

In the 1970, the world was shocked with news of the famous band, the Beatles, breaking up. The following year, while John Lennon and Paul McCartney were busy trading insults in the press, the quiet Beatle, George Harrison, was set out to make rock and roll history. To come to the aid of the 1971 refugee crisis of Bangladesh, Harrison and Ravi Shankar together pulled off two of the biggest aid concerts in history, named Concert for Bangladesh. The concert was a massive success as thousands of people showed up at New York's Madison Square Garden as both shows were successfully sold out. Of course it was a big deal for the Americans to see a Beatle perform, but Harrison was not the only show stopper. Being in a hiatus for two years, Bob Dylan made his come back performance in this very concert. As Dylan opened with his song 'Blowing in the Wind', Bangladesh was introduced to the 'Man of Constant Sorrow'.

The Concert for Bangladesh was one of the first aid concerts ever held. This was the cause that showcased rock and roll's responsibility towards humanity, and of course it would not be complete without Dylan. The 70's represented the peak of the peace and anti-war movement. As the American youth grew tired of war and hatred, slogans such as 'Give Peace a Chance' grew stronger. Concert for Bangladesh in a way demanded Dylan's presence. It is said that Harrison himself wasn't sure of Dylan's appearance as he didn't perform a single song in two years. Until the middle of a song switch when Harrison saw Dylan backstage standing with his guitar, Bob Dylan was a question mark in the set list.

Now what was it that made Dylan a front man for these movements? Before we go into detail, we must look at the legacy which is Bob Dylan. From the early 60's till today, decade after decade, Bob Dylan has filled our heads with a language that both illuminates and transforms the realities we confront. A radical poet who wanted to be free from the shackles and baggages of bad traditions, we are talking about a person who, half a century ago, shocked the music world by plugging in an electric guitar and alienating folk purists. Dylan's cultural impact, while difficult to narrow



## THE TIMES ARE A CHANGING

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down, started from New York's Greenwich Village. Dylan and his compatriots such as Pete Seeger and John Baez relegated to small coffee shops as they found the support for their avant-garde personalities there. Ironically, Dylan challenged the washed up traditions by digging out American traditions of music. He used traditional music such as blues and country to speak about the counter cultural movement.

Every one of his songs had a statement challenging the wrongdoings that were taking place around him. For example "How many deaths will it take till they know / that too many people have died?"—brought up echoes of countless deaths in the name of freedom, and has been something of a battle cry for Dylan's listeners. "People like Dylan established that one cannot be an artist just by sitting with a guitar," says Probar Ripon, poet, singer and vocals for the band Monosoroni. "He somewhat showed that there are responsibilities of being an artist and that it's not just about the glamour and the fame." There is also ferocity and magic of "Desolation Row," where he suggests to Eliot and Pound for "fighting in the captain's tower." We can sense that Dylan's presence with the captains, struggling to express the fear and loneliness that oppresses us all. This song is also an example of Dylan's mixing of a range of sources in his lyrics—from fairy tales to science, from the Bible to Shakespear. It is hard to find examples of a singer who sang about conflict and at the same time rose up to billboard charts, much like a pop star. The great actor Jack Nicholson had summed up Dylan's work and popularity quite neatly. After Dylan got his first Grammy, the actor said, "Bob Dylan brought intellect into our pop music."

On October 13, 2016, Bob Dylan, the poet leader of the rock era was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Credited with having "created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition," Dylan, 75, became the 259th American to have won a Nobel Prize. While this announcement was made and the world celebrated the first rock star noble laureate, the quiet Bob Dylan remained so, not giving any statement on the topic. Nonetheless tweets and Facebook statuses kept rolling in, both praising and criticising the discussion. Prominent writers celebrated Dylan's literary achievements, including Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates and Salman Rushdie, who called Mr. Dylan "the brilliant inheritor of the bardic tradition," and also adding that it was a 'great choice'. This is the first time a singer has won this prestigious prize, and also the second lyricist after Tagore. "This is a

stepping stone for literature as well, for it gave songwriting a much awaited place in the world of literature," says Sharmin Chowdhury, Associate Professor at Department of English, New York University. "For example we can see great writers such as Homer and Sappho. They wrote poetic texts which were meant to be performed, and it's the same for Bob Dylan."



