Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society_* page 218-219

[8] Lane, Edward William. 1968. *_Arabic-English Lexicon_* (Part 5) page 2035

[9] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 *_The student's Arabic-English dictionary_* page 246. See also: Lane, Edward William. 1968. *_Arabic-English Lexicon_* (Part 2) page 462

[10] Dols, Michael Walters . 1992. *_Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society_* page 216-18

[11] Sherif, Faruq. 1995 *_A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an_*. pages 52-53. See aslo: Dols, Michael Walters . 1992. *_Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society_* page 10 and pages 211-223

[12] Rouget, Gilbert. 1985. *_Music and Trance: a Theory of the Relations Between Music and Possession_* page 280

[13] Irwin, Robert. 1999. *_Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature_* page 3. See also: Macdonald, Duncan Black. 1909. *_The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; Being the Haskell Lectures on Comparative Religion Delivered Before the University of Chicago in 1906_* pages 24-25

[14] Bell, Richard. Montgomery, William. 1977. *_ Bell's introduction to the Qur'an_* page 77. See also Gibb, H. 1958. *_Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey_* page 36

[15] Nicholson, Reynold A. 1907. *_Literary History of the Arabs_*. page 73

[16] Macdonald, Duncan Black. 1909. *_The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; being the Haskell lectures on comparative religion delivered before the University of Chicago in 1906_*. page 25

[17] Zwettler, Michael. 1990 "Mantic Manifesto: The Sura of 'The Poets' and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority". In *_Poetry and prophecy: the beginnings of a literary tradition_* ed. James L. Kugel".page 77

[18] Bell, Richard. Montgomery, William. 1977. *_ Bell's introduction to the Qur'an_* page 77

[19] Zwettler, Michael. 1990 "Mantic Manifesto: The Sura of "The Poets" and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority. In *_Poetry and prophecy: the beginnings of a literary tradition_* ed. James L. Kugel page 77

[20] An official definition of poetry as belonging to specific poetic meters and the documentation of those meters didn't happen until the mid-8th century under Khalil ibn Ahmad (خليـــل بـــن أحمد). For an excellent description of Ahmad's system of classification see: Scott, Hazel. 2009. *_Pegs, Cords, and Ghuls: Meter of Classical Arabic Poetry_*

[21] "that this *saj'*, in those early days, was fully recognized as a form of poetry (*shi'r*) and not as such a separate literary form as it came to be in later Islam is perfectly clear." Macdonald, Duncan Black. 1909. *_The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; being the Haskell lectures on comparative religion delivered before the University of Chicago in 1906_* page 33

[22] "The *saj'* is believed to have been the earliest form of Arab poetry, and persons who uttered it were called 'poets' who, as mouthpieces of demons revealed knowledge of the unseen world." Sherif, Faruq. 1995 *_A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an_*. page 53. Prophecies, curses, blessings and other incantations are mentioned by Faruq as being the type of utterances a poet would make using *Saj'*. Although *saj'* seems to have been the only medium used by *Kahin*, a *sha'ir* might also use the *rajaz* (رجز) meter for these same purposes. See: Bellamy, James A. 1969 "Review of 'Untersuchungen zur Rağazpoesie: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft by Manfred Ullmann'". In *_Journal of the American Oriental Society_*. (Vol. 89, No. 4) page 805. See also: Grunebaum,Gustave Edmund. Wilson, Dunning S. 1981. _Themes in Medieval Arabic Literature_ page 123

[23] Nicholson, Reynold A. 1907. *_Literary History of the Arabs_*. page 72

[24] Izutsu, Toshihiko. 1956. *_Language and Magic Studies in the Magical Function of Speech_* page 131

[25] Irwin, Robert. 1999. *_Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature_* page 2.

[26] Nicholson, Reynold A. 1907. *_Literary History of the Arabs*. page 73

[27] Zwemer, Samuel Marinus. 1920. *_Influence of Animism on Islam: An Account of Popular Superstitions_* page 48. The terms *al qafa* and *qafiya* are linguistically linked.

[28] Nicholson, Reynold A. 1907. *_Literary History of the Arabs_* page 73. The aphorism "The arrow needs an archer, and poetry a magician." seems to recall the role of the poet as a magician, as well as the use of poetry as such an attacking arrow. See Bell, Gertrude Lowthian. 1897. *_Teachings of Hafiz_* page 19

[29] Macdonald, Duncan Black. 1909. *_The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; Being the Haskell Lectures on Comparative Religion Delivered Before the University of Chicago in 1906_* page 25.

[30] For an interesting discussion of the shaman as a poet see: Hoppal, Mihaly. (1987), "Shamanism: An Archaic and/or Recent System of Beliefs" in *_Shamanism: An Expanded View of Reality_* Shirley Nicholson pages 90-95

[31] Andre, Tor. 1960. *_Mohammed: The Man and His Faith_* page29

[32] Andre, Tor. 1960. *_Mohammed: The Man and His Faith_* page 45-46

[33] Many of the jinn listed are described as choking their victims. See: Shadrach, Nineveh. 2007. *_Book of Deadly Names_* pages 8, 10, 20, 34, 86, 96, 100, 140, 156, 166, and 170. *Kahins* are frequently mentioned as experiencing this choking as well. Muhammad was described as being choked or squeezed when his *qarin* seized him.

