



The Peoples' Traffic Rules for Mera Bharat Mahaan - 1

By Harshwardhan Gupta

(India has the highest rate of casualties per vehicle-km in the World. Today it far surpasses our industrial casualty figures. Much ink been spilled on the condition of Indian traffic, but absolutely nothing has changed. So I have decided to write this in an utterly vicarious and negative style. I have played the Devil's Advocate and drawn up this set of 'Public' Rules already followed in letter and spirit by every citizen of our great democracy, and have explained the "logical and rational" reasoning behind each of them. In the true democratic spirit, I invite all readers to contribute their own rules by sending them to me at neubauplan@eth.net. These will be compiled into Part-2 with your name.)

~ Preamble ~

We are the largest democracy in the world, and therefore we have a birthright to device and make our own rules, including those for public roads, as we are The Public. The Rules don't follow any order or pattern, just like the traffic they are meant for. So we hereby give these rules to ourselves.

~ Our Rules ~

- Rule 01. Drive on any convenient side of the road. When not inconvenient, drive on the left side, or in the middle of the road. (This saves time and fuel, plus, '*Praja*' in a democracy is '*Raaja*'.)
- Rule 02. When taking a right turn, take the shortest possible path. (Saves time and fuel.)
- Rule 03. If you are driving a heavy vehicle, drive them in the perfect middle of an open road; or in the right-most lane in a divided road. (This is easy on you as it produces less side-pull on the steering. Plus it makes you feel important, which is necessary for your well-being.)
- Rule 04. You can turn without giving any signal. (As it is other people's responsibility to get out of your way.)
- Rule 05. If somebody is asking for 'side' from right (wants to overtake you from the right), flash your right indicator. If you want to turn right, you can flash your right indicator if you feel like signalling; otherwise you have the inalienable right to take a sudden turn without signalling. (It is up to the intelligence of the driver behind you to figure out what you have in mind.)
- Rule 06. Use the horn as much as you can. (Otherwise no one will pay any attention to you.)
- Rule 07. If someone honks behind you, first turn around and see if he is an acquaintance. Keep on looking behind at him till you are sure you don't know him. Then make up your mind whether he is insulting you or getting angry at you. If yes, first give him a few choice abuses, and then continue doing so, depending on his reaction. If however, you finally come to the unfortunate conclusion that he merely wants to pass you, decide next if you really want to let him pass, and let him pass only if you are sure that that will not hurt your self-esteem. (High self-esteem is your fundamental right, and you can and should go to any length to preserve it.)
- Rule 08. When in a traffic jam, or at a closed railway crossing, inch forward as much and as quickly as is physically possible. Freely cut lanes for this purpose – even if you have to veer right onto the extreme right shoulder of the road. (It may or may not save time and fuel, but it is exciting and entertaining, and gives you a healthy sense of power and achievement. This is necessary and very important for your well-being.)

