

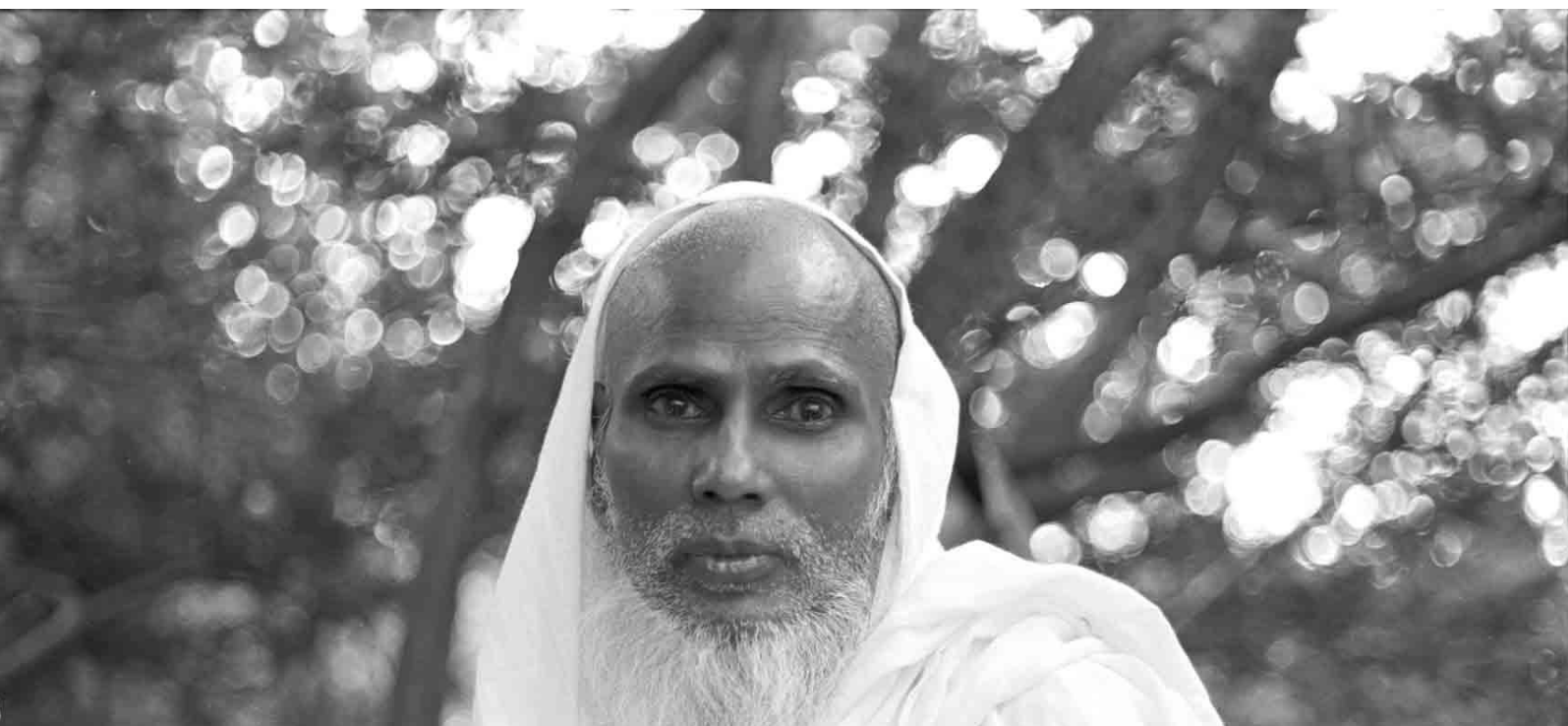


Centre for Asian and
Transcultural Studies

South Asia Institute



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



***The Afterlives of a Pillar: Wondrous Tales
Concerning Guru Bawa***

Prof. Frank J. Korom, Boston University, USA

Humboldt Awardee at the South Asia Institute

Public Talk - All are invited! -



My presentation will focus on oral narratives talked about Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, a charismatic Sufi saint who came to the United States from the Tamil-speaking part of northern Sri Lanka known as Jaffna. Bawa spent the years between 1971 and 1986 ministering to a transnational community of disciples, his so-called "funny family." His primary headquarters in the United States was Philadelphia, where the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship took shape and grew. After his death in 1986, he was buried in a rural area outside

of Philadelphia, where his mazār has become a place of pilgrimage for South Asian and North American Muslims alike. By focusing on stories as performative vehicles for the remembering of Bawa, the community he founded keeps his charismatic presence alive in the "office" of his charisma, since no successor was ever appointed to continue his role as the qutb (pillar) of his small but dedicated group of followers. The ongoing circulation of narratives about his wondrous career therefore contains the power to keep his absent presence alive and vibrant as his funny family continues to mature and expand more than 35 years after his death.

**Date & Venue: Monday, 18.07.2022
6 p.m. sharp, Room 010.01.05 (lecture hall)
Voßstr. 2, Geb. 4130, 69115 Heidelberg**