



**– Institute's Colloquium –**

**Omar Kasmani, M.A.  
(Freie Universität Berlin)**

**Between [Dis-]guise and [Dis-]orientation:  
The Case of a female Fakir**

In contrast to hereditary male-only spiritual masters who draw on patrilineal and secure forms of charisma, fakirs in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan, rely on individual callings, communal initiations, spirits and dreams to validate their spiritual and social roles. Fakir lives illustrate how questions of appearance and exteriority, of bodily consumption and dispositions, and those of spatial, sexual, and corporeal practice are outcomes of a fakir's orientation to a saintly source – and also how concerns of its effectiveness surface and operate in fakir representations of themselves.

By presenting the case of a struggling female fakir at the shrine of L'al Shahbāz Qalandar (d. 1274), I wish to put forward the fundamentally gendered, embodied and spatial work of fakir orientations in the framework of what fakirs call *bhes* (*lit. guise/ disguise*). Its discussion in the case at hand illustrates that in being differently orientated in social and spiritual terms, fakirs are consistently faced with failure, competition, even a loss of orientations making fakir careers open, fragile and temporal at best.

**on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> 2015  
4-6 p.m.  
Institute of Ethnology  
Stuttstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

**Everybody is welcome!**