



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 2, 2014

KFC Bans Hand Wipes — Because They Might Offend Muslims

It's a culture clash that could drive a man to drink: A customer at a U.K. KFC was told he couldn't have a hand wipe because the alcohol in it might offend Muslims.

While the customer himself was offended (in the relevant usage of the word) and said it wouldn't bother him because he liked alcohol, this didn't persuade staff at the "Halal-only branch" to relent; after all, tolerance is the order of the day. The *Times* provides the story's details, [writing](#):



Graham Noakes, 41, said he was astonished when staff at the fast food chain's outlet in St George's retail park [in Leicester] refused to give him a hand-wipe because it was against its Halal policy.

Staff said this was because the wipes are soaked in an alcohol-infused liquid. Alcohol is forbidden in the Muslim Holy book, the Quran.

Graham said: "They told me it might offend other customers".

The 41-year-old added: "I've never experienced anything like this before, [sic] I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Why shouldn't I be allowed a wipe for my hands? They use wipes in hospital, [sic] what happens when we start being told we can't have wipes there? I just can't understand it."

But what happens may already be known. According to *FrontPage Mag's* [Daniel Greenfield](#), "Muslim staff in hospitals have already compromised hygiene in the UK."

As for KFC's policy on the wipes, "A KFC spokesman said the company had been running a halal trial since 2010, in 'areas where there has been demand from our customers', such as the restaurant in St George's Retail Park," the *Times* reported.

Yet there is some question as to whether the hand-wipe policy is driven by Muslim sensitivities — or leftist ones. The U.K.'s *Metro* claims many Muslims are "baffled" by KFC's stance and [writes](#) that Islamic leaders say "the restaurant's 'bizarre' move could lead to accusations that their community is being too demanding." It quotes Suleman Nagdi, a spokesman for the Leicester-based Federation of Muslim Organisations, as saying, "Using alcohol doesn't mean that you're consuming it; it seems like an unusual decision."

But whether or not KFC's policy is authentically Koranic, critics would say there have been many "unusual" Islamic decisions in recent times. In Minneapolis, Cleveland, and elsewhere, for instance, Muslim cab drivers have refused service to certain customers in deference to perceived Islamic prohibitions. As Abe Sauer [wrote](#) February at the *Awl*:

In Minneapolis in 2007, airport officials [reported](#) that about 100 passengers each month were refused taxi service for religious reasons, with the total logged refusals between 2002 and 2008



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numbering 5,200. Most of these cases involved Muslim drivers who, citing religious reasons, declined to pick up passengers carrying alcohol or those accompanied by dogs, acts that, outlined in a statement from Minnesota's Muslim American Society, involved "cooperating in sin according to Islam."

And it's not just a U.S. problem. One *Toronto Sun* columnist [was scandalized](#) after a Muslim driver refused to allow her dachsie Kishka into his car.

Also in Minneapolis, there was a 2007 report of Muslim cashiers in local Target stores who refused to ring up pork products, citing Koranic prohibitions against handling the meat; they would ask other cashiers to perform the task, or the customers would do it themselves. NBC News [wrote](#) at the time, "Minneapolis-based Target Corp. has now offered its local Muslim cashiers who object to handling pork the option of wearing gloves while cashiering, shifting to other positions or transferring to other nearby stores."

Not surprisingly, this has also been an issue in the U.K., with retailers there [accommodating](#) Islamic sensitivities as well.

Of course, what's considered Muslim participation in sin may vary, as a story related to me by a Kenyan Catholic priest I knew illustrated. As a youth, he one day sought to buy cigarettes from a Muslim shopkeeper in his native country, only to be told he would have to remove them from the case himself because handling tobacco was sinful. He then asked, if it was a sin, why the shopkeeper would want him to handle the cigarettes.

The man's response was to chase him from the store with a machete.

As for Graham Noakes, no one will have to chase him from KFC after his Leicester experience; he's so upset that he says he's "never" going back. And the irony? Noakes is currently in Leicester to help build a Muslim community center.



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