GANGSTERISM IN SOUTH AFRICA
(INCLUDING INFO ON THE NUMBER GANGS)
Amanda Buys’ Spiritual Covering

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GANGSTERISM in South Africa.

Gangsterism in South Africa dates back to mining boom and the subsequent expansion of informal urban areas in Johannesburg in the late 19th Century, which saw the emergence of small groups of bandits. These inconsequential criminal groups were eventually transformed into more complex gang organisations, with the most notorious being “The Ninevites”, which reportedly had a membership of close to 1,000. The incarceration of gang leaders led to the permeation of gang culture into the prison system, which still persists to this day. **The most notorious prison gangs are the numbers gangs, that is: The 26s, 27s and 28s.**

Street gangs exist in most of South Africa’s large urban centres, but are more prevalent in impoverished communities on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape province, and are typically linked to the drug trade. Historians have suggested that the proliferation and intensification of gang activity in Western Cape can be traced back to the extensive coerced relocations of coloured communities from desirable areas in Cape Town to the Cape Flats, which arguably undermined community and social cohesion, and allowed for criminality to flourish. Studies have suggested that gangsterism persists due to the lucrative nature of illicit economy; high risk factors for violence by young male youth; and an entrenched gang culture.

Gang violence on the Cape Flats has ebbed and flowed over the past six decades, with violent peaks being largely been due to: rivalries between gangs relating to territory and illegal trade (particularly drugs); feuds between gangs; and internal leadership struggles (amongst others). The mid- to late-1990s was a particularly violent period on the Cape Flats as militant vigilante groups (the most well-known being People Against Gangsterism and Drugs — PAGAD) emerged in response to intense gang activity. Some members of these groups were also responsible for acts of violence, which included the lynching of a well-known gang leader.

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Perceptions of WHY children join GANGS.

Groups were remarkably consistent in what they viewed as the reasons for joining gangs. Every group mentioned the greater wealth of gangs, with money, guns, brand name clothing, and nice cars being consistently mentioned as part of what made gangs attractive. For young men, one of the attractions suggested was access to women:

Participant:

YOU DRIVE THE LATEST CARS AND WEAR THE LATEST CLOTHES. YOU HAVE EVERYTHING OF THE BEST.

Participant:

FOUR OR FIVE HOUSES.

Participant:

SOME GANGSTERS ALSO WALK AROUND WITH DOGS. ONCE YOU SELL DRUGS YOU CAN EVEN BUY YOUR OWN HOUSE. YOU CAN START YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

THEY SAY THEY’LL GIVE YOU TEN THOUSAND RAND — THEN YOU MUST SHOOT SOMEONE. THEY GIVE YOU A CAR. IF YOU WANT SOMETHING YOU GET IT RIGHT NOW.

MAYBE THEY HAVE WOMEN IN THE HOUSE.

However, these attractions were understood as being attractive against the background of a context of deep poverty. Every group mentioned poverty and deprivation relative to others, as a key reason for children entering gangs:

THE SMALL CHILDREN WHO GROW UP IN POOR CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN THEY SEE WHAT THE GANGSTERS HAVE, THEN THEY SAY, I ALSO WANT LOTS OF MONEY.

THEY TAKE YOU OFF THE STREET — THE CHILDREN WHO DON’T HAVE HOMES. THEY DRESS THE CHILDREN. THEN THEY GET THE CHILDREN TO GO OUT AND SELL DRUGS. NOT NECESSARILY — BUT IT DOES HAPPEN.

IF IT HAPPENS THAT SOME PEOPLE COME FROM A STRUGGLING FAMILY, SOMETIMES THE PARENTS CANNOT AFFORD TO BUY EXPENSIVE CLOTHES. AND SHE WILL END UP FALLING FOR A GANGSTER BECAUSE HE WEARS NICE CLOTHES.
Sometimes it happens like this, you are coming from a struggling family and you tell yourself that you won’t go to school, because those kids at school have money from their parents. What will happen is that you will end up robbing people to get money.

Some people struggle, and maybe they don’t have money to buy food and things like that, and then it’s like, okay, I’ll pay you if you sell my drugs. And then they also start using those drugs. Or, maybe you kill this person and they pay you for that.

If government can maybe just solve the money scarcity problem because they mainly do it because of money.

The legacy of apartheid was seen as providing a context for this poverty:

Facilitator:

TELL ME A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT. WHAT DOES APARTHEID HAVE TO DO WITH GANGS?

Participant:

THEY PUT MANY PEOPLE INTO SMALL COMMUNITIES, SO PEOPLE Fought ... A LOT OF BAD PEOPLE Fought AND THEY STARTED THE GANGS AND THE GANGS Grew.

Participant:

THE SPLITTING UP OF PEOPLE. THEY PUT PEOPLE IN TOWNSHIPS ...

Participant:

THE POOR PEOPLE.

Within this context of poverty, children’s descriptions of conditions that place children at risk for joining a gang covered almost every aspect of the social world. Although poverty was so frequently mentioned that the children appeared to view it as the key reason for joining a gang, they also mentioned reasons that had to do with individual children and the many social contexts which affect children’s development.

The media was seen as providing negative role models:

Participant:

AND YOU ALSO SEE GANGSTER ON TV PROGRAMMES.
Participant:

JA, AND YOU SEE HOW THEY SHOOT THE POLICE.

Participant:

THE KIDS SEE THE GANGSTER ROLE MODELS.

Almost uniformly, groups expressed deep frustration and dissatisfaction with the institutions of society that are directly involved in crime prevention and intervention — the police, the justice system, and correctional services. These were identified as contributing to high rates of crime and violence through ineffective actions, through corruption, and through creating opportunities that either socialised people deeper into gangs or did not provide effective sanctions for criminal behaviour:

AND YOU CAN'T TRUST THE POLICE. MY MUM SAW THESE HOBOS FIGHTING WITH KNIVES AND SHE CALLED THE POLICE. THE POLICE CAME THERE AND WHEN THEY SAW ALL THE PEOPLE FIGHTING, THEY TURNED AROUND AND LEFT. SO YOU CAN'T TRUST THE POLICE.

WE PHONED THE POLICE AND THEY SAID THEY Couldn'T COME BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE VANS. BUT WE ONLY LIVE A FEW HOUSES FROM THE POLICE STATION! THEY COULD EASILY WALK TO WHERE WE STAY. BUT HERE HE'S TELLING MY MUMMY THAT THEY DON'T HAVE A VAN.

THE POLICE MUST JUST GO OUT AND DO WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING; THEY ARE NOT DOING ANYTHING. IT’S NO USE HAVING THEM THERE. THEY ARE DOING NOTHING FOR US.

Living in a neighbourhood environment in which drugs were endemic and in which there were too few pro-social opportunities for children (such as sports or cultural activities), was also recognised as providing opportunities for children to be exposed to both drugs and violence:

Before the drugs came in everything was fine. Then came the shebeens. Now they come with tik (crystal methamphetamine). So then they must escalate because then there was no violence.

Participant:

THERE IS NOTHING FOR THE YOUNGSTERS TO DO — LIKE FACILITIES ... SPORT. THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO KEEP YOU BUSY — AND THAT'S WHY.

The high levels of danger in these neighbourhoods also seemed to play a role in encouraging gangsterism in the sense that being part of a gang was viewed as potentially providing security. In addition, the fear engendered in their communities by gangsters gave them what was perceived as power and respect from the community. Children also felt that gangsters perceived themselves as “cool”:
Facilitator:

Okay, talk a little bit about the power. How do you get the power? What does it mean to have power?

Participant:

Everybody respects you.

Participant:

I’m in this gang and you won’t touch me. And if you do something to me, it’s not just me but the whole gang that you’re doing it to.

And there are lots of people who respect you if you’re a gangster. They want to be cool.

Another thing is that there are older boys who beat up smaller boys, and these young boys end up angry and form a gang of their own because they want to fight the older ones. He will join the gang to gain respect and everyone will know him because he will be walking with a feared gang.

However, this sense of safety was also balanced against the safety costs of being in a gang:

But I don’t think it’s safe to be a gangster. If you part of the gang and you try to leave, the gang will get you. It’s safer to be outside (of a gang) because once you are inside you are protected, but once you have gang fights then you must fight, and bullets will fly and knives will come out. So there is more possibility of dying inside a gang than outside. But if you live in a wild neighbourhood then it’s also bad — no matter what side you’re on.

Yes, but you’re not actually safe. There are people after you. You become a suspect. Once you join the gang, it’s difficult (to leave) because you know their secrets and they will kill you.

I think, however much he wants to get out of a gang, if you give your heart to the Lord and stay there, but otherwise, no, they’ll come and get you.

Girls described a particularly gendered approach to relations with gangs in terms of both material goods and the need for protection ...

They described romantic involvement with gangsters as being based on their material goods or on the protection they would receive from other threats:
He is cute, well dressed, girls are always talking about him, you will like him, you will be attracted by his looks.

In some cases, it appears that gang membership may be forced. In other words, living in the same neighbourhood as a gang that was weak in either numbers or physical strength may put children at risk:

When they are short in numbers they force people to join them, or maybe if they see that you are physically strong they would force you to join them because they can see that you are able to grab hold of a person. So they will force you.

Risk factors were also identified in the more proximal social contexts that affect children’s lives — the neighbourhood, the school, their friends and their family. Children mentioned poor family environments as reasons why they might join gangs:

They feel that they don’t get enough love. Their parents don’t love them and the only way they can be loved is to go into a gang. It’s almost like everybody has the same problems, and once you are in a gang, then all your problems are gone. You have no mother shouting at you; no one tells you what to do.

Sometimes you can also have a situation at home where the mother and the father are always fighting. So they get abused at home and then they think, I’m going to join a gang because that will make it easier.

In some families you find that the mother and father drink with their children, and it is easily copied by the children. The mechanisms by which children joined gangs were identified as occurring through the influence of family members or friends, with membership consolidated by arrest and further initiation within prison:

If your uncle is a merchant then you are also part of that and sometimes, the older brother is a gangster and then the smaller brother has to do what the bigger brother tells him.

It’s easy. You just get involved with someone in your area. Being seen with them makes you suspect with the other gangs. The word would be out that you are going around with one of the gangs.
you might go with your own friends to where you find these guys who are gangsters and you won’t even know.

It can start with a normal conversation. He might try and convince you. He’ll ask you to do things that he’ll pay you for — give you things.

Afterwards, you must give him back, so you sell the drugs. And once you go out and sell drugs then it’s over; you are part of the gang. But you must go to jail to get tattoos of what the names of the gangs are.

They call it the history. You go to prison and you become a man.

In addition, parents were also seen as playing a role in promoting gangsterism, through protecting their children who were in trouble with the law:

Maybe Amanda will go to the police to lay a charge and he might go to jail and when he comes back home his mother will go to a Xhwele (traditional healer) so that her son can be released from jail, the mother will go to a traditional healer and I do think that when he comes out .... he will not stop doing this because his mother is encouraging him to do this, she is telling him this is right, she will get him lawyers, advocates and go to traditional healers. She will do everything for him because that mother don’t feel what other parents are feeling.

School dropout and its associated elements (such as pregnancy) were mentioned by many groups as an initial step towards gang membership:

Participant:

Because if you drop out of school you have nothing else to do but to join a gang. There is no other job without education, so they join a gang to have a source of money.

Facilitator:

Between grade 8 and today, have a lot of your classmates dropped out of school?

Participant:

Yes. Many.
Facilitator:

SO WHEN YOU STARTED IN GRADE 8, HOW BIG WAS YOUR CLASS?

Participant:

WE WERE ABOUT 50 STUDENTS AND NOW IT’S DROPPED TO ABOUT 30 STUDENTS.

Facilitator:

AND WOULD YOU SAY YOU LOST THE STUDENTS TO GANGSTERISM? WHY DID THEY DROP OUT?

Participant:

IT’S BOYS MAINLY.

Participant:

THE GUYS THAT I KNOW ... AND WALKING AROUND TRYING TO GET MONEY. THEY TELL PEOPLE, IF YOU DON’T GIVE ME MONEY I’M GOING TO ROB YOU. WITH GIRLS, MAYBE THEY DROP OUT BECAUSE THEY FALL PREGNANT OR HER BOYFRIEND TELLS HER NOT TO GO TO SCHOOL ANY MORE.

