Ritual Death as Essential Practice: Defending Sallekhana in the Courtroom

a talk by

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Manisha Sethi is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Centre for the Jawaharlal Nehru Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. A Sociologist by training, Prof. Sethi’s research interests encompass a wide range: from gender and religion, to law and counterterrorism. Her doctoral work was an ethnographic study of the nuns of the Jain tradition. In trying to understand the preponderance of women in the Jain mendicant orders, it interrogated on the one hand the dominant theories of renunciation, and on the other the liberal-Kantian ideas of women’s agency. She has written extensively on the discourse of counterterrorism and the legal regimes that accompany it. Her current work examines the relationship between religion and law. Rather than seeing it as a case of competing sovereignties, her focus is on situating this relationship in a wider concatenation of ideas – tolerance, diversity, reform, majoritarianism, Indian secularism etc.

Dr. Sethi is the author of Escaping the World: Women Renouncers among Jains (Routledge, 2012) and Kafkaland: Law, Prejudice and Counterterrorism in India (Three Essays, 2014).