



# Precepts for Meditators

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The Lord Buddha taught Buddhists and all humans to be concerned of precepts or moral disciplines as precepts are significantly interrelated to ones' minds and meditation experiences. Since meditation practices are 'mental activities,' meditators who observe precepts are more likely to have better meditation experiences because the precepts observances secure ones' fine qualities of minds which are good foundations and preparations for further meditation practice.

If our minds are wholesome and pure, they will result our thoughts, speeches, and actions to be wholesome. Consequently, when we have wholesome thoughts, speeches, and actions, we will earn the merit energy which cleanses and purifies our minds, causing the minds to be even more wholesome. On the contrary, if our minds are unwholesome, and we spoil ourselves by allowing the minds to spring into bad thoughts, speeches, and actions further, we will earn the sin energy that pollutes our minds in return. Hence, the sin energy will worsen the qualities of our minds. As we

have accumulated more sin energy in our minds from mental, verbal, and physical misdeeds, our minds will be darkened and more likely to bring about additional bad thoughts, speeches, and actions. These are the correlations between our minds and our thoughts, speeches, and actions. We can say that the qualities of our minds directly affect how we think, speak, and act, either in the wholesome or unwholesome way, and our thoughts, speeches, and actions, reversely affect the qualities of our minds with the merit or sin energy we earn.

Therefore, all humans regardless of religions, especially meditation practitioners, are recommended to observe precepts or moral disciplines which are suitable to their lifestyles such as the 5 precepts for secular daily life or 8 precepts for retreated secular life, 10 precepts for novice monks' monastic life, and 227 precepts for fully ordained Buddhist monks' monastic life. As we observe moral precepts, the precepts will limit our speeches and actions to be more contented, peaceful, disciplined, and wholesome. If we violate the precepts either verbally or physically, these will stem from the unwholesome minds, and the unwholesomeness and sin energy will add up.

So, now, we understand how the precepts can prevent our minds from being polluted and secure our minds to remain pure and peaceful up to a level. In addition, the daily livings of those who observe moral precepts are more likely not to be troublesome like others, and the karmic consequences will promote good and sound livings.

The 5 precepts for secular daily living are as follows:

(1) Abstention from killing and harming oneself and others (2) Abstention from stealing and fraudulent actions (3) Abstention from sexual misconduct (4) Abstention from lying and false speech and (5) Abstention from drinking alcohol and consuming narcotics which worsen the quality of one's mind.

The 8 precepts for retreated secular living are as follows:

(1) Abstention from killing and harming oneself and others (2) Abstention from stealing and fraudulent actions (3) Abstention from sexual intercourse (4) Abstention from lying and false speech (5) Abstention from

drinking alcohol and consuming narcotics which worsen the quality of one's mind (6) Abstention from having meals after noon until dawn to prevent oneself from having excessive energy (7) Abstention from decorating oneself with ornament, making up, singing, dancing, and performing entertainment, which consequently encourage sensual desires and (8) Abstention from sleeping on a big bed or seat stuffed with soft materials in order to prevent oneself from laziness and over comfort.

All meditation practitioners are recommended to observe either 5 or 8 moral precepts to enhance their meditation practices. However, in addition to the 5 or 8 precepts, there are novice monks' precepts, and the fully ordained Buddhist monks' precepts regulated by the Lord Buddha to promote orderly monastic livings. But the Lord Buddha also taught that too many precepts may discourage ones from attaining enlightenment due to the stress from restricted lifestyle in contrast to the better and longer stability of the monastic order. Thus, precepts should be practised to the extent that they promote a peaceful life that enables good meditation as well as enlightenment only.

We may also observe the superior level of moral precepts by supervising our minds which is to prevent ourselves from bad thoughts. Whenever bad thoughts occur, we should be mindful enough to cease them promptly. Don't let our bad thoughts grow into bad ideas, speeches, and actions. So, our thoughts will remain pure and wholesome always. Then, the pollution to our minds will be minimised, and our minds will be in good qualities and peaceful always, so do our livings. This is a good foundation for progressive and successful meditation experiences.

To compare our minds to a bottle of clean water which can be used for many beneficial purposes such as drinking and cooking, if we break the moral precepts, it is like adding dirt into our bottle of pure water. As we add more and more, our water becomes dirty and unclear. Then, we cannot use the water for drinking or cooking immediately because it must be filtered or purified first. This happens to many meditators who do not observe precepts as they have to spend extra time to distill their minds and face with the inconsistent meditation experiences.

In conclusion, all meditation practitioners should observe at least 5 or 8 moral precepts, or we can observe the advanced precepts by keeping our thoughts, speeches, and actions wholesome always. As we can do this, our minds will remain pure and ready for further mental development with meditation practice where our meditation experiences are more likely to be better than those who do not observe precepts.