Participant:

SOMETIMES GIRLS DO LEAVE SCHOOL FOR THE BOYFRIEND.

Participant:

AND IF A GIRL HAS A BOYFRIEND WHO IS A GANGSTER, THEY ARE LIKE WAY COOL, AND THEY GET THE MONEY TO BUY CLOTHING AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

Participant:

YOU DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE YOU ARE SCARED OF THE BOYFRIEND. AND YOU ARE ALSO SCARED TO LEAVE HIM BECAUSE THEY WILL COME AFTER YOU. SO THAT IS WHY GIRLS DROP OUT, AND THEY END UP LIVING WITH THEIR BOYFRIENDS. OR, THEY CAN JUST DROP OUT OF SCHOOL AND SIT AT HOME; HAVE LEKKER NICE [PARTIES.

Risk factors at the level of individual children were also mentioned. Most notable amongst these was the addiction of individual children, although other motivations were also mentioned on occasion. It was clear that drug addiction was a key reason for joining gangs:
The drugs get you into gangs. A lot of drug users are gangsters because the people who do drugs, they don’t have money to spend on drugs...

So they try to get it from other people and that’s where most of the robbery and killing take place.

Revenge was another reason often given for joining a gang:

And it’s often this way that you become a gangster, perhaps… gangsters shoot your little brother dead. Like my friend, that happened, his brother and his mother sat in the road, in front (of their home), it was hot. Then the gangs came past, then they shot his little brother dead. Today, he’s, he has his own gang.

Today he’s the leader of a gang, see miss. He, that man who shot his little brother, is already dead but now he takes it out on that man’s family, miss.

One group mentioned the identity formation tasks of adolescence as a reason for joining a gang:

The reason people join gangsters is that they want to see what is happening in a gang, and they want to be famous and to be respected.

The problem is that people are searching for their own identity.

They will have been in prison long ago. And if you go to prison you lose your self confidence.

You live like a gangster. You lose your respect for your family. Now if you go back, then that’s how it is. Perhaps it’s your mother or father’s funeral.

When you get there then everyone looks at you with thoughts like, he was a pig with his family, you lose everything, and you can also lose your girlfriend. Then you lose all your self confidence.
When it comes to worldly things they have everything. It’s mostly emotional or family problems.

In a gang there’s no freedom. You are controlled by one person the whole time. It’s like the German war – you can control everybody. In a gang you must be cool. Most of them ... they are not taught properly and they don’t have discipline in their houses. They don’t have respect for adults or for themselves. Your family can also be affected.

You yourself can get killed by other gangsters. They have everything, but there’s one thing they don’t have — and that is love. If they’d had love in their lives, then they wouldn’t have done what they have done.

Some end up homeless because they are running away from this. Others commit suicide.

It’s difficult to pull out of a gang, the other gang’s members know that you have killed and then the other gang will come after you and kill you even if you are out of the gang.

You have to stand alone, especially if you are arrested. You can’t depend on the others (your fellow gangsters) who were there, you need to stand alone.

Everything belongs to the group; they change your name, you lose your identity. Everything that was yours now belongs to them.

Preventing and intervening in GANGSTERISM.

Several groups were asked to describe what their community would be like if it were safe for young people. Although the degree to which crime and violence was viewed as endemic was highlighted in comments such as ‘You can’t imagine a different world’, most children were very quick to come up with elements of a safe community that they deemed essential. Doing away with gangs and drugs were clearly high on their priority lists, as were instituting extra-mural activities for children.

Many suggestions were made about activities the children longed to have: entertainment, a place to play games, a place to dance. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to have something to do after school and over the weekends and holidays.

Mention was also made of the need for community cohesion, for neighbours to look out for each other and for each other’s children.
Taken together, these ideas suggest the children’s view of what would effectively prevent children joining gangs:

- Plenty of opportunities for recreation,
- A neighbourhood that is low in crime and drug activity,
- And high in cohesion, employment, school enrolment and religious institutions.

These initial ideas about prevention were all essentially located in social institutions beyond the family and friendship group: the neighbourhood, school and faith organisations; and in those broader socio-political factors that influence factors such as employment rates.

When asked directly what would prevent children from joining gangs, participants identified factors that mirrored what they had identified as risk factors. As with the risk factors, chief amongst their nominations for prevention was ending poverty.

**Poverty** was not seen simply as lack of money, however, but as multi-dimensional:

- As affected by the opportunities afforded people for employment,
- And as creating a context in which essential services were either inaccessible or of poor quality (or both).

**Prisons and the NUMBER SYSTEM**

The numbers gang in South Africa is a very secretive gang and very understudied. Thus it is of great importance to try obtain as much information on them as possible. Very little research is available on the numbers gang and this website aims to break the cycle and create an interest in the research of the numbers gang.

Although the numbers gang is a prison gang. The numbers have started to move outside of the prison walls and are joining the drug and crime market on the outside. South Africa has an extremely high crime rate and by studying the numbers gang, it can help aid in the prevention of crimes in the country.

**WHAT IS A PRISON GANG?**

A prison gang is an organization which operates within the prison system as a self-maintaining criminal entity. They usually consist of a select group of inmates, where there is an established code of conduct and this governs the chain of command.

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The history of the numbers gang differs from gang to gang, however, there are a few agreements between the different gang members. The 28’s believe in Nongoloza and the 27’s believe in Kilikijan. The time differs as to when the groups actually got together, however, it has been mentioned that it was sometime between 1880 and 1890.

The two were migrant workers looking for work at a local mine, where Po, a nomad, had seen them and discouraged them from working at the mines. Po had discovered that many of the black youth would go into the mines and would die. Po found that the black workers were treated inhumanly and worked in poor working and living conditions. Po taught the two boys how to rob coaches and black mine workers and how to live a life of crime. Po then found 15 other young men to join the different groups and thus, Nongoloza had 7 people in total in his gang and Kilikijan had 8. The two gangs worked separately, Nongoloza at night and Kilikijan during the day. At one time Po instructed Nongoloza and Kilikijan to go to buy a steer at a local farm, but when the farmer refused to sell them the steer they stabbed him and stole his steer.

With this, Po instructed the men to drink the blood of the animal and keep certain body parts, which to this day are seen as icons in many gang tattoos and in the constitution. With the cow hide, the two men were instructed to use the blood to write the constitution on a rock and then use the blood to write on the inside of the cow hide. The rock was given to Kilikijan and the hide to Nongoloza. However, during one of the robberies, one of Kilikijan’s men dropped the rock and it broke in two, one part going into a river. They now only had half of the laws. However, one day the two groups decided to work together. Before they went out, Nongoloza said he was not feeling well and asked Kilikijan if one of his members could stay behind to look after him. When Kilikijan and the rest of the gang returned, they found Nongoloza having sex with this other man. Kilikijan was furious, he and Nongoloza began to fight. Po heard the commotion and came down to sort it out, when he found out what happened, he instructed the 2 men to go to the nearest mine and see if men do sleep with other men. This was found to be true and thus the 28’s see sex with males a normal and natural thing. With this Kilikijan told his gang member to move to Nongoloza and thus the 28’s and 27’s were formed.

They say 2 is for the 2 men (Nongoloza and Kilikijan) and the 7 and 8 is the total amount of members there were in the gang. After the 2 men split ways, Nongoloza and Kilikijan continued robbing mines, coaches and migrant black workers. Once the two members were caught and arrested they eventually met in a Durban Prison, this was around 1907/1908. This is where the 26’s were formed. Nongoloza tried to take the 6 men for himself as his sex slaves, however, once Kilikijan told the 6 men what Nongoloza does, they refused and began their own gang. There was major conflict between the 26’s and 28’s and thus the 27’s were used as a mediator between the two groups.

During the apartheid era in South Africa, racial inequalities and segregation was a common site. The numbers gangs felt that they were not being looked after properly in the prisons and thus fought for equality and improved prison conditions. They wanted to work against the Boere who oppressed the prisoners. It was here that Nongoloza began working in the prison kitchen and today all around South Africa, only 28’s work in the kitchen, while the 26’s work as cleaners in the prisoners.
which number?

Once sentenced by the South African Department of Corrections (DOC), the prisoners are classified into three different categories. These categories are either economic offense, sexual offence or a crime of violence. According to the category the prisoner is classified under, will depend on the number gang he will join.

Pollsmoor prison

Pollsmoor prison is located in Cape Town South Africa, the southern tip of the African continent. It is the most violent prison in South Africa and has the highest number of prison gangs. It is at this prison, that the numbers gang are thriving and are at its highest population.

Understanding the 26’s

• Specialize in robbery, smuggling and other monetary crimes.
• Work as the cleaners in the prisons.
• Recruits of the 26's only need to be able to scavenge for goods and who has his wits about him, wherever they are.
• Members must be active in the gangs duties and cant just laze around.
• The 26’s keep the prisons alive and are responsible for acquiring supplies of money, drugs, cigarettes and other luxuries and known for beating the system.
• The wealth they bring into the prison system must be shared with the 28's, if the 28's are low on resources.
• Do not use violence very often and are often seen as a soft option for new recruits.
• However, although it is the softer option of the gangs, they do have a history of blood wars and must take blood in order to obtain a higher rank.
• If a member of the 26’s becomes to violent and aggressive, he must become a 27 because there is no room for him in the 26's ideology.
• Members of the 26’s should not look for blood nor should they seek same sex relationships.
• A 26 can at any stage covert to a 27, if he would like to communicate with the camp of the 28's.
• However, if a 26 wishes to remain a 27, he must take blood in order to remain a 27.
• Any inmate who has been raped, cannot join the 26's.
• The 26 gang will also not tolerate any member who has sustained head injury in prison, unless he takes back his blood by stabbing a warder.
STRUCTURE OF THE 26’S

Broke up into two different sections:

1. The unarmed privates known as the number ones.
2. The officers known as the number two’s.

• THE NUMBER ONE’S STRUCTURE

1. The General — Knows all the laws about the gangs.
2. Inspector One — Ensures that all punishment is carried out; he issues uniforms to new recruits alongside Captain One.
3. Doctor One — Examines new recruits by looking at their eyes, ears, evaluating any head injuries and thus has the final say if any new recruit is able to join the gang.
4. Clerk
5. Advocate
6. Judge
7. Captain One — He is the captain of blood and has permission to stab others. He will have six stars on his shoulders, usually three on each shoulder and these are seen in the form of tattoos.

• THE NUMBER TWO’S STRUCTURE

The number two's deal with the initiation of the new recruits:

1. The Fighting General — Gives permission to the Number ones to arms themselves with weapons. He will have eight stars tattooed on his shoulders, usually four on each shoulder.
2. The Inspector Two — Observes all ritual stabbings and ensures that all duties are performed and plays a role in the promotion of members.
3. The Doctor Two — Examines new recruits by looking at their eyes, ears, evaluating any head injuries and thus has the final say if any new recruit is able to join the gang.
4. The Judge Number Two — Sits in for any minor cases of the gang members and overseas any sentences passed down.
5. The Lawyer — Pleads on behalf of the offender
6. The Scribe — Is a secretary and accountant
7. Captain Two — Is also known as the wireless operator. He searches for new recruits and memorizes decisions taken at inter-gang meetings. With the inspector two, he also observes all ritual stabbings. He will have four stars on his shoulders, usually two on each shoulder and these are seen in the form of tattoos.
It is important to note that not all aspects are known with regards to the functions of each ranking member. This is because of the extreme secrecy of the numbers gang.

UNDERSTANDING THE 27’S

• They are the men of blood and the most violent of the gangs.
• They are career criminals specializing in violence.
• Monitors and enforces the laws and codes of the number.
• They negotiate problems and communicate between the 26’s and 28’s.
• If one is a 28 and not a wyfie, one can become a 27 by taking blood and lots of it.
• Do not allow any same sex relationships in the 27 camp, this is because of the history of Nongoloza and Kilikijan.
• The most secretive of the numbers gang camps and little is known about their structure.

