

Samitis and Guptis

Besides the five great vows for ascetics and twelve vows for laypeople, Jainism lays great emphasis on observance of five Rules of Conduct (Samitis) and three Rules of Avoidance of Misconduct (Guptis).

A person must be careful in walking, sitting, standing, and lying down. He must speak the only gentle, sweet, and righteous speech. He must be careful in placing and removing articles of his use. He must keep everything clean and should not make himself instrumental in the growth or death of germs and insects.

Five Rules of Conduct (Samitis):

Iriya Samiti - Regulation of walking
Bhasa Samiti - Regulation of speaking
Esna Samiti - Regulation of begging
Adana Nikshepana Samiti - Regulation of taking or keeping
Utsarga Samiti - Regulation of disposal

Three Rules of Avoidance of Misconduct (Guptis):

Mana Gupti - Regulation of mind
Vachana Gupti - Regulation of speech
Kaya Gupti - Regulation of bodily activity

Five Rules of Conduct (Samitis):

Iriya Samiti - regulation of walking: One should walk carefully looking forward about six feet distance so as not to cause them pain or death of any living being.

Bhasa Samiti - regulation of speaking: One should avoid the eight faults of speech during conversation. The eight faults are anger, pride, deceit, greed, laughter, fear, gossip, and slander. Always use sinless and concise speech.

Esna Samiti - regulation of begging: Monks should search and obtain pure foods and other articles necessary for use, and to use the same in a faultless manner.

Adana Nikshepana Samiti - regulation of taking or keeping: One should lay down or take up an article of use very carefully so as not to endanger the life of small creatures and insects.

Utsarga Samiti - regulation of disposal: One should dispose of waste things, such as mucus, urine, stools and other items in a solitary and out of the way place in a proper manner so as not to cause any inconvenience to anybody by becoming a source of nuisance or contamination. This waste helps the growth of germs and is also the indirect cause of their death.

Three Rules of Preservation (Guptis):

Mana Gupti - regulation of mind: One should guard one's mind against impure thoughts such as anger, hate, curse, greed, jealousy, ego, etc. Always be forgiving and devote the mind to pious meditation.

Vachana Gupti - regulation of speech: One should guard his speech so that it might not utter harmful, harsh, careless, foul, senseless, embarrassing, or bad language.

Kaya Gupti - regulation of bodily activity: One should guard movement of his body, so as not to hurt others, walking with an eye on the path so as not to harm, or kill an innocent life such as ants, bugs, etc. One should not daydream while doing any activity. Develop decent behavior and manners.

Thus, Samitis purify the actions and make them faultless, while Guptis are prohibitions against sinful activities of mind, speech, and body. Both are equally necessary for the spiritual uplift of a soul. Collectively all eight virtues are known as Ashta Pravachan Mata.