

Coyote Madonna

Contributed by Editor, Coyote Madonna

Welcome to Coyote Madonna - mashing up religion and spirituality on-line since 1999. Culture is a living thing. Buddhism fuses with Native American ritual fuses with Christianity fuses with who knows what... some call it new age, but it has been going on forever. Creation is always dying, always pregnant, always giving birth, and some rough beast is always slouching towards some Bethlehem to be born. Birth is, of course, a bloody process. I speak from experience, having helped birth a few babies. There is lot's of grunting and screaming and sweat and blood - and to think that the process of spiritual fusion and birth will be any different is, I think, foolish. But in the end there is new life, and joy. In theological terms, theism is dead. That ole' omnipotent boogey man in the sky just isn't there. The concept does not jibe with what we know about the universe. But as has been said, just because theism is dead, doesn't mean God is dead. (Let's stop right there for a minute. God has become a bit of a loaded word. Male, angry, etc. I prefer the term Creator, or better yet: Creation! Creation as verb, not noun. Creation as ongoing process, unfinished, unfolding, dynamic. Creation not separate from the Creator, but one and the same. There is no Creator out there, apart. Creator/Creation is here, the unfolding ground of being. We are in the belly of Creation, in the womb, always being born.) The word 'religion' comes from the Latin, 'religio' to link. Notice that this is an action, a verb. We are always linking, fusing, trying to make sense of it all. And our civilization has been inundated with so much information and revelation about the actual nature of the universe and reality, that we haven't really had much of a chance to integrate it, link it to our daily lives and spirit. Whenever our systems of linking are in disarray, new things come about. What a glorious process. I can think of some great examples from the past. Christianity met up with the peyote religion of northern Mexico and gave rise to the Native American Church. Indian Buddhism met up with Taoism and gave rise to Zen. And of course, early Christianity met up with the paganism of northern Europe and adopted all those lovely pagan rituals like Christmas and Easter. And of course you got your Santeria and your Voudun. Examples are endless. That is what Coyote Madonna is about. The old systems are in disarray, and the new are being born. We can retreat into fundamentalism, (and don't get too cocky here, Christians aren't the only ones with fundamentalists - I know some New Age ones, some Tibetan Buddhist ones, some Native American ones, etc.) or we can embrace the change. Let us tell new stories, new creation myths, make new gods and goddesses from the old ones, take apart the old constructs and rebuild them in endless combinations as we learn and discover more about ourselves and the nature of Creation. All of our histories and stories and linkings are now in the pot, and what a fine stew we might have if we tend it carefully! The greatest danger in all this is that we take ourselves too seriously, which is why I honor Coyote in all this. The ability to laugh at ourselves, to never hold too tightly to our beliefs, never to confuse them with Creation's unfolding. In many Native American traditions, Coyote (or Raven) made this world. Which means that Creation is a Trickster... One final note: Coyote Madonna is not about what many would call 'wifty New Age ideas'. I'm not interested in woohoo squishy spirituality. I take no truck with the idea, for instance, that abused babies are somehow responsible for their abuse because of their karma in a past life. This is nonsense. The abusers are responsible. Here and now. In this life. Ideas must pass muster, subject to two main criteria: reason and some attention to logic, and the visceral criteria that what we entertain as our beliefs must make sense to us as people. Given that Creation seems to have the interesting habit of reflecting our beliefs right back at us, I opine that we should be a bit careful about what we believe. Trickster Creation will bite you in the ass faster than you can say 'karma' in most cases. As you may have noticed, I tend to be a bit of an up-from-the-mud, low road, funky-ass theologian. As in: Pay attention. Balance the checkbook. Do your grunt work. The universe is not necessarily a nice warm cuddly place. There are no easy answers, most of the time. Saying so doesn't make it so. Discipline and hard work and prayer count for a lot. Happiness is an attitude.... and we got plenty of attitude here! Welcome to Coyote Madonna!