UNDERSTANDING THE 28’S

• They are the sexual offenders, who have sex or who are raped in the gang.
• They believe in same sex relationships.
• They are broken up into either the Gold Line, the Silver Line or the Third division in the gang.
• The 28’s usually work in the kitchens of all prisons and share food equally.

WHAT IS THE “GOLD LINE”?

Also known as the “blood line”. These are males in the gang who enter by taking blood through the stabbing of a warder.

• THE HIERARCHY OF THE GOLD LINE

The LORD:

Presides over the high command of the military wing of the camp of 28.

The Military Wing:

1. The Judge — He hands down any death sentences to members or non-members of the gang and must oversee the sentence. The judge has seven star tattoos on his right shoulder, which are said to be gold, and seven star tattoos on his left shoulder, which are said to be silver.
2. **The General** — Is able to issue weapons, declare war and ensures that a wrong is rightened. A soldier can be promoted to this position if he is bloodthirsty. The General has six stars on his right shoulder and six stars on his left shoulder. Again the stars on his right shoulder are said to be gold and the ones on the left are said to be in silver.

3. **The Colonel** — The colonel is the one who knows and understand all gang laws of the 28’s. He does not carry a weapon. He issues the ranks and punishment to members of the 28’s. The colonel has four star tattoos on his left shoulder and four on his right shoulder. Again the stars on his right shoulder are said to be gold and the ones on the left are said to be in silver.

4. **The Wireless Operator** — He is selected because of his exceptional memory. He is the eyes and ears of the gang and must always be aware of everything that is going on, especially in regards to the 26’s and 27’s. He also reports on any problems with the prison food. The wireless operator has three stars tattooed on his right shoulder and three on his left shoulder.

5. **The Lieutenant** — He controls the flow of information to the upper ranks and to those in positions below him. He thus links division one, soldiers and privates. He is an expert on gang knowledge and history and tests the new recruits of the 28’s camp. He also directs the flow of the bloodline and of the wyfies of the 28’s.

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**WHAT IS THE “SILVER LINE”?**

This group is also known as the female line. This group is designated for the "females" or "wyfies" in the gang who supply sexual favors, on command, to the gold line.

- **HIERARCHY OF THE SILVER LINE: DIVISION ONE**

The *high command* of the civil wing of the 28’s consists of males who were once “wyfies” but have since risen in status.

**The Civil Wing:**

1. **The Governor General** — Knows all the laws and regulations about the gangs constitution and hands out the law. He is responsible for issuing provisions of tobacco. He has seven gold and seven silver stars tattooed on his shoulders.

2. **The Doctor** — Has six gold and six silver stars tattooed on his shoulders. He will issue the knife that will be used against someone, depending on the type of injury that is required. He examines newcomers to the gang for *dirty marks* or other gang tattoos. He is also in charge for any medical matters and will even taste the prison food to ensure it hasn't been poisened. Most importantly he examines the new recruits and decides whether their hearts beat two or three times a year, thus determining their prison careers. Two beats would indicate a wyfie and three times would indicate a soldier.
3. **The Inspector** — Has six gold and six silver stars tattooed on his shoulders and has the number 28 tattooed somewhere near the stars. He makes sure that all members are schooled in the gang mythology and plays a role in the promotion of members. In addition to this he also looks for new recruits in the prisons, in both awaiting trial and sentenced sections. Finally, the inspector communicates with the other gangs and the warders and he must be informed if a gang member would like to speak to the warder.

4. **The Clerk** — The clerk has four gold and four silver stars tattooed on his shoulders. He is the secretary and the accountant of the 28's.

5. **The Magistrate** — He has three gold and three silver stars tattooed on his shoulders. When there are problems, either in the gang or out of the gang, the magistrate decides on how to handle the situation. He can decide whether a case can be thrown out, if blood is due or if its a death sentence.

6. **The Under Magistrate (Public Prosecutor)** — Similar to the lieutenant in the gold line. He plays a mediators role in relation to the members above and below him. He displays two tattooed stars on either shoulder. Finally, he also ensures that the wyfies do not indulge in any sexual activity.

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### HIERARCHY OF THE SILVER LINE: DIVISION TWO

The silver line (division two) are the supervisors of the probationers. They consist of the following is the different roles.

1. **Goliath One** — He is the *female* head of the privates. He can go where ever he pleases in the 28 camp and can have sex with anyone he pleases. He does not need any permission from the Lieutenant from the gold line to do so. When a death sentence is passed down, it is the Goliath One who dances around naked, to fill the thoughts, of the people who give the death sentence, with lustful thoughts. The victim’s sentence is then commuted to gang rape. The Goliath One is usually chosen for his youth and good looks and is described as the whore of the 28's, who must be able to work the men up into a sexual frenzy.

2. **Goliath Two** — He gives the laws to the privates and is controlled by the Colonel of the Gold Line.

3. **Silver One** — His role is to voice his disapproval of the underachievers in the gang. The Wireless Operator in the Gold Line is responsible for him and his actions.

4. **Silver Two** — He cannot be ordered to commit any bloody deed or expected to fight. He records the number of probationers in the gang and schools the probationers about different aspects of the gang. During the period of training of a Silver Two, he cannot have sex in the 28 camp; however, he can have sex with a non-gang member. He also ensures that all probationers observe the rules of the gang.
THE PROBATIONERS

• This is the lowest rank in the private line.
• When they wear a shirt or jacket, they must show some of their chest, which shows that they are always available for sex.
• They also have the tattoo of the Moliva Boy on their left shoulder, which shows their position as sex slaves.
• As wyfies they are never expected to fight and remain pampered and protected.

WHAT IS THE THIRD DIVISION?

The third division consists of the fighting soldiers of the Gold line. These members may not take part in any sexual activities and may not have any contact with the Silver line or the "wyfies".

• HIERARCHY OF THE THIRD DIVISION

Below the Gold Line of the 28's is the Third Division, which are the fighting soldiers and the non-commissioned officers. They consist of the Captain One, Captain Two and Sergeant One and Sergeant Two.

1. Captain One — He acts as the general of the soldiers. His orders come from the Lieutenant of the Gold Line. He is also able to discipline members for minor infringements.

2. Captain Two — He is in a complimentary position to that of the Colonel in the Gold Line. Thus he must know all the laws of the 28’s and can issue punishment to the soldiers of the 28's.

3. Sergeant One — He instructs new members of the laws and traditions of the 28 camp. He also ensures that no soldiers become corrupt or behave how they not supposed to.

4. Sergeant Two — He keeps tobacco for the wyfies and allocates tasks to the new members of the gang. He is also the jailer when offences are committed and escorts them to the higher rankings when punishment is undertaken.

THE SOLDIERS OF THE 28’S

The soldiers are forbidden any contact with the probationers or wyfies. Their role is solely to protect the camp of the 28’s twenty four hours a day. They also do sentry duty at night to be on the alert for the arrival of a warder.

THE SABELA

• The Sabela is something which is unique to the numbers gang in South Africa. The Sabela consists of the words, symbols and colors that differentiate one from another. This section of the website will discuss the various concepts of the Sabela in relation to the numbers gang.
• The complex codes of the numbers gang specify how the gangs should approach each other and the protocol states that the 26’s rule by day and the 28’s by night.
• When a new recruit is to be initiated the gang will inform the new recruit on gang tradition and policies. These policies play an important role and if any member ever forgets the policies, traditions or history of the gang, they can be severely punished.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE NUMBERS GANG

The language they use is a result of the diverse community in prisons in South Africa. South Africa has eleven official languages, which consist of Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Thus, in order for the different cultures to be able to communicate with one another in the gangs, they speak a mix of Afrikaans, English, Xhosa and Zulu. These are the most spoken languages in the country, thus many of the offenders in prison are able to speak one or more of these languages.

During the initiation stage of a new recruit, they must learn the values and history of the numbers gang in their mother tongue and can mix the languages if they like. The mix of the four languages is known as fanigalore. Fanigalore was devoeoped in the mines in South Africa in the late 1800’s. This was developed as way for the black mine workers to communicate with one another and for the white mine owners to be able to communicate with all of the workers, without having to learn all the different languages.

SALUTES

Each branch of the numbers gang has its own salute. When giving the salute, they will say this is my sign, my flag, my gun and my pen.

The 26’s salute:

• Consists of a raised thumb

The 27’s salute:

• Consists of a thumb and the index finger

The 28’s salute:

• Consists of the thumb and the first two fingers (pictured RIGHT).
• With the salute of the 28’s gang, the members will combine a salutation of Umsunukonyoko. This is a specific reference to someones mothers genitals.
FLAGS OF THE NUMBERS

It is important to note that the flags of the numbers are invisible and are only symbolic. Thus they can be created in any way, as long as all the elements are there and each element is completely understood.

- **FLAG OF THE 26’S**

![Flag of the 26’s](image)

The flag of the 26’s is pure white, which emphasizes their ability to rob with a clear conscience. Their symbol, either on the flag on their body is money and can be found in the form of the Dollar ($) sign or cash. This sign indicates that they are money motivated. There is also a thin red line which indicates that they are reading themselves for war. However, during peace times, this line is invisible.

- **FLAG OF THE 27’S**

![Flag of the 27’s](image)
The flag of the 27’s is red as blood and has crossed swords, with the blades pointing upwards. There is also a horn or bugle and seven six point stars on the flag. The red stands for blood, because they are of the fighting line and are the most violent of the gangs. The swords symbolize that they are ready to fight and the seven stars symbolize the number of the gang, 27.

- **FLAG OF THE 28’S**

  ![](image)

  The colors of the flag of the 28's consists of red, green, black and white. The flag is green, with a thin red line. There is also white on the flag and black. The color white symbolizes the privates who never fight, but who do *women’s* work in the prisons.

  Red is for the Gold Line and for the men who take blood. Green is for the Silver Two's and black is never mentioned and is not always on the flag. Black stands for the fallen or dead members of the gang. The flag also consists of a lion’s head and a Kudu horn.

  The 28's also have a symbolic building which they refer to and often try to paint their cells in the specific colors. They try to paint the walls white, the roof red, the window frames green and try have a gold flagpole.

**TATTOOS OF THE NUMBERS GANG**

**The 26’s:**

- Most of the symbolic tattoos of the 26's will be found on the right hand side of the body. This is to show that they stay away from same sex relationships and practices.
- The tattoos often have a fixation of Dollar ($) signs, cash or coins and often the money is pierced by the point of a blade.
- Another tattoo often seen on a member of the 26’s is that of fists holding a bunch of cash or an open book with the number 26 on it.
The 27's:

- Most 27's will have a tattoo displaying the crossed scimitars and a rising sun.
- All 27 gang members will have a tattoo that states that they are either armed with some sort of weapon or that they are violent in nature.

The 28's:

- A 28 member will often have a tattoo of a sun setting between his buttocks.
- If a member has a tattoo saying Moliva Boy, it indicates that he entered the gang through the Silver Line.
- However, if a member has a tattoo referring to blood or death, it means that he entered the gang through the Gold Line. It is important to note that some members may have many tattoos all over. This is because they may enter through the Silver Line and move up into the Gold Line.
- Members of the 28's will often have the number 28 somewhere tattooed on their body.
- They may also have a quote saying, "my heart beats 3 times per year", this indicates they are of the blood line or Gold Line. Or they may have a quote saying "my heart beats 2 times per year" this indicates they are of the Silver Line.
Tattoos and the Scriptures

Exodus 20:1-6 “1 And GOD spoke all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD your GOD Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the land of bondage. 3 You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 You will not make for yourself any graven image, or any likeness of anything in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in waters under the sea. 5 You will not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them, for I the LORD your GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, 6 and showing mercies to thousands of those who love me and keep My Commandments.”

This passage speaks of making for yourself graven images or pictures. A tattoo is like an engraved picture in the skin made with ink to last forever. Verse four speaks of making any likeness:

… in the heaven above, which could indicate tattoos of:

- The Sun, the Moon, the zodiac symbols, the stars, fallen angels, the Grim Reaper, demonic faces, and also vultures, eagles, swallows, sparrows, owls, ravens or pigeons, fairies.