- Rule 09. Don't lock your car doors when you drive. (It may save your life in a crash, but it will do severe damage to your sense of power and manliness.)
- Rule 10. Don't ever use the seat belt. (Your comfort and a sense of freedom are much more important. Our Constitution guarantees individual freedom as our fundamental right! Only cowards use seat belts, that too only when their insecure wives nag them into it, or they are NRIs.)
- Rule 11. Don't ever use a helmet. (Same reasoning as above.)
- Rule 12. Always answer your cell phones. Even make calls, and learn the art of SMSing while driving. (It is crucial that you remain connected at all times in today's world. Plus it improves your image in the eyes of other more unfortunate road users. Driving after all makes use of only a small isolated portion of your brain – rest can be put to better use.)
- Rule 13. Offer suitable bribes at all opportunities. Learn the easy art early from your friends, parents and relatives – you will master it soon. (You save money and trouble by bribing, and after all, the poorly paid 'bribees' have children to support too!)
- Rule 14. If you are a salaried / contractual driver and will not face any serious trouble if you bump the vehicle, then drive as recklessly as you can. (Owner-drivers will always yield to you as they value their own vehicle more than you value yours.)
- Rule 15. If you like your drinks, or are into drugs, then continue with your habit on the road. (Driving is one occupation where nobody will know and object that you are high, and you will enjoy life more fully than the poor wretched non-addicts on the miserable road)
- Rule 16. Don't spend too much money on vehicle maintenance. Cut corners and haggle with the mechanic. (As he is essentially a robber. Spend that money on various luxuries of life instead.)
- Rule 17. Don't switch on your parking lights till you can barely see the road ahead; or your headlights till you actually cannot see without them. If others can't see you, that is their problem. (This saves valuable fuel, even if the saving is never more than 0.1 %. *Boond-boond bachao!*)
- Rule 18. Swerve suddenly and avoid even the smallest of potholes. (This will increase the life of your suspension, plus you remain more comfortable too. *Khadde mein kaun jaana chaahata hai!*)
- Rule 19. As a pedestrian, you can cross the roads any time, any place. (You must be given maximum freedom as our democracy must work for the 'less fortunate' too!)
- Rule 20. Take the flashy, creative auto and bike ads seriously, as all of them tell you the same thing in different ways: Ride ever more rashly with your sexy machine! Go faster, Faster, overtake now, NOW! Enjoy the adrenalin rush, the unbridled power, the roaring speed! Unleash the ferocious beast inside your vehicle! Go, go, go, shine before the girls! Girls, you are expected to immediately fall in love with the rashest, most macho, most reckless of male drivers! Guys; brake hard at the last moment and put the rear wheels in a controlled skid!
- Rule 21. Take the tyre, fuel and lube companies' ads seriously too: Fit their tyre and race a fighter jet! Fill their fuel and ride the wild buffalo! Do a wheelie with your motorbike at the smallest of opportunity.
- Rule 22. Don't believe that crap about defensive driving. The advertising media – the responsible and mature guardian of our democracy – is continuously taking pains to guide you to do exactly the opposite. (Those who don't emulate the advertisements are cowards, frightened old men, flaccid nerds, nobodies!)
- Rule 23. At every opportunity, you should push your vehicle to its limit to keep them fit. (If engines are not regularly pushed to their limit, they become dull!)
- Rule 24. If you hit somebody, run away before you are caught. (The police will trouble you. Worse, bystanders might lynch you.)
- Rule 25. If you see an injured person on the road, stop and watch the fun but do not, repeat, do not help (Great misfortune will befall you if you help somebody. Everybody, especially the police, will assume you must have had a hand in causing the injuries.)
- Rule 26. Break rules but always believe that you always observe all rules; it is others who break them and thus force you to break them. (If you don't break rules, you will remain standing in one spot the whole day.)

Rule 27. It is your duty to always try and inch ahead as much as possible in the traffic. It does not matter if you get into traffic jams, or cause them, or simply delay the vehicle in front of you. Push ahead as quickly as possible as soon as you find even one inch of space ahead of you.

Rule 28. If somebody is crossing your path and he would reach the crossing point before you, race forward to close the gap as much as you can. If you can't block him, then definitely keep moving ahead as much as you can, as that will force the other driver to slow down. As he is slowing down, surge ahead. If you still cannot pass before him, then at least don't let him pass without getting considerably delayed and inconvenienced because of you. Best would be to inch ahead so much that he is forced to come to a complete halt. He delayed you, so you must delay him too. In this process, you might also get delayed, but you have at least given yourself a fighting chance, and it is extremely beneficial for your ego, well-being, self-importance, and to take revenge on him for coming in your way.

Rule 29. It does not matter if your driving / riding causes more chaos and delays, slows down or blocks others. They have caused the traffic jam, you are only trying to get out and reach your destination in the fastest possible ways. This is also very, very important for your satisfaction level, feel-good factor, self-esteem, self-importance and pride.

Rule 30. If your girlfriend is your pillion rider, you gain an extra right to drive absolutely rashly. People understand that 'everything is fair in love and war'.

Rule 31. Generally, follow the above rules designed to enhance your well-being and self-esteem.

Rule 32. It is your right to try and extract as much sensual, carnal, power-giving, self-importance-providing, self-esteem-enhancing, adrenalin pumping, emotionally thrilling, pleasure out of driving fast, because life otherwise is so dull. Enjoy every moment while it lasts. *Maut se kya darna? Marna toh hai sub ko ek bar!*

After reading the above, don't feel ashamed at all. Instead, be creative and find innovative faults with the author's mentality. Deeply reflect on our traffic problems while you are driving, and propound your own original take on the state of traffic in India, as you party with friends and relatives in your leisure time. Curse this magazine also for publishing such crap.

*Ae *@#&%, gaadi chalaana nahin aata kya?*

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