

# OMM BULLETIN

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Riding is a way of Thinking @ [www.ommriders.com](http://www.ommriders.com)

**OMM website in Turkish and English offers reports, articles and pictures of OMM group activities. Information on training are available on Advanced Riding Academy site**

**Issue 110** of the OMM BULLETIN is a digest of the previous three issues that, for distribution problems, did not reach all the riders and friends who subscribed.

**From issue 111**, due by the end of August, we will resume the standard format of this newsletter.

## What Makes a Good Rider?

What makes one of us saying "*hey, this is a good rider*"?

We all divide riders between "GOOD", "BAD" and "WITH POTENTIAL": unfortunately, there are no sure criteria to substantiate these categorizations.

Or maybe not, maybe we can find some common ground or at list enough ground to create a good definition.

Let's assume that you ride on clear sunny morning with a Rider that in any case, under any circumstance and in any condition does not exceed the 50 kilometers per hour speed.

After one hour of sharing the ride, after 50 kilometers of absolute boredom would you define this rider as "GOOD"?

I do not think so and I do not know one rider that will do so.

Here we have a common element: SPEED.

A GOOD rider moves at speed; a BAD rider is slow.

Before you start shouting about social responsibility, safety and restrain, keep me company for the next criteria.

Let's us go back to the sunny morning ride and see our FAST biker riding fast in a busy street, just when schools open... keeping is splendid speed and overtaking blindly and so on ... always at sustained speed.

Will you define him as a GOOD rider? Certainly not since he has no AWARENESS of the situation, no SENSE of RISK whatsoever.

Now we may have a second element to agree with: AWARENESS with SENSE of RISK makes a GOOD rider while a biker without it may look as BAD one.

The hypothetical ride continues: the rider is fast, the sense of risk and awareness is elevated but then you, riding on his tail notice a too frequent use of brakes and throttle.

Yes fast, yes aware, still this rider reacts too briskly and too jerky, he faces the road situations (of which he is aware) with a sense of surprise, with a last minute reaction. The ride is stop and go, the rider is rough with the bike and you are getting slightly sick.

No GOOD, he lacks the smoothness that comes from ANTICIPATION and PLANNING.

A third area of agreement?

A GOOD rider must have a PLAN that anticipates what has to be done.

Continuing on the ride you may discover some of the by-products that lack of planning brings on the ride: corner after corner the fantasy of your friend finds new lines, new positions and, obviously, new actions-reactions ... in few words his ride is inconsistent and you can never guess what he will do next.

You take a safe distance and you think that, after all, this is not – unfortunately - a GOOD rider.

He is fast, aware with active sense of risk, he plans with anticipation but he does not apply a consistent SYSTEM in the execution of his plan.

So, choose the world that you prefer “consistent” or “systematic” and then agree with me on a fourth element for the definition of GOOD riders.

FAST, AWARE with SENSE of RISK, PLANNING with ANTICIPATION and with CONSISTENT EXECUTION (or SYSTEMATIC in action).

In your ride, you now stop and you, being a good friend, do not discuss what you observed. After all riders who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones... but your friend starts boasting about the ride adding story of how good he was and how excellent he will be. Knows all, done all, right all time.

You have now a fifth (and for today last) element of possible agreement: a GOOD rider is kind and modest, gracefully exercising HUMILITY as first tool for further LEARNING.

Now I put down the side stand and wait for your reactions.

## Desire makes Good Riders

When talking about "Good Rider or Good Riding" we spoke of elements (like speed) that in the minds of many create negative images. Some of our relatives/friends/partners may consider us irresponsible and fool for risking life in such banal and senseless way.

For us the benefit of "freedom from the box", the joy of filtering and reducing waiting time, the pleasure of facing the "adventure of the traffic" overtake any possible risk. Expected benefits and pleasures make all bikers ready to take the risk.

So, when the usual party joker tells us the usual story – *I had a bike as well time ago, like you I was a biker ... but then I had an accident and I sold the bike and the helmet for good* - she or he only means that the benefit or pleasure from biking was not there, that the desire of a "life-empty-of-asphalt encounters" was greater than biking.

When we talk about being aware of the risks we are talking, at the same time, of the level of desire we have toward biking.

**DESIRE makes every human action, including motorcycling, sublime, exalting, worth doing. DESIRE is the force that pushes all of us to learn more, to try harder, to reach the unreachable stars of perfection.**

DESIRE breaks the barrier of our mortality: we could stop at any time on the road to competence succumbing to the fear of death. The memory of friends and companion that lost life on two wheels can be a deterrent or a spur or both.

The sincere desire has built inside the acceptance of a basic rule: in fast moving sports any mistake can demand heavy toll. Mortality is our companion in life and it rides on the back seat checking our competence all the time.

DESIRE without COMPETENCE increases exponentially the "risk factor" and experienced knowledge is the best cure against taking risks.