… or in the earth beneath, which could indicate tattoos of:

- Snakes, scorpions, dogs, wolves, jackals, lions, tigers, leopards, cats, mice, dinosaurs, apes, hyenas, naked women, faces of loved ones, spiders, skeletons, mosques, churches, flowers, open books depicting the laws of particular “Number” gangs, dragons, the statue of Liberty, flags especially the US and British flags, money and dollar and pound symbols, weapons like knives, pangas, axes and guns, different hand signals showing particular gang membership, sexual organs.

… or in the waters under the sea, which could indicate tattoos of:

- Dolphins, sharks, crocodiles, octopuses, mermaids, Neptune.

These tattoos are like demonic tags. Remember your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit — so if you place tattoos on your body, these tattoos can then act like satanic altars that open up occultic gates in your life. Tattoos represent the journey you are on and when you look at someone’s tattoos then you can actually determine his ranking in the underworld.

When you see tattoos of the Grim Reaper, Skull & Bones or the Hangman’s Noose, then it is possible that the person made a covenant with death and is willing to go all the way to the grave for his cause. When you see tattoos of a male sexual organ, it signifies the person’s sexual orientation is homosexual. Tattoos of money, dollar, and pound symbols shows that the person is a thief and a robber and a worshipper of money.

Tattoos with weapons and blood show men of blood who are involved in blood sacrifices. When you see a tattoo of a right hand it shows affiliation to the 26 and 27 (Sunup) gang, and when you see a tattoo of the left hand then it shows affiliation to the 28 (Sundown) gang. A tattoo of a knife pointed upwards or a knife pointed downward respectively signifies 26 and 27 gang affiliation or 28 gang affiliation.
In the nineties the American Rapper Tupac Shakir sang a song titled “Thug Life” which became quite popular after his death. In Manenberg (a suburb in Cape Town) in the stronghold territory of the Hard Livings gang, they had a large mural painted on one of the Court walls. The painting was of Tupac and the slogan “Thug Life” was also painted on the wall.

Many gangsters adopted the slogan and has “Thug Life” tattooed on their chests. I found out that the Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the word Thug as a “Member of religious organization of assassins in India suppressed by 1825; cut-throat and ruffian.” Can you see the spirit operating in men who bound themselves with that tattoo on their bodies?

Modern tattoos include the Chinese symbol of Yin and Yang and Chinese characters, which shows the influence of the spirit of the East in South Africa. Tattoos of the dragon are very popular even with gangsters. (The dragon being one of the symbols of satan himself — Revelation 20:2).

**Nowadays**

Tattoos have become so fashionable today that one sees it everywhere! Men’s bodies are full of tattoos and yet they may not even have spent a day in prison or have any gang affiliation.

Ladies put tattoos around their navel and at the base of their spine not realizing that they are spiritually binding their reproductive organs, bladder, kidneys, stomach and their spinal cord.

Around the region of the South-Indian Islands and Australasia you’ll find places like Papua New Guinea, West Samoa, Tahiti and Fiji where tattoos are quite normal in their cultural makeup. To a large degree these tattoos identify from which tribes they originate.
An Article in the “Joy Magazine” on Tattoos:

Tattoos amongst the Amazon tribes identify the various members of a given tribe. In Papua New Guinea, all kinds of body scarification, tattoos and body mutilation distinguish the various tribes. Among the tribes in Borneo tattooing is mainly associated with headhunting (a visible sign of success) for men and the coming of age of women — in some cases it symbolizes their social status. Tattoos are part of “the rites of passage”.

A pagan view on the subject: “A tattoo is a complex signifier; it signals class; it signals sexuality; and it has specific content as a signifier; a depiction of an animal, a person, an abstract tribal design. The most usual motifs are signifiers of power and masculinity. But what the tattoo signals above all is the power one seizes over one’s own body … To be branded or tattooed shows also that you have the requisite guts to join the group … it serves as a sign of pain and hence of resolution.” (Crissen Sartwell) To put this in simple terms, it is a form of autonomy (self law) which is idolatry.

“Tattooing is often a magical rite in the more traditional cultures, and the tattooist is respected as a priest or shaman.” (Michael Dello, Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration). (End of Joy Magazine Article.)

Prayer Points in Dealing with Tattoos

Leviticus 19:28 “Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourself. I am the L ORD.”

1. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) I ask you to remove every tattoo on my body that presents me as an agent of Satan.

2. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) I ask Your forgiveness for unwittingly putting tattoos on my body which actually showed collective family patterns. I may have had the same tattoos that another family member or ancestor may also have had, which symbolized the same family sins or underworld affiliation.

3. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us because when we put tattoos on our bodies we activated the Kundalini Serpent spirit and fire to come in and bind us.

4. FATHER, we know that many of South Africa’s gangster tattoos represent Sun worship. We ask You to forgive us for becoming involved in this form of idolatry.

3 Y’shua (Hebrew) is Jesus’ real name, which means “Salvation”. We have no problem with the name “Jesus” — it is merely the Greek transliteration of “Y’shua”. Jesus is the name most of us grew up with. Remember though, Y’shua was a Jew, of the Tribe of Judah, not a Greek. It’s sort of like this … when you come to know someone’s real name, you want to use it, hence the use of Y’shua instead of Jesus. Another powerful reason to use Y’shua is that every time you say His Name, you are proclaiming “Salvation”. You will also note in some places, we have used the real Name of the FATHER, YHVH. The Name is made up of the Hebrew letters, Yod-Hey-Vav-Hey, and is most commonly pronounced “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”. Again, we have chosen to use this, as YHVH is the FATHER’s Name.
5. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us that we used our tattoos to declare our gang or tribal identities. We renounce that demonic identity in the Name of Y’shua! From this moment on we proclaim our identity to be in Messiah Y’shua (Jesus Christ) of Nazareth our Saviour and Redeemer.

6. FATHER, we acknowledge that Your Holy Spirit is the only Spirit that gives us power and the gifts of Your Spirit is a manifestation of Your power. LORD we repent and ask for forgiveness because we rejected Your Holy Spirit power and we tattooed our bodies to symbolize occultic power and ranking.

7. FATHER, we ask forgiveness for putting tattoos of animals on our bodies not knowing that we have connected to religions of animism and animal spirit worship.

8. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us for putting tattoos of the Sun, Sun rays, the Moon, the stars or constellations of stars on our bodies depicting worship of those heavenly bodies. LORD we acknowledge that these things in the heavens were given to all nations to enjoy and You O LORD gave a definite warning that we should not look up to them and be enticed to worship them. Please forgive us for worshipping the creation and not the Creator.

9. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) I ask that all portals may be closed by the Blood of Messiah Y’shua (Jesus Christ). Because of certain satanic tattoos on our bodies we unknowingly opened up portals in the spirit for demons to enter into us… please forgive us LORD in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus).

10. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) we ask for Your forgiveness because we allowed spiritual monitors to follow us and stalk us because our tattoos were like bright shining demonic tags/labels in the spirit.

11. FATHER, please seal these demonic tags/labels with the Blood of Messiah Y’shua (Jesus Christ) and remove all demonic authority so that the enemy will have no more legal ground to communicate with us through the gateways of our tattoos.

12. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please take Your Flaming Sword and destroy every spirit and soul tie that still binds us with workers of iniquity because we have the same gang or tribal tattoos.

13. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us for putting tattoos of water creatures on our bodies, which connected us to marine altars and water spirits. These water spirits then opened up the doors for sexual sins in our lives.

14. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us for putting tattoos of flags on our bodies. (The Star Spangled Banner of the US and the Union Jack of the UK which actually represents Free Masonry).

15. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us for putting tattoos of the flags of the 26, the 27, the 28, the Desperado or the Air Force on our bodies. By these flags we showed allegiance to these groups and our involvement in the darkness of the occult.

16. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us for even putting drawings and tattoos on other people’s bodies. O LORD please remove the authority and influence that we have over them. From now on LORD, allow us only to exercise Godly influence and Godly authority over them.

17. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) please forgive us as we now repent that we used our tattoos as a tool to instill fear in other people.
18. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) we ask that You break the stronghold of tattoos forever over our lives and that when people see us that they will not see the tattoos that we display but that they will see the Fruits of Your Spirit that we display.

19. FATHER, in the Name of Y’shua (Jesus) we repent that we defiled our bodies with tattoos, our bodies which were supposed to be a dwelling place for Your Holy Spirit. Your Word says that if any man is in Christ he is a new creation and from today onwards we declare our bodies to be a dwelling place for Your Holy Spirit.

20. FATHER, please restore us so that the tattoos on our bodies will have no more authority in the spirit to speak into our spirits or our souls. Please LORD help us to gain spiritual victory over our tattoos. Thank You Y’shua (Jesus).

Additional Prayer Guidelines for Tattoos

• Wash the tattoo in Covenant Meal (Communion) wine/grape juice to declare that the Blood of Y’shua has the final word. Then anoint the tattoo and declare that the anointing of the Holy Spirit breaks the yoke of the evil one.

• Silence the tattoo altar from speaking and call the Fire of GOD down upon this altar to burn up whatever the enemy can use against you/the person. Silence all accusations against you/the person for allowing the tattoo to be placed on your/their body.

• Cut the body part free from the tattoo and any other influence it could have on the body. Cut the person free from the tattoo parlour as well as the tattoo artist, who was a channeller for satan. Cut yourself/the person free from the territorial spirits controlling that particular parlor where you/the person went to.

• Take every detail on the tattoo and whatever it stands for, and pray over everything in detail — all symbolism and whatever it was/is speaking into the spirit world. Bind every demon attached to every detail of the tattoo picture.

• Once having prayed over the tattoo and dispelling all demon spirits — render the tattoo powerless and close the gateways that were opened with the tattoo on the body part. This usually deals with the tattoo in the spirit.

• The BEST next step — if possible — will be is to go to someone who does laser treatment and have the tattoo removed. Even if you/the person can only afford it little-by-little monthly, it will still be worth it!!

Additional Resources on Tattoos:

Section on tattoos in our article on "Twilight":
http://www.kanaanministries.org/downloads/?did=71

Bill Sudduth's book "What's Behind The Ink?:"
http://arsenalbooks.com/product/Whats_Behind_the_Ink_Bill_Sudduth/39
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fhlJzORjQ8
EDITOR'S NOTE: For us, the terms "Christian" and "tattoos" are a non sequitur. Or, stating it another way, the issue of Christians having tattoos is a no-brainer because Scripture is unequivocal, unambivalent, and crystal clear regarding the matter. In other words, there is absolutely no gray area regarding this matter in the Word of GOD, but rather is entirely black and white: GOD condemns it and states categorically that it's a practice of pagans, not bona fide Christians! Period! Case closed! But some people, including purporting Christians, vociferously and adamantly claim and contend otherwise, albeit without a scintilla of Scriptural support. Again, for us, there is no argument; none at all. Nevertheless we proffer the following two articles for those (if there are any) who are on the fence concerning the issue, and really would like to consider the unimpeachable and irrefutable Biblical evidence. The first article, speaks for itself. The second article is offered to provide some fairly recent data regarding tattoo-mania, which, of course, we have no way of independently verifying. But, this data, or any data, has absolutely no bearing on what any Christian should believe regarding this or any other matter. Genuine Christianity does not base doctrine on demographic data and the ever-changing mores of human cultures, but on the unchanging Word of GOD!

**Tattoos And The Bible: A Christian Response To Tattoo-Mania (Part One)**  
*By Terry Watkins, ThD*

Within the last decade the tattoo has virtually conquered the cultural world.

The taboo tattoo was, until recently, the menacing fashion of heavy-metal rockers, bikers, criminals and the social outcast. But today the tattoo glamorously appears everywhere and anywhere. It's the latest fashion craze. The tattoo has found a canvas on celebrities such as Britney Spears, Julia Roberts, Jessica Simpson, Bruce Willis, Geraldo Rivera, Halle Berry, the Dixie Chicks, and thousands of others.

The sports world has also received the “baptism of tattoos.” A 1997 AP Poll discovered over 35% of all NBA players sported at least one tattoo, including such mega stars as Michael Jordan, and Shaquille O’Neal. Sports reporters claim similar tattoo percentages are decorating the professional football, baseball and hockey world. Holding their own, the tattoo adorns the “conservative” golf world on such notables as Lee Trevino and Tiger Woods.