[34] This name is discussed below. "Abd Alhazret" (عبـد الحضــرت) means "Slave of the Presence". Although I have never seen the Arabic in other sources, I am not the first to suggest that "Abdul Alhazred" should be translated as "Slave of the Presence". See: Morrison, Grant. 1994 "Lovecraft In Heaven" in *_The Starry Wisdom: a tribute to H.P. Lovecraft_* pg 6 See also "Abdul Al-Hazred" in Remus, E.E.. 1996. *_The Magician's Dictionary_*

[35] Presumably the pre-adamite *Jinn* are synonymous with the Old Ones as Alhazred's description of them corresponds quite precisely in essentially every detail.

[36] "their hand is at your throat yet you see them not" and "yet may not forest or city behold the hand that smites"

[37] Price, Robert M. 1996 "A Critical Commentary on the Necronomicon" in *_The Necronomicon : Selected Stories & Essays Concerning the Blasphemous Tome of the Mad Arab_* page 266.

[38] He experienced is own violent poetic call by the jinn on the streets of Medina. See: Macdonald, Duncan Black. 1909. *_The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; being the Haskell lectures on comparative religion delivered before the University of Chicago in 1906_* pages 18-20. He died in C.E. 674 and thus would have been a real-life contemporary of an adult Alhazred.

[39] Irwin, Robert. 1999. *_Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature_* pages 2-3

[40] This section isn't intended to represent the actual history of the name, but rather it is meant as an exploration of whether the name itself poses any significant linguistic, historical, or cultural problems. Could the name Abdul Alhazred theoretically have been the name of an 8th century mad poet? If so, what would its significance have been?

[41] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 *_The student's Arabic-English dictionary_ pages 664-665*

[42] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 *_The student's Arabic-English dictionary_ 664*

[43] The transformation of the voiceless alveolar plosive (the final consonant) into a voiced alveolar plosive is relatively commonplace in transliteration and *even in everyday speech* (the latter being true both of Arabic and of many European languages).

[44] One will also see this word written as حضـرة. To somebody unfamiliar with Arabic these may appear to be different spellings. However, ت and ة are simply different forms of the letter same letter (*tāʾ*). The latter form being

called a closed *tāʾ* (*tāʾ marbūṭa* تـاء مربوطـة) and is often used when *tāʾ* appears at the end of a word. A discussion of the evolution and usage of the closed variant is beyond the scope of this article and it will suffice to say that ت is the older version and is used in this article for that reason. However, both forms are still in use and are acceptable. In English it is common to see this word transliterated as either *hazrat* or *hazret*.

[45] Lane, Edward William. 1968. _*Arabic-English Lexicon*_ (Part 2) page 589.

[46] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 _*The student's Arabic-English dictionary*_ page 283

[47] Lane, Edward William. 1968. _*Arabic-English Lexicon*_ (Part 2) page 588.

[48] The sort of systemization of Islamic cultural norms implied in this objection was not even begun until around the 9th century and is thus wholly irrelevant. See: Hameen-Anttila, Jaakko. 2000. "Arabian Prophecy" In _*Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives*_ ed. Martti Nissinen, pages 115-119. Moreover, there are many examples of names that are far more overtly heterodox being used in the Islamic period (often by ostensive Muslims). An especially blatant example of this is the name *Abd Al-Jinn* (عبـد الجـن). See: Singh, N.K. and Samiuddin, A. 2004. _*Encyclopaedic Historiography of the Muslim World* _ page 315. Obviously, there has been a significant non-Muslim population in most Islamic countries from the 7th century right up until the present. Given this, it is unsurprising that many "un-Islamic" names like *Abd Al-Malak* (عبـد المـلاك), *Abd Al-Masih* (عبـد المسـيح), and *Abd Ath-Thaluth* (عبـد,الثـالوث), to name only a few, have been in constant use throughout this period. See: Meinardus, Otto Friedrich August. 2002. _*Two thousand years of Coptic Christianity*_ page 266

[49] The term "presence" (*hazret*) is used as an honorific for Islamic prophets and orthodox religious figures. So if the objection were raised that "Abd Alhazret" were too heterodox, a person who was so-named could simply argue that it meant that he was a servant of the prophets. It thus would have been at least as respectable as *Abd Al-Rasul* (عبـد الرسـول) "Slave of the Messenger" or *Abd Al-Sayyid* (عبـد السيد) "Slave of the Master", names which are still in use by Muslims despite not referring to any of "99 names of God".