Respect for the self is the condition for learning and increasing the competence: *to know, is to know that you know nothing* and we must keep going out for a good, vivacious ride, making progress with smooth maneuvering while recognizing that perfection is far away, that better riders can still teach a lot, that... I am good...but.

To stop biking because the risks involved would be foolish even at my advanced age: more foolish would be to stop learning sitting on the glorious knowledge so far acquired.

## **Responsibility of Good Rider**

The relative small number of women practicing motorcycling in Turkey does not surprise me ... and every time I sit with a group of bikers I understand why.

Since I met my mother, I always believed that women have more intelligence, sensibility and positive common sense than men and, as such, women find the conversation between bikers quite boring and definitely not interesting.

Of course around a dinner or coffee table, relaxing after a ride with a cold beer or hot chocolate the conversation **MUST** be on bikes & bikers and, usually in these circumstances, all bikers present are "good bikers" if not exceptional ones.

I guess that for sensitive women it could be intellectually challenging to spend hours on horsepower, counter-steering, traction-control and bravadoes done with them.

Bikers, especially the young ones in my circle, are more and more fanatics and this attitude is probably the greatest barrier to learning. **The famous quote of Winston Churchill "A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject" set the stage and define the issue. If "not changing the subject" is boring, "not changing the mind" is the fertile ground for ignorance.**

Still fanaticism is growing and becoming a normal way of relating to people although the fanatic (or fan) displays micro-mind standards and little tolerance for contrary ideas or opinions. True in politics, philosophy, religion, hobbies, sports and motorcycling, this is a belief and a behavior involving uncritical zeal or obsessive enthusiasm.

We see the tragedy of fanaticism in the events that take lives, relationships and talents.

We see fanaticism in the rejection of diversity, of other people's opinions, of new discovery and ideas.  
We see fanaticism in the defense of privileges, superstitions, injustice and inequality.

In our small ponds we see fanaticism in the macho attitude of knowing all, in risking all, in boosting all, in the never-ending talks that won't change subject.

Once again women are generally good in evaluating what is important placing things in the right contest. It must be the legacy of giving life or the relation between testosterone and obtuse behavior.

For bikers being objective is more difficult: difficult to admit that biking is a game ... to be played with intelligence skills and intensity ... knowing at any time that it remains a game.

Additionally fanatics have problems in recognizing responsibility and to admit limitations and mistakes. It is always somebody or something else: never my fault always the stupidity or stupor of "external".

A good biker is not only able to respond to hazards but, more important, is the one who takes full responsibility of the outcome as the essential tool for learning.

The truth riding as my passenger is the sweet one Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, in *The Little Prince*. *"People have forgotten this truth, the fox said. But you mustn't forget it. You become responsible forever for what you've tamed. You're responsible for your rose"*

"View from the Cockpit" is the editorial that traditionally opens all issues of OMM BULLETIN.

These articles are written by Paolo Volpara, founder of OMM, with the contributions of bikers and thinkers who keep the dialogue open.

If you like to participate with comments, expansions, suggestions or criticisms you can mail directly at [volparapa@gmail.com](mailto:volparapa@gmail.com)

## **TO ALL BULLETIN READERS**

**WARNING: BIKING IS DANGEROUS and SO IS LIVING. READING THIS BULLETIN MAY MAKE YOU THINK THAT IS THE TOP OF DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES.**

NOTHING IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN BIKING EXCEPT SOME KIND OF LIAISONS

Before biking, be sure that you had a good meal (it could be your last one) and a good digestion with all that comes with it. Never, and I mean never, ride with empty stomach: nothing to show when you are really scared.

Every accident does not happen by accident: it is your stupidity and you pay for it. "Suddenly" is the way we cover our inattention: police like it.

Using earplugs in your nose can seriously reduce your sense of smell and the aesthetics of your face: same applies for tight booths and underwear.

Brake fluid and Battery liquid are transparent and so is vodka: do not confuse them.

Dedicating too much time to training may make you better and this is politically incorrect.

Riding while training on other kind of activities is extremely dangerous and in some country (Turkey included) highly illegal.

If you smoke, always check what you smoke before opening the door. Smoking while riding may increase the chances of accident especially if you do not have proper ventilation in your helmet.

Finally remember that all that is good is dangerous, forbidden or fattening but biking may reduce the cellulite level and eliminate dandruff. Biking fast may keep you away from jail.

Do not ride fast, do not ride hard, and do not ride for long time or distance. Do not use the horsepower of your bike (is there just for fun and conversation) nor tell your mother, partner or lover that you have a two-wheeler in garage.

Always wear protection does not matter what you are doing. And try to enjoy life as well, in between.

**IF YOU CAN'T BE A GOOD EXAMPLE  
BE AT LEAST A TERRIBLE WARNING**