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4 Taken from: [http://www.spiritlifemag.com/christians-and-tattoos/#sthash.EKD0uE6P.dpbs](http://www.spiritlifemag.com/christians-and-tattoos/#sthash.EKD0uE6P.dpbs)
The National Geographic News stated that 15% of all Americans are tattooed. The Alliance of Professional Tattooists (APT) estimates over 39 million Americans have a tattoo. Details Magazine published a poll that stated 22% of 18-25-year-olds have at least one tattoo. It’s also estimated 60% of the tattooed are women.

And many more are waiting in line ...

Even the toy world has its very own Tattoodles doll. And it’s rumored sweet little Barbie has recently been seen flaunting a “cool” tattoo. Not to be outdone by the tattooing zealous adults, the younger generation has joined the tattoo party. A Texas Tech University School of Nursing study consisting of over 2,100 adolescents from eight states reveal that 1 in 10 adolescents were tattooed and over half were planning on getting tattooed. Another study estimated 25% of all 15 to 25-year-olds are tattooed. By the way, the average age of getting tattooed is 16 years old. While some receive their first tattoo as young as eight-years-old.

According to US News and World Report, (November 3, 1997) tattooing is the country’s sixth-fastest-growing retail business. And growing at the amazing rate of more than one new tattoo studio every day.

And get this ... Lycos, who ranks the Top 50 search words every week, found “tattoos” was the fourth most searched word for the year 2001! For the week of October 15, 2002 (when this was written) “tattoos” was number six. And among the highly-prized Lycos 50 Elite, which is the 50 most popular topics in the history of the Lycos — “tattoos” comes in at a solid number seven. (search results at http://50.lycos.com). [Note: Jesus or Christ did not even make the Lycos Top 100, “the Bible” ranked number 18.]

In other words ... the world has gone “tattoo crazy”.

Even among many Christians the once-forbidden tattoo is welcomed with open arms (and legs, and necks, and backs, et al). Not surprising the major perpetrator of the Christian tattoo is the Christian rock music community. And fast following their Christian rock idols, thousands of Christian young people are getting “marked for Jesus” with the tattoo. Among the fastest growing trend in the tattoo industry is the Christian tattoo shops.

We’ve received scores of emails from concerned Christian parents, young people, youth pastors, and pastors requesting information on the tattoo. Many parents have written pleading for help with their teenagers and tattoos.

This article is an examination of tattoos in the light of the Word of GOD and history.

**Tattoos And The Bible: What About Leviticus 19:28?**

Leviticus 19:28 is the Christian (or so-called Christian?) tattooist and tattoo-bearer’s worst nightmare. The LORD plainly, clearly, strongly, and without a doubt — condemns the tattoo.

*Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:28*
Could that be any more clear? “Ye shall not ... print any marks upon you ...” Simple. Straightforward. Settled.

GOD said it. I Believe it. That settles it.

Right? Not hardly ...

The clear statement from the word of GOD does not settle anything for this generation of disobedient, carnal, worldly, tolerant, non-judgmental, Christians. Rather than obey GOD, they run miles and miles and miles to “justify” their open disobedience to the Word of GOD. How do they get around Leviticus 19:28?

Clearly, there it is. “Ye shall not ... print any marks upon you ...”


Did you know that “bestiality” (sicko, perverted, sex with an animal) was ONLY forbidden in the Old Testament Levitical Law? Only in Leviticus 18:23 and Leviticus 20:15-16. Dude, only in the Old Testament Law. Does that mean a Holy GOD NOW — under the New Testament, approves of bestiality?

By the way, have you ever read Leviticus 19:29? The verse immediately AFTER the “it’s not for me” Leviticus 19:28? Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. Leviticus 19:29, this is the only place in the Bible that GOD directly forbids someone to prostitute their daughter. And since, it’s ONLY in the Old Testament Levitical Law (and “hey, dude, we’re NOT under the law”) — it MUST be ok by the LORD for a parent to cause their daughter to prostitute.

Same sick, perverted, wicked, line of reasoning as the “it’s ONLY in the Old Testament-tattoo-bearer-wearer”. Same reasoning ... same disobedience ... same perversion of the Word of GOD.

There are many other “moral laws’ that are ONLY forbidden in the Old Testament, such as the human sacrifice of children. No where in the New Testament is this forbidden. Does that mean that NOW under the New Testament, GOD Almighty endorses throwing babies into the fire as a human sacrifice?

And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy GOD: I am the LORD. Leviticus 18:21

Matthew Henry’s Commentary at the beginning of Leviticus 19 explains that most of Leviticus 19 (such as verse 19:28) are moral commandments that applies not only for Israel but for the New Testament Christian today.

“Some ceremonial precepts there are in this Chapter, but most of them are moral ... most of these precepts are binding on us, for they are expositions of most of the Ten Commandments.” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Leviticus 19:28)
IT’S ONLY “FOR THE DEAD”

But by far the Christian tattooers favorite excuse for disobeying Leviticus 19:28 is the “that means nor print any marks upon you — for the DEAD”. It’s ok, as long it’s not for the dead”. See the “for the dead!!! ... for the dead!!!!”.

Is it ok to practice satanic bloodletting, self-mutilation or cutting of the flesh as long as it’s not for the dead? It’s in the same verse ... Hmmm ... ?

_Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD._ Leviticus 19:28

Notice also, the phrase “for the dead” is ONLY referencing the “cuttings in your flesh.” The condemnation of “nor print ANY marks upon you” is not qualified by the phrase “for the dead.” Also, if you’ll notice the verse clearly says “ANY marks” period.

Merrill F. Unger’s, very popular and authoritative, Unger’s Bible Dictionary under the definition for “Mark” includes the following reference for Leviticus 19:28:

“In _Leviticus 19:28_ we find two prohibitions of an unnatural disfigurement of the body: ‘Ye shall not make any cutting in your flesh for the dead, nor any print any marks upon you.’ The latter (Heb. qa aqa, incision) refers to tattooing, and has no reference to idolatrous usages, but was intended to inculcate upon the Israelites a proper reverence for GOD’s Creation.” (Merrill F. Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, 1974 ed., p. 696)

Notice that Unger teaches that tattoos were forbidden without any reference to pagan, heathen, or idolatrous usages. In other words, the tattoo itself, regardless the reason, was forbidden. Amen, Brother Unger.

Wycliffe’s Bible Encyclopedia under the definition for TATTOOING distinctly says:

“While ‘cuttings in the flesh’ have reference here to mourning customs [for the dead], the tattooing does not appear to pertain to such practice.” (Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, 1975 ed., p. 1664)

The New American Commentary on _Leviticus 19:28_ writes the condemnation was for, “cutting the body either for the dead or with tattoo marks.” (Mark F. Rooker, The New American Commentary on Leviticus, 2000 ed., p. 262) Explicitly recognizing the tattoo was not “for the dead.”

Do you see how dishonest and disobedient this “it doesn’t apply to my New-Testament-Christian-marked-for-Jesus-tattoo” is? Find what you don’t like in the Word of GOD, cut it out (doesn’t apply to New Testament Christians) or misapply (it’s just for the DEAD, when it’s clearly NOT). Same tactics used by the satanic cults and heretics for years. You can prove anything and everything with such deceitful methods.
THE “FORBIDDEN” HAIRCUT

One of the silliest and childish arguments to justify the Christian tattoo is the: “Hey man, do you get a haircut or trim your beard? GOD condemned getting a haircut or trimming your beard in the verse before forbidding the tattoo. Dude, the tattoo is the same as getting a haircut.” Believe it or not ... this is a widely used argument.

Leviticus 19:26-28 is a clear condemnation of pagan, witchcraft and heathen practices. Look at the context. Verse 26 is plainly referring to “enchantment [spells or witchcraft] nor observe times [astrology] ... Verse 28 is the pagan, demonic practice of bloodletting [cuttings in your flesh] and tattooing. Why would the LORD stick in the middle a verse that “condemns simply getting a haircut”? Of course, He wouldn’t ... And He didn’t ...

Leviticus 19:26-28 reads:

“26 Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times. 27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. 28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.”

The condemnation found in verse 27 of “rounding the corners of your head” or “mar the corners of thy beard” was the forbidding of a common pagan practice that cut the hair as worship and honor of the hosts of heaven.

Here’s how Matthew Henry’s and Coffman’s Commentaries reflect on the “forbidden haircut” of Leviticus 19:27:

“There those that worshipped the hosts of heaven, in honour of them, cut their hair so as that their heads might resemble the celestial globe; but, as the custom was foolish itself, so, being done with respect to their false gods, it was idolatrous.” (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Leviticus 19:27)

“Herodotus tells of the use of this type of haircut, forming what is called a tonsure, as the practice of pagan religious cults of ancient times who did so honoring one of their gods.” (Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament, Leviticus 19:27)

The fact is ... up until a few years ago, virtually everyone, including the most liberal Christian, KNEW the tattoo was clearly forbidden by the Word of GOD. And throughout history, the tattoo has ALWAYS been condemned by Bible Believing Christians. Always. Every historical resource ever written on tattoos clearly confirms this fact.

“Just as occurred in other cultures with tattoo traditions, when these pagan tribes were ‘converted’ to the Christian religion, their spiritual and cultural rites (which included tattooing, piercing and scarification) were outlawed ... ” (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book: A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p.9)
“Whenever missionaries encountered tattooing they eradicated it.” (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 101)

“While these and other body modifications continued to be practiced underground as a way for non-Christian people to identify each other, GOD forbid you got caught and your mark was revealed.” (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book: A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p.11)

Up until a few years, virtually every commentary written understood Leviticus 19:28 as an open condemnation of the tattoo. The Christian acceptance of a tattoo was not even considered for serious discussion.

Jameison-Faussett-Brown Commentary and Explanatory on the Whole Bible writes under Leviticus 19:28:

“Nor print any marks upon you — by tattooing, imprinting figures of flowers, leaves, stars, and other fanciful devices on various parts of their person. The impression was made sometimes by means of a hot iron, sometimes by ink or paint, as is done by the Arab females of the present day and the different castes of the Hindus. It it probable that a strong propensity to adopt such marks in honor of some idol gave occasion to the prohibition in this verse; and they were wisely forbidden, for they were signs of apostasy; and, when once made, they were insuperable obstacles to a return.” (Jameison-Faussett-Brown Commentary and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, Leviticus 19:28)

James M. Freeman in his excellent book, The New Manners & Customs of the Bible, says of Leviticus 19:28:

“Tattooing Forbidden: Both cutting and tattooing were done by the heathens, and so GOD forbade His people from doing so in imitation of them.” (James M. Freeman, The New Manners & Customs of the Bible, 1998 edition, p. 157)

Coffman’s Commentary on the Old and New Testament under Leviticus 19:28 says:

“The cutting of one’s flesh also characterized pagan worship as attested by the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel in the contest with Elijah. Tattooing was also a device of paganism. . . Christians generally disapprove of tattooing, despite the fact of the widespread use of it by many even today. In the light of what GOD says here, and in view of the history of it, it seems strange that anyone would pay someone else to tattoo him.” (Coffman’s Commentaries on the Old and New Testament, Leviticus 19:28)

Charles R. Erdman in his commentary on Leviticus 19:28 writes:

“The custom of tattooing was forbidden, while among all the nations of antiquity it was common.” (Charles R. Erdman, The Book of Leviticus, 1951 ed., p.93)
But Naves famous Topical Bible puts it best. Under the topic “Tattooing”, Nave’s simply and bluntly writes: “TATTOOING, forbidden, Lev. 19:28” (Nave’s Topical Bible, p. 1312)

**BUT WHAT ABOUT ISAIAH 44:5 AND EZEKIEL 9:4?**

I’ve seen several references by Christian tattooers who claim Isaiah 44 and Ezekiel 9 are examples of GOD-ordained tattoos in the Bible.

“And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” Ezekiel 9:4

“One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” Isaiah 44:5

The following excellent explanation of Isaiah 44:5 and Ezekiel 9:4 came from a Jewish website:

1) In Leviticus 19:28 the term used is “k’thoveth qa’aqa.” “K’thoveth” means “writing or inscription.” “Qa’aqa” comes from a root whose meaning is “to insert or to stick in.” Together, “writing that is stuck in”(see Rashi’s commentary on the verse). Jewish oral tradition explains that the verse is talking about what we refer to today as tattoos, i.e. scratching or piercing the skin and filling it in with pigment.(see the tractate “Makoth” 21a).