PHOTO: INTERNET

Bob Dylan is said to be a very quiet and introverted fellow. His songs consist of all that he has to say. Though the Nobel Prize was a very big achievement, Bob Dylan cannot be labeled as just a Nobel Laureate. He is beyond the awards he won. As Leonard Cohen said, "It is like pinning a medal on Mount Everest for being the tallest mountain." We salute the poet for his outstanding gift of poetry to the humanity. His words will forever be "Blowing in the Wind". ■

### NUMBERS

# 45 percent

Hillary Clinton is leading by 45 percent in the recent polls. The Upshot's elections model suggests that Hillary Clinton is favoured to win the presidency, based on the latest state and national polls. A victory by Donald Trump remains possible: Clinton's chance of losing is about the same as the probability that an N.F.L. kicker misses a 33-yard field goal!

Source: New York Times



PHOTO: INTERNET



## LET'S TALK ABOUT BEN-STOKIN': AN OPEN LETTER TO MY ENGLISH SON

After an English Gentle Sir goes rogue, a victim to BenStokin, an English father writes this hard-hitting open letter that everyone will now read instead of just writing a simple, private letter which could have served the purpose easier. You won't believe paragraph 7, line 8.

Dear Son,

How do I even start writing to you about BenStokin, my Good Old Chap? My instinct, any Englishman's instinct, is not only to divide and conquer but also to CIVILISE. But BenStokin is a shameful issue, old sport. Let me start, dear child, by asking you what you think of the weather today, as we British are prone to. LOL we are so harmless and cute though with our Queen, crows, cakes and tea. But BenStokin is something that promises to rip away at the last strand of decency, we, the English, have tethered to our last great invention: The Gentleman's Game of Cricket. Let me quote a poem I wrote during the "The Great Urination at the Ashes" aka "The Splashes". You may be too young to remember, as we are so quick to forget our own actions, like when we colonised everything and slaughtered people from the savage region with impunity. But these subjects were too delicate to discuss but now that you are 42, I guess it is time.

*What is this game we play,  
That takes away the Brownie's right to celebrate?  
So we push and shove and teach them some manners,  
And afterwards on the green, we sit and defecate?*

*Gentle English sirs always have a cool head  
But man this tropic weather can change me;  
Crocodile Dundees getting rowdy first,  
How can blue-eyed, Blonde Jesus from Middle East blame me?*

I know your head is in a googly right about now but don't feel gutted yet. Your young English mind cannot understand how to avoid BenStokin but as an upstanding citizen of the GREAT Britain, we must always be bastions of decency and thus tend to not discuss vulgar things we may have done in the past or wish to do in the future. But guvnor, we now need to have open conversations over some fish and chips from the jolly old harbour, unbothered by the scouers. Firstly, the problem with BenStokin is that BenStokers were not raised under the bosom of her Majesty, the Queen, God Save the Queen. Apparently, as history has taught us, when you mix an English Man with a New Zealander, you get an Australian and that is never ever a good thing. This gives BenStokers a "mean streak" you would not normally associate with English men who are all upstanding citizens with a lot of common sense, as the Brexit so succinctly sums up.

Son, I cannot impress upon you that despite all that too, sometimes BenStokin happens, especially when yesterday's peasants play at becoming today's champions. Honestly, as ugly and unexpected as that was, the facts of the case are simple. The Brownies were never ones for humility. Especially that bugger from the port and you know all about the port workers and their kind; this wasn't 1930s and no way would we be caught with our pants down again. Am I saying BenStokin is ok? Sometimes it is. Sometimes we bomb hospitals and invade countries to murder leaders based on lies too. Point is, don't hold yourself to the same standards as those that we conquered.



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

In conclusion Son, sometimes things can get mad as a bag of ferrets and usually it is never your fault, because of your polished race, of course. 'Something must have been said', because everyone knows we are the calmest, coolest lads, just having a laugh while taking the mickey. So ask yourself why we may go Benstokin' sometimes.

And as you ask yourself the question ask what is this country that I live in, that forgets its past indiscretions and sweeps it under the rug under the guise of "oops sorry mate". We are a nation that refuses to answer for our ancestors. Why should we even begin to think of answering for our own actions then? Remember these parting words:

*Lads may go Benstokin  
Like the Bush and the Blair  
Miffing Chilcot and Tamim alike,  
Remember the lads don't really care!*

*Come join the most tolerant of the crowd  
Also PS: No Dogs or Indians allowed.*

Yours,

Dad

*The author is a nobody, no one, nothing, and a father of two sons aged 42 and 3.*