[50] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 _*The student's Arabic-English dictionary*_ page 691. See also: Lane, Edward William. 1968. _*Arabic-English Lexicon*_ (Part 5) page 2035

[51] Zitouni, Abdelghani. 1985. "Jinn and their Situation in Pre-Islamic Poetry" (الجِنّ وَأحوالهُم فـي الشـعر الجَاهلي). http://www.dahsha.com/viewarticle.php?id=26667 accessed 1-21-2010. Originally published in _*Arab Heritage Magazine*_ (مجلـة لتراثـا العـربي) No. 20. This article contains several explicit references to the '*azif* in relation to Arab poets. It also implicitly refers to the '*azif* (as the "cries" or the "intelligible words" of the *jinn)*. I thank Nineveh Shadrach for referring me to this article.

[52] 'ayn-zay-fa' (ع - ز - ف)

[53] Rouget, Gilbert. 1985. _*Music and Trance: a Theory of the Relation Between Music and Possession*_ page 279-280.

[54] "The soothsayer (*sha'ir*) could conjure up a genie (*jinn*) by means of music, and tradition still remembers the genie as the inspirer of verse or melody." See: Robertson, Alec. 1960 _*The Pelican history of music, Volume 1*_ page 119. See also: Farmer, Henry George. 1929 A _*History of Arabic Music to the XIII Century*_ pages 7-8. Farmer connects this to the belief that poets are inspired by jinn

[55] Farmer, Henry George. 1952. "The Religious Music of Islām" in _*The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*_ (No. 1/2 Apr., 1952). page 60-65

[56] "In pre-Islamic Arabia, 'azf (or 'azif) signified the ominous whistling of the jinn, or "demon." Musical instruments were referred to as al-ma'azif, or 'tools of 'azf'" See: Racy, Ali Jihad. 1986. "Words and Music in Beirut: A Study of Attitudes" in: _*Ethnomusicology*_ (Vol. 30, No. 3) (Autumn, 1986), page 426. (al-ma'azif = الْمَعَازِفَ)

[57] Lane, Edward William. 1968. _*Arabic-English Lexicon*_ (Part 5) page 2035

[58] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 _*The student's Arabic-English dictionary*_ page 691. Steingless refers to the *jinn* as "demons of the desert"

[59] Sometimes the phrase *'azif al-jinn* (عـزيف الجـن) was used for clarity, as the term 'azif has several meanings.

[60] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 _*The student's Arabic-English dictionary*_ page 691

[61] Such a reciter (*rawi* راوي) was often the disciple of the *sha'ir*.

[62] (*rebab ash-sha'ir* ربـاب الشـاعر) See: Lane, Edward William. 1837. _*An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians Vol. 1*_ page 371

[63] Lane, Edward William. 1968. _*Arabic-English Lexicon*_ (Part 5) page 2035
[64] _*The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam; being the Haskell lectures on comparative religion delivered before the University of Chicago in 1906*_ page 59. See also page 44.
[65] It is perhaps worth mentioning that a distinct humming sound, which often transmutes into a concrete message, is a frequent effect of the trance-state induced by several entheogenic tryptamines. Certain entheogenic tryptamines also have a reputation for generating inspired and/or poetic speech. Given this, there certainly appears to be at least some connection between the tryptamine-trance and that of the *sha'ir majnun.* It is perhaps an interesting synchronicity that the "Fungi from Yuggoth" have buzzing or humming voices.
[66] Beckford, William. 1900. _*The History of the Caliph Vathek*_ page 207
[67] See "*Singing Sand*" http://www.nymoon.com/pubs/desert/singingsand/ accessed 1-14-2010. This site has a short article and several excellent sound recordings of the phenomena. For a nice discussion of the competing scientific theories about the phenomena see "*Enigma of the Singing Dunes*" http://www.physics.org/featuredetail.asp?NewsId=16 accessed 1-14-09
[68] Lyall, Charles James.1981. _*Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry, chiefly pre-Islamic: With an Introduction and notes*_ page 82. See also: al-Dabbi, Mufaddal ibn Muhammad. 1918. _*The Mufaddaliyat; an Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes*_ page 276.
[69] Dan Clore and Kenneth Grant have both commented with considerable insight on this topic.
[70] Steingass, Francis Joseph. 1884 _*The student's Arabic-English dictionary*_ page 31
[71] Hamblin, William. 1989. "Notes on a Fragment of the Necronomicon" in _*Call of Cthulhu*_ ed. Sandy Peterson page 156.
[72] Caprona, Pierre de. 1983. "A Letter on the Lovecraft Mythos" _*Crypt of Cthulhu #14*_ (Vol. 2 No. 6) ed Robert M. Price. page 13
[73] It is interesting that this name, like both the terms *sha'ir* and *majnun,* implies a person operating under the control of an unseen presence. This triple redundancy in the phrase "the mad poet Abdul Alhazred" seems like an unlikely synchronicity and is hard to dismiss as random chance. More superstitious individuals may be tempted to see -deliberate emphasis- perhaps by an "unseen presence" ;-)