2) Isaiah 44:5 uses the word “yichtov” which means “will write” without the word “qa’aqa” “to insert or to stick in.” Isaiah is not talking about tattoos. What he is saying is “…and he will write with his hand to the L-rd…” like someone who signs a contract to express his utmost commitment and obligation(see Metzudath David’s commentary on the verse).

3) Ezekiel 9:4 uses the word “tav” which means “a mark or a sign.” The man clothed with linen is going to mark the foreheads of the righteous with ink, not tattoo them!

Someone who read the verses (Isaiah 44:5 and Ezekiel 9:4) in the Hebrew original would never dream that they are referring to tattoos.

THE “TATTOOED” LORD JESUS CHRIST

Some Christian tattooers go so far as claim that the Lord Jesus Christ has a tattoo!

Many Christian tattooers claim that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in Revelation Chapter 19 on a horse — He has a tattoo on His Thigh!

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Revelation 19:11-16 says:

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of GOD. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty GOD. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

I know you don’t believe Christians can be that deceived so here’s the proof:

“And what of Christ Himself? Twice in chapter 19, our Lord is depicted as having a name written on Him (verses 12 and 16). As unthinkable as it may be for some to picture our Lord Jesus as having a tattoo, the author of the Apocalypse had no problem with it.” (www.larryoverton.com/berean/tattoos.htm)

Revelation 19:16 clearly is referring to the “vesture his thigh” — “… he hath on his vesture and on his thigh …”

Can anyone with any spiritual discernment (and a brain) really believe the Lord Jesus Christ has a tattoo? Isn’t it amazing how spiritually blind someone becomes when they began to justify their disobedience to the Word of GOD?

But what really is frightening about this gross, perverted, wicked interpretation of a “tattooed” Jesus Christ in Revelation 19:16 — it makes the Lord Jesus Christ a SINNER!

It means the Lord Jesus CLEARLY disobeyed Leviticus 19:28! It means the Lord Jesus Christ was not Holy! He was not the sinless, spotless Lamb of GOD. He clearly was disobedient and broke the Levitical Law of Leviticus 19:28!

And if the Lord Jesus Christ committed sin — everyone is either in hell or on the way to hell. There is no salvation without a sinless, spotless Lamb of GOD. It took a sinless, perfect, Saviour to pay for your sins.

And thank GOD — despite what these spiritually sicko, perverted, Christian tattooers “preach” — The Lord Jesus Christ was without sin — and without “tattoo”!

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 1 Peter 1:18-19
For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 1 Peter 2:21-22

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 1 John 3:4-5

DEFILING THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

Most Christians, even the most carnal and backslidden, would never desecrate or defile the local church building. Even among most lost people there is a reverence and sacredness to the church building.

But ... did you know if you are truly born again the Holy Spirit of GOD dwells within in (John 14:17, Romans 8:9, 11) and your body is the temple of GOD. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 makes this very clear.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of GOD, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

And ... did you know the Lord warns several times of the seriousness of defiling the temple of GOD — your body! In 1 Corinthians 3, the Lord clearly and sternly warns against defiling your body — the temple of GOD. If any man defiles the temple of GOD — HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY!

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?17 If any man defile the temple of GOD, him shall GOD destroy; for the temple of GOD is holy, which temple ye are. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

My Christian friend, you’d better watch what you do with your body. It is the temple of a Holy GOD. You’d better not defile it with pagan, devil-worshiping tattoos! “... If any man defile the temple of GOD, him shall GOD destroy ...” What GOD said — He meant!

GOD is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Numbers 23:19
7 Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:7-8

Do you really believe the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased with a Christian wearing a pagan tattoo? Do you honestly believe GOD's Perfect Will is for a Christian, any Christian, to be "marked" with a demonic tattoo?

With the unbiased documentation and Bible we've given (and we could supply much, much more) there is no question to the pagan and devil-worshipping source of the tattoo. Every tattoo historian I've read, traces the root of the tattoo to religious paganism. Every one.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 is another warning against the tattoo. Notice the warning against the "fellowshipping" and concord with Christ and Belial (the devil). Verse 16 is very interesting ... as it relates the "fellowshipping" with your body — the temple of the living GOD.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 reads:

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

I realize in writing this, a lot of Christians (or so-called Christians?) could care less what GOD says. They’re gonna do what they want to do — despite heaven or hell. But there are many Christians who want to serve GOD more than anything — with ever fiber of their soul. I’ve talked to many, many Christians who were thinking about getting a tattoo. But after showing them the satanic origin of the tattoo they realized a tattoo was not the will of GOD. And it was for those “good and faithful servants” of the Lord Jesus Christ that this was written for.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Matthew 25:23

Friend, GOD loves you and desires more than anything you love and obey Him. He desires first of all obedience unto salvation by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12). And after salvation, His will for you is to serve and love Him with all you heart, body, mind and soul.

You won’t regret it! It'll be worth it one day!
If you are truly a Christian and still have doubts about whether the tattoo is the perfect will of GOD, go back through this article with an open Bible and an open hear. Prayerfully, look up the verses. And before you start, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. 2 Peter 3:17-18
“YE WORSHIP YE KNOW NOT WHAT”  
*Jesus Christ*, John 4:22

Throughout history the tattoo bears the mark of paganism, demonism, Baal worship, shamanism, mysticism, heathenism, cannibalism and just about every other pagan belief known. The tattoo has NEVER been associated with Bible Believing Christians. And whenever and wherever, in history Christianity *appears* — tattoos *disappear*. The only exception -- 20th century, lukewarm, carnal, disobedient, Laodicean Christians.

The birth of the tattoo has always borne the fruits of pagan religion and mysticism. Without exception, research after research, study after study, book after book, the roots of the tattoo never wavers. The following documentation is just a small (very small) drop of the ocean of research documenting the pagan and demonic source of the tattoo.

Please remember ... the following documentation is from pro-tattoo books simply documenting the obvious spiritual and religious link to the tattoo. These are not Christian writers trying to paint a negative portrait of the tattoo. No matter how much the carnal, rebellious, Christian desires to justify their perverse reasoning for "marking" themselves with the forbidden demonic tattoo, the facts are loud and clear, backed by tons of research and documentation by the leading pro-tattoo authorities on the planet — the foundation, origin, meaning and purposes of the tattoo is pagan demonism, shamanism, Baal worship, and occult mysticism.

A tattooist in many cultures is also a shaman, magick-man, priest or priestess. According to the dictionary a shaman is a "intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds, using magic to cure illness, foretell the future, control spiritual forces, etc." ([www.infoplease.com/ipd/A0648969.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipd/A0648969.html))

"Tattooing is often a magical rite in the more traditional cultures, and the tattooist is respected as a priest or shaman." (Michelle Delio, *Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration*, p. 73)

"In Fiji, Fromosa, New Zealand and in certain of the North American Indian tribes, tattooing was regard as a religious ceremony, and performed by priests or priestesses." (Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 64)

"The actual tattooing process, which involved complex ritual and taboos, could only be done by priests and was associated with beliefs which were secrets known only to members of the priestly caste ..."

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6 Taken from: [http://www.av1611.org/tattoos/pagan.html](http://www.av1611.org/tattoos/pagan.html)
Hambly concluded that historically tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting which were associated with religious practices intended to put the human soul in harmony with supernatural forces and ensure continuity between this life and the next." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 158)

The tattooist, shaman or the occult priest many times uses the tattoo as a point of contact, or inlets into the spiritual world. The tattoo is much more than just a body decoration. It’s more than just a layer of ink cut into the skin. In fact, the tattoo in every culture, in every country, up until the 20th century, was a vehicle for pagan spiritual and religious invocations. Even today, in many countries (including the United States), the tattoo is believed to be a bridge into the supernatural world.

Famous witch and author Laurie Cabot writes of the tattoo:

"The origins of tattooing came from ancient magical practices ..." (Laurie Cabot, Power of the Witch, cited in Masonic and Occult Symbols Illustrated by Dr. Cathy Burns, p. 301)

"According to Amy Krakow in her chronicle The Total Tattoo Book, ‘tattooing has had well-defined roles: marking a rite of passage at a stage of life, calling the spirits, proudly, defiantly or sneaky showing who you are via body art.”

"Many native tribes practiced therapeutic tattooing. The Ojibwa, for instance, tattooed the temples, forehead, and cheeks of those suffering from headaches and toothaches that were believed to be caused by malevolent spirits. Songs and dances that were supposed to exorcise the demons accompanied the tattooing ceremony." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 90)

"Tattooing is about personalizing the body, making it a true home and fit temple for the spirit that dwells inside it ... Tattooing therefore, is a way of keeping the spiritual and material needs of my body in balance." (Michelle Delio, Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration, p. 8)

Among today’s latest tattoo craze is "tribal tattoos", which are pure paganism. Tribal tattoos are designs that bear serious symbolic mystical and occult meanings. Tribal tattoos, especially, are possible channels into spiritual and demonic possession.

"When the designs are chosen with care, tattoos have a power and magic all their own. They decorate the body but they also enhance the soul." (Michelle Delio, Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration, p. 13)
The reasons why puncturing the skin should be regarded with some degree of awe are not far to seek, for in the first place, there is the drawing of blood, which to the savage world over is full of significance as a rejuvenating and immortalizing factor. There is in addition to the opening of numerous inlets for evil to enter ...” (Hambly Wilfrid D. 1925. The History of Tattooing and its Significance, p. 233, cited in Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 162)

Rolling Stone magazine describes famous tattoo artist Paul Booth during his tattoo as, "... allowing his clients' demons to help guide the needle." (Rolling Stone magazine, March 28, 2002, p. 40)

"Burmese tattooing has been associated with religion for thousands of years. Tattooing among indigenous North American groups including the Arapaho, Mohave, Cree, and Inuit (Eskimo) is rooted in the spiritual realm as well." (Laura Reybold, Everything you need to know about the dangers of tattooing and body piercing, p. 15)

"Skulls imprinted on skin abound, and depictions of the Grim Reaper are commonly seen ... These images, indelibly marked on the skin, reflect uncertainty about the future, and sublimate the pervasive fear of the unknown. Possibly, at the same time, to wear a death's figure on one's body may be an invocation of whatever undefinable forces of nature and the cosmos that exist, in an attempt to protect the wearer from such a fate." (Henry Ferguson and Lynn Procter, The Art of the Tattoo, p. 76)

Ronald Scutt, in his exhaustive book, Art, Sex and Symbol covers a great deal about the history and culture of tattoos. Scutt documents that most of the time tattoos are connected to spiritual, religious and mystical purposes. The following documentation is from Scutt’s book:

"In fact tattooing is much more likely, in view of its subsequent development, to have had a mystical significance, or to have been used as a status symbol, the red ochre carrying an association with blood and life." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 22)

[Tattooing] "In association with sun-worship, megalithic building, ear-piercing, serpent worship, ..." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 22)

"These marks [tattoos] are believed to be associated with the worship of the sun-goddess Neith" (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 24)

"Be that as it may, primitive tribes were certainly convinced that the spirit, having escaped from the body at death, retained a replica of its earthly tenement. They therefore used tattoo marks as a means of identification in the next world and a passport to future happiness." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 63)
"The Mohave Indians in the Lower Colorado instituted chin tattooing for both sexes because it was believed that a kind of Judge looks over each one who comes to Sil'aid (Land of the Dead) and if a man don't have marks on his face, He sends him down to where the desert rats are." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 63)

"Among other Indian tribes there was a conviction that on the journey heavenwards to the 'Many Lodges' they would be stopped by an old woman and examined for the presence of tattoo marks on the forehead, chin or wrists. I absent, the luckless warrior would be pushed off a dizzy height to fall back to earth with no hope of ever gaining readmittance to the spirit world." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 63)

"Hindus in Begal believed that without tattoos parents would not be able to recognize their children in the next world." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 63)

"Then there is the ghastly fate of the untattooed Frijan women: 'struck down by the souls of their own sex and without further ado served up as food for the gods.'" (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 64)

"Yet the worship of the sun-god Baal had involved the marking of the hands [tattoos] with the divine token in a mystic attempt to acquire strength." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 64)

According to survey and statistics, Scutt lists the reasons why people get a tattoo and the number two reason — "to secure a place in heaven".

