

# Humor

## Turning Seventy-one

### Musafir

I shouldn't be complaining. I had my share of youth longer than most people. Though I still don't feel old from inside, I can't hide my bare scalp, drooping chin, potbelly and aging skin. If I go for cosmetic surgery, maybe people will still think I am middle-aged. The other day, I went to a restaurant and asked the waitress disgustingly, "Where had you been all my life?" I was not hitting on her. I was simply upset with the fact that it took her so long to serve me. She hesitated for a second then replied, "Well sir, for more than two-third of it, I wasn't even born."

One thing good about getting old is you get insults with a dose of respect. People hesitate to tell you, "Get lost buster!" They might look at your haggard face and say, "Sir! Would you mind hiding behind your wrinkles?" Getting older, and being ethnic, is a double whammy in America. All the younger ones start calling you grandpa. One time a new immigrant from the old country called on me for a career advice. We had never met before. When I opened the door for him, he said, "Is your grandson home?" "Well, you came here to see me. Didn't you?"



"Sorry! I didn't think that you'd be this old," he replied.

"Never mind come on in," I responded.

I became so disgusted with that incident that I stopped meeting ethnic people. I don't understand who gave them the right to address me as grandpa? The other day someone called to invite me to an ethnic party.

"Sorry, I don't go to ethnic parties anymore," I responded.

"Why not?" "Because I am made to sit in a corner as I look old."

“But, You are only as old as you feel,” the voice on the other end snapped at me.

“I don’t feel that old at all.”

“But sir, you look old,” was the terse response.

That certainly made my day. I soon realized that it was not only my appearance that looked weary, my thinking was becoming ancient as well. I find pleasure in watching the Discovery channel, talking about French film directors, indulging in diet food, discovering the merits of alternative medicines, understanding Surrealism, and rediscovering relativity. The younger crowd, who watches Shameless, The Girlfriend Experience, Drinking Buddies and wonders why Kim Kardashian is still married to Kanye West, gazes at me in despair and bewilderment when I listen to modern artists such as, Madonna, Billy Joel and Elton John.

Things are deteriorating even faster now. Of late, I’ve started taking an interest in reading War and Peace. I talk to people about the similarities between the German and Sanskrit grammars and find Indian classical music enticing.

I no longer care for keeping up with the times. I proudly declare that I am electronically illiterate when it comes to handling Snapchat and Alexa. It’s perfectly acceptable for

me to agree that I couldn’t be a perfect person when I was pressured by my parents to become one. Now, without any pressure, I am sinking into timeless backwaters — bridge, botany, the Civil War biographies, and bridge.

Forgive me, my list of venerable pursuits and imperfections are increasing by the hour. But one of the rewards of getting older is no one cares about my imperfections anymore. It’s expected of me. As a matter of fact, no one seems to care about anything I do anymore. When I struggle for words, people don’t think that I am poorly educated. They perceive this as an early symptom of Alzheimer’s disease. I can use bathrooms in stores without buying anything and not feel embarrassed about it. The storekeepers probably allow me to do so for their own safety. I can go out in odd pairs of shoes and socks and not upset anyone. The world seems to accept me for what I have become. I don’t hide my age anymore. As a matter of fact, I can’t! My eyebrows and facial hairs have turned gray.

Did someone say, “Happy seventy-first birthday?” Are there anymore cards left in the store beyond 70?