"Reasons for getting a tattoo:

2. To secure a place in heaven.
5. To propitiate malignant spirits at time of death.
6. To acquire special characteristics through totemism and ancestor worship.
9. To make the body sexually interesting." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 13)

Dr. Hambly, probably the greatest tattooist historian and researcher that ever lived, writes over and over, that tattoos are based on pagan spiritual and religious rituals. Any serious and honest study of the origin and foundation of the tattoo will clearly expose a demonic and supernatural intent of tattoos.

Tattoo enthusiast and historian, Steve Gilbert, in his popular, Tattoo History: A Source Book, cites some of the historical facts Hambly found in his extensive research.

[Hambly] "retailed a wealth of examples which he had culled from field work by anthropologists in many parts of the world. Tattooing was supposed to: prevent pain; protect against gunshot wounds; cure illness; confer superhuman strength; preserve youth; enhance the supernatural powers of a shaman; ensure the survival of the soul after death; ...
... Identify the soul in the hereafter; attract good luck; protect against witchcraft; ensure the protection of a deity; confer occult powers; prevent drowning; exorcise demons; ensure the protection of a totemic animal or spiritual guardian; record a pilgrimage to a holy place, etc.

Hambly reported that previous investigators had often been misled because obtaining information as to the religious and magical uses of tattooing was fraught with difficulties. In the myths of many cultures tattooing was of divine origin. The actual tattooing process, which involved complex ritual and taboos, could only be done by priests and was associated with beliefs which were secrets known only to members of the priestly caste. Anthropologists were often misled because their informants either did not know or would not reveal the secret significance of the rituals and taboos. Hambly concluded that historically tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting which were associated with religious practices intended to put the human soul in harmony with supernatural forces and ensure continuity between this life and the next." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 158)

THE TATTOO’S GREATEST ENEMY ... THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

In the pages of history, whenever and wherever "tattooing" pagan tribes were converted to Christianity, without exception, one of their first pagan practices to "pass away" (2 Corinthians 5:17) — was the tattoo. Why? Because, unlike today’s disobedient carnal "tattooed" Christians (or so-called?), the converted pagan KNEW the tattoo was against the Word of God. The Holy Spirit quickly "told" the converted pagan — no tattoo.

"Just as occurred in other cultures with tattoo traditions, when these pagan tribes were 'converted' to the Christian religion, their spiritual and cultural rites (which included tattooing, piercing and scarification) were outlawed ..." (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p.9)

Amazing ... when the Lord Jesus Christ enters in — the tattoo goes out.

"Whenever missionaries encountered tattooing they eradicated it." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 101)

"While these and other body modifications continued to be practiced underground as a way for non-Christian people to identify each other, God forbid you got caught and your mark was revealed." (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p.11)

I have many friends before they were saved received a tattoo. And without exception, everyone of them is ashamed, and as much as possible they cover it. But before they got saved — like the pagan tribes — they proudly displayed their tattoo. And let me add — most of the time, this is before they’ve read Leviticus 19:28, or before anyone even told them a tattoo is wrong.
After receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, they KNEW the tattoo was displeasing to their God. What about you?

A booming testimony to the author of the tattoo is recorded by Steve Gilbert:

"When Cortez and his conquistadors arrived on the coast of Mexico in 1519, they were horrified to discover that natives not only worshipped devils in the form of status and idols, but also had somehow managed to imprint indelible images of these idols on their skin. The Spaniards, who had never heard of tattooing, recognized it at once as the work of Satan." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 99)

Even though, these Spaniards "had never heard of tattooing" — they "recognized it at ONCE as the work of Satan".

And some of today's carnal, rebellious and disobedient Christians (or so-called Christians?) gibber-gabber nonsense about "marking themselves for Jesus" ...

TATTOOS. . . AND TODAY’S CIVILIZED SOCIETY

Somebody says, "Sure that was back in the dark ages. That was in heathen lands. Today that has all changed. Nobody connects any kind of ritualistic or pagan spiritual rituals to a tattoo."

Yes ... They do ...

"These tattoos act as protective and empowering talismans for the wearer. There are even some body artists who perform ritual tattoos, piercing, brandings and cuttings. They may suggest you consult your astrological chart to pick the right time to get your body art. They will burn incense, light candles, . . ." (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p. 29)

"Some tattooists in the West are experimenting with ritual tattooing. This method of working incorporates doing a ritual to create a sacred space in the area where the tattoo is positioned. Often incense is burned and the gods invited to bless the proceedings." (Michelle Delio, Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration, p. 75)

TATTOOS: THE CUP OF DEVILS

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the table of devils.” 1 Corinthians 10:21
TATTOO: The Mark of Blood

By Terry Watkins | Dial-the-Truth Ministries

TATTOO: THE BLOODY TRUTH

One of the oldest and most common satanic practices is cutting of the flesh or blood-letting. The term "blood-letting" originates from the word "let" — "to allow to pass, go or come"; hence "blood-letting" literally means to allow the blood to come, or pass.

Throughout history the cutting of the flesh and blood-letting are rituals performed to unleash demonic and supernatural powers. Because the "life of the flesh is in the blood" [Leviticus 17:11], the blood is highly valued in the occult as the "power source". And by releasing or letting the blood or the "power source" — supernatural power is unleashed.

The Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult, writes of the power of the blood and it's connection to Satanism and the occult.

"BLOOD (occult; Satanism). The vitalizing or life-giving agent used in the sacrament of the BLACK MASS. Blood is believed to provide power and life and therefore plays a central part in ritualistic sacrifices." (George A. Mather and Larry A. Nichols, Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult, p.40)

The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft, says of the blood-letting ritual, "Blood that is let is believed to unleash power". By the way, some modern tattoo artists perform rituals during their tattoo procedure in order to unleash supernatural power. Some even lick the flowing blood bubbling from the tattoo.

"BLOOD: Called the "river of life", blood is identified with the soul and is the vehicle that carries the vital energy of the universe through the body. In magic, blood is revered and feared for the miraculous power it possesses and confers. Blood that is let is believed to unleash power." (Guiley, Rosemary Ellen, The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft, second edition, p. 26)

The Word of God in 1 Kings 18 gives a detailed and perverse example of blood-letting by Satanists (aka prophets of Baal) attempting to unleash supernatural power and ignite the fire for the sacrifice.
“25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. 26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. 27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. 28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.” (1 Kings 18:25-28)

Notice how 1 Kings 18:28 describes this devil-worshipping, self-mutilation, blood-release act — "... after their manner ..." In other words, this "blood-letting" was common practice among the prophets of the devil. Blood-letting was a familiar ritual among the prophets of Baal.

It’s also evident from other scriptures that cutting of the flesh or blood-letting was common practice among the pagan, wicked nations.

In Leviticus 21:5 and Deuteronomy 14:1, the LORD condemns such demonic practices.

“5 They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. 6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.” (Leviticus 21:5-6)

“Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.” (Deuteronomy 14:1)

**BLOOD-LETTING AND DEMON POSSESSION**

Mark chapter 5 contains the familiar account of the devil-possessed man of Gadera. Notice in verse 5, among the demonic acts, and a tell-tale sign of possession — cutting himself with stones.

“1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. 6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, **thou unclean spirit.** 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, **My name is Legion: for we are many.**” (Mark 5:1-9)

It’s also interesting that this "cutting himself with stones" was associated with a man possessed not with one, but legions or many devils. Luke describes the same account as "... a certain man, which had devils **long time** ..."

"And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, **which had devils long time**, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." (Luke 8:27)

The morbid practice of cutting oneself and blood-letting has a long and dark history in the demonic pages of satanism, demonism and the occult.

Under the definition of "Satanism", the highly-acclaimed, Encyclopedia of American Religions, lists among the activities performed by Satanists is "blood letting":

"**In this branch of Satanism, ... one can expect to find those individuals engaged in grave robbery, sexual assaults and the ritual blood letting ...**" (Melton, Gordon, Encyclopedia of American Religions, 3rd Edition, Gale Research Ltd., 1989, p. 145)

An article in The Independent newspaper, acknowledges the pathway from blood-letting to satanism found on websites aimed toward children.

"**The Association of Teachers and Lecturers said the popularity of children’s programmes and books featuring witchcraft could encourage children to search for sinister material on the internet. Researchers for the union found websites promoting satanism, blood-letting and wicca (witch). ...One website found by the union describes in detail how to carry out blood-letting and blood drinking ...**” (Buffy 'prompting pupils to access the occult", Ben Russell, Education Correspondent, The Independent, April 22, 2000, www.cesnur.org/testi/buffy_001.htm)

In 1996, the satanic, Kentucky vampire cult led by the self-acclaimed 500-year-old vampire and satanist, teenager Rod Ferrell brutally murdered two people. Ferrell began his dark journey of blood, satanism, vampirism and murder by walking around cemeteries at night, **cutting himself and practicing blood-letting.** ("Vampire Cult Slaying Case," Court TV [Online]. www.courttv.com/verdicts/vampire.html)

**TATTOO: A TRAIL OF BLOOD-LETTING**

There’s no question that tattoos originated from the satanic ritual of blood-letting and cutting of the flesh as described in 1 Kings 18. In fact, in Leviticus Chapter 19 verse 28, where the LORD clearly condemns the tattoo, **“Ye shall not make any ... print any marks upon you.”** Notice what else is included in the same verse ... Obviously, by the context, the LORD connects the forbidden "marks" or tattoo, — **“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh ...”** (more on Leviticus 19:28 later).
"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:28)

TATTOO: AND THE BLOOD FLOWS

Perhaps it would be a good time to give a few brief descriptions of the tattoo procedure. May I remind you again, these are all from pro-tattoo resources.

"Early people cut open their skin and rubbed soot into the wounds to mark themselves. They punctured their skin with the bones and teeth of animals." (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, p. 28)

"You’ll see little drops of blood emerge from the freshly tattooed spot ... How much you bleed has a lot to do with your personal physiology as well as outside factors (like the presence of alcohol in your bloodstream, which can make you bleed like a stuck pig). Usually your blood will coagulate within a few minutes, clotting up the tiny punctures that have been made ... When your tattoo is finished, the artist will clean it gently with an alcohol/water solution. Once that dries and little blood bubbles have ceased rising to the surface, the artist may want to snap a few photos of your piece." (Jean-Chris Miller, The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications, pp. 97,98,99)

"The tattooist guides the tattoo machine over the skin. He or she stops the needle every minute or so to wipe the blood and ink clean. The amounts of bleeding and pain in the tattoo process differ according to each person ... After the first two hours, remove the bandage and wash away any collected or dried blood." (Bonnie B. Graves, Tattooing and body piercing, p. 22, 24)

"As soon as he stops working with the needle, the sailor’s skin send up its blood beads ... the eagle’s eye reddens but there is now no telling blood from ink ... Carmey floods the flesh behind the eagle with red and the finished eagle poises on a red sky, born and baptized in the blood of it’s owner." (Ronald Scutt, Art, Sex and Symbol, 1974, p. 19)

"The reasons why puncturing the skin should be regarded with some degree of awe are not far to seek, for in the first place, there is the drawing of blood, which to the savage world over is full of significance as a rejuvenating and immortalizing factor. There is in addition the opening of numerous inlets for evil to enter." ([Hambly Wilfrid D. 1925. The History of Tattooing and its Significance, p. 233] (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 162)

Rolling Stone magazine gives a first-hand description of the blood-letting tattoo procedure:

"Evan Seinfeld, the bassist for Biohazrd, sits in the chair, offers his hand and waits for the bleeding to began ...
The instrument whirs to life, humming across Seinfeld's hand, creating a **vibrating pool of blood and ink.**" (Rolling Stone, March 28, 2002, p. 40)

Beware — the tattoo procedure is a fashion of the satanic practice of blood-letting or cutting of ones flesh. Rubbing a little ink or pigment in it doesn’t change the fact — you are cutting your flesh — you are practicing blood-letting.

Don’t take my word for it. Here’s what the pro-tattoo, historians write:

By far, the most extensive work ever published on tattoos was Dr. W.D. Hambly’s, *The History of Tattooing And It’s Significance*. Author Steve Gilbert, in his popular *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, writes, "Hambly concluded that historically **tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting ...""

"**Hambly concluded that historically tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting which were associated with religious practices** intended to put the human soul in harmony with supernatural forces and ensure continuity between this life and the next." (Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 158)

Did you also notice in the above quote, that Hambly also concluded that tattoos were "associated with religious practices"? Hmmm ... Now I wonder what kind of "religious practices" would practice "blood-letting"? Hint: If you forgot, go back and read 1 Kings 18.

There’s no doubt that the cutting and marking of one’s skin [tattooing] is connected to and associated with the satanic and demonic practice of blood-letting.

Author Gilbert again links the tattoo to blood-letting, and magic. And even gives an enlightening and frightening description of a modern day blood-letting, blood-licking, satanic, tattoo procedure. Notice, the connection to the demonic "spiritual manifestations".

"**In northwest Alaska, traditional practices of tattoo and ritually induced bleeding were often related and may have even overlapped to some extent.** Around Bering Strait, shamans commonly **performed bloodletting** to relieve aching or inflamed parts of the body. Nelson watched a shaman 'lancing the scalp of his little girl’s head, the long, thin iron point of the instrument being thrust twelve to fifteen times between the scalp and skull [which is the identical technique for tattooing] ... It is plausible that the release of blood functioned to appease various ills and **spiritual manifestations**. For instance, several St. Lawrence Islanders explained to me the importance of licking the blood that was released during tattoo ‘operations’." (Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 181)

May I again remind you — all this information and documentation are from books promoting and glorifying the tattoo! These are not Christian authors writing with any anti-tattoo slant. But this is hard, documented facts from tattoo artists, tattoo historians and people who endorse tattoos.

You can **try to** justify and close your eyes to the documented FACTS — but the FACT is — the tattoo is clearly connected to satanic blood-letting.
“And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.” 1 Kings 18:28

“And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” Mark 5:6

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” 2 Corinthians 2:11
Nanoparticles in Tattoos May Cause Cancer

By Dr. Mercola | 20 November 2013

Story at-a-glance:

- Nanoparticles are widely found in tattoo inks, with black pigments containing the smallest particles and some virtually 100-percent nanoparticles.
- Nanoparticles are ultramicroscopic in size, making them able to readily penetrate your skin and travel to underlying blood vessels and your bloodstream.
- Tattoo inks are not regulated and may contain cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).
- To date there have been no systemic studies to look at the safety of injecting such inks into the body, so the long-term health effects remain unknown.

I don't know about you, but I've never gotten a tattoo and after reading this study I am glad I avoided them. If you've ever gotten a tattoo, or thought about it, chances are high that you weighed the artistic and social aspects of it far more than the health aspects. In fact, you may not even be aware that there is a health aspect to receiving a tattoo — other than the inherent risks of infection, allergic reaction or disease transmission if equipment is not properly sterilized.

Research is increasingly showing, however, that there might be health risks involved, especially if your tattoo design contains large areas of black ink, as the ink itself may be toxic.

Can Tattoo Ink Lead to Cancer?

It has been said that "tattoo ink is remarkably nonreactive histologically, despite the frequent use of different pigments of unknown purity and identity by tattoo artists."

However, University of Bradford researchers using an atomic force microscope (AFM) that allows them to examine skin with tattoos at the nano-level have found evidence that suggests otherwise. In a preliminary study (the first to use an AFM to examine tattoos), the researchers found that the tattoo process remodels collagen (your body's main connective tissue).

Further, nanoparticles from tattoo ink were found to exist in both the collagenous network of the skin as well as around blood vessels. This suggests that the ink particles are leaving the surface of your skin and traveling elsewhere in your body, where they could potentially enter organs and other tissues.

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8 Taken from: http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/11/20/nanoparticles-tattoo-ink.aspx
This is problematic because tattoo inks are largely unregulated and known to contain cancer-causing compounds. The researchers believe the issue could become a significant public health concern given the rise in tattooing in the last decade, noting:

"We need to do more work, but there is no question that these substances can be toxic. It takes a long time for the multi-step nature of cancer to show its face and I don't think we should wait to see if there is anything wrong with these ingredients."

**Nanoparticles in Tattoo Ink May Be Carcinogenic**

Nanoparticles are ultramicroscopic in size, making them able to readily penetrate your skin and travel to underlying blood vessels and your bloodstream. Evidence suggests that some nanoparticles may induce toxic effects in your brain and cause nerve damage, and some may also be carcinogenic.

In 2011, a study in *The British Journal of Dermatology* revealed that nanoparticles are indeed found in tattoo inks, with black pigments containing the smallest particles (white pigments had the largest particles and colored pigments were in between).

With the exception of the white pigments, the researchers noted that "the vast majority of the tested tattoo inks contained significant amounts" of nanoparticles. "The black pigments were almost pure NPs [nanoparticles], i.e. particles with at least one dimension <100 nm," they said.

**Black-Ink Tattoos May Be the Riskiest**

The black ink is the color most often linked to potential adverse health effects, although all tattoo inks have toxic potential, including:

- Potentially carcinogenic.
- May cause inflammation and DNA damage.
- May contain carcinogenic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) like benzo(a)pyrene (a Class 1 carcinogen according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer).

Since black ink may contain a significant amount of nanoparticles, it is likely that such toxins could find easy entrance into your bloodstream, perhaps worsening their effects. Writing in *Experimental Dermatology*, researchers highlighted the dangerous potential of tattoo inks (particularly black) even beyond nanoparticles:

"Black tattoo inks are usually based on soot, are not regulated and may contain hazardous polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Part of PAHs possibly stay lifelong in skin, absorb UV radiation and generate singlet oxygen, which may affect skin integrity."
...Tattooing with black inks entails an injection of substantial amounts of phenol and PAHs into skin. Most of these PAHs are carcinogenic and may additionally generate deleterious singlet oxygen inside the dermis when skin is exposed to UVA (e.g. solar radiation)."

While so far incidences of skin cancer appearing on tattooed skin has been deemed coincidental, it is largely unknown whether the inks may be contributing to cancers, or other health problems, elsewhere in the body. It's known, for instance, that some tattoo pigment may migrate from your skin into your body's lymph nodes. According to Dr. Samuel Epstein, a well-respected professional in cancer prevention:

"...the evidence which we’ve accumulated so far, is largely restricted to the fact that they [nanoparticles] get into your bloodstream and reach organs throughout your body. And as far as the brain is concerned, we have actual evidence of entry into the brain and producing toxic effects -- lesions, small lesions, toxic effects in the brain."

Tattoo Inks Are Not Regulated in the US, Most Are Industrial-Grade Products

Inks and ink colorings (pigments) used for tattoos are technically subject to regulation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as cosmetics and color additives. However, the Agency states that because of other public health priorities and a "previous lack of evidence of safety concerns," they have not traditionally regulated such products. As such, many dyes used in tattooing are actually produced for industrial uses such as car paint or printers’ ink, for instance.

To date there have been no systemic studies to look at the safety of injecting such inks into the body, although the National Center for Toxicological Research is conducting research to determine:

- The chemical composition of tattoo inks and how they break down in your body.
- The short-term and long-term safety of tattoo inks and pigments.
- How your body responds to the interaction of light with the inks.

The Friends of the Earth — a global network of grassroots groups — is among those now calling for proper regulation of tattoo inks amidst the new findings that they may contribute to cancer. In the meantime, it may be wise to "think before you ink," as the FDA recommends, at least until further research is completed (and remember that permanent makeup is also a form of tattoo).

Are All Nanoparticles Dangerous?

Nanotechnology refers to the study and design of systems at the scale of the atom, or the nanoscale. At the most basic level, the manufacturing is actually the rearranging of individual molecules and atoms into complex "molecular machines."
One nanometer is one-billionth of a meter, which is a measure so small it's absolutely useless as a reference point. To get some idea of just how small these particles are, consider that a human blood cell is 8,000 nanometers, and a human hair is 80,000 nanometers wide.

On one level, nanoparticles are an incredible advancement of technology. For instance, in the supplement industry, nanotechnology can shrink the size of vitamin molecules down to microscopic nanodroplets that are much easier for your body to absorb. On the other hand, nanoparticles are so small that they can easily be inhaled or absorbed through your skin, so great care needs to be taken as to what types of particles are being produced on the nano-scale. As written by Sayer Ji, founder of GreenMedInfo.com:

“One of the unintended, adverse consequences of nanotechnology in general is that by making a substance substantially smaller in size than would occur naturally, or though pre-nanotech production processes, the substance may exhibit significantly higher toxicity when in nanoparticle form. Contrary to older toxicological risk models, less is more: by reducing a particle's size the technology has now made that substance capable of evading the body's natural defenses more easily, i.e. passing through pores in the skin or mucous membranes, evading immune and detoxification mechanisms that evolved millions of years before the nanotech era.”

I'm typically a major advocate of technology, but I have mixed feelings about the use of nanotechnology, particularly when it comes to exposing your body to these complex molecules for non-essential purposes like tattoos. If harnessed properly, however, nanotechnology has the potential to make major strides in conventional medicine and other areas related to your health. Stay tuned for more information as new advances in nanotechnology are made... by the way, this is an area that extends far beyond tattoo ink or even cosmetics. Already, nanotechnology is being harnessed for seemingly endless applications, including:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Environmental remediation</th>
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<th>Commercial products (hundreds of products including tennis rackets, computers, food packaging, automotive products, stain removers, air purifiers and much more)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronics and information technology</td>
<td>Medical and health applications</td>
<td>Transportation (smarter and greener vehicles and aircraft, for example)</td>
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The Priestly Blessing ...

*Numbers 6:24-26*

“24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”
The Priestly Blessing ...

Hebraic Translation

"YHVH will kneel before you presenting gifts, and He will guard you with a hedge of protection, YHVH will illuminate the wholeness of His Being toward you, bringing order, and He will provide you with love, sustenance, and friendship, YHVH will lift up the wholeness of His Being and look upon you, and He will set in place all you need to be whole and complete."

*Translation by Jeff A. Benner, for more information, please see [http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/12_blessing.html](http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/12_blessing.html)*
The Priestly Blessing

May the LORD bless you and keep you
May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
May the LORD lift up his face to you and give you peace

1 This blessing is (ritually) recited (by the kohanim) during synagogue services during Nesiat Kapayim ("the Raising of the Hands"), though it is also recited over children on Friday night before the start of the Shabbat meal or as a bedtime blessing.
2 The name YHVH (יהוה) represents God's attributes of love and mercy, in contradistinction to the name Elohim (אלוה), which represents God's attributes of justice and power as our Creator.
3 The word for "face" (פנים) is plural with the 3rd person singular ending. It is considered metaphorical since God is incorporeal. The plural form is thought by some to indicate God's revealed and hidden attributes in creation.
4 The hiphil verb (ראה) comes from the word "light" (ל }; 3:18). grace refers to the bestowal of an undeserved gift. The blessing is bestowed even though unearned or unmerited.
5 May God grant you grace or favor (ᵍ), i.e., to understand the "breadth and length and height and depth" of God's love (Eph. 3:18). Grace refers to the bestowal of an undeserved gift. The blessing is bestowed even though unearned or unmerited.
6 Since one's face is an indication of the heart's attitude, Rashi says that this means God will suppress His anger by "looking at you" (if God is angry at you, He "turns His face away" and refuses to admit your presence). The "lifting of face" also pictures God lifting you up as a father might lift up his child in joy. The "showing of face" indicates spiritual intimacy.
7 All of the other blessings are useless without the establishment of inner peace, and therefore it is the seal of the blessing. Shalom (שלום) is not simply the absence of strife, but a balance and harmony between the finite and infinite, the temporal and the eternal, the material and the spiritual realms. Shalom is a gift from Sar Shalom (שלום עליכם, the Prince of Peace.)