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[Music Playing]
[04:59:52]

Moyers: **[05:00:11]** So through the eyes love attains the heart, for the eyes are the scout of the heart and the eyes go reconnoitering for what it would please the heart to possess. And when they are in full accord and firm all three in one resolve at that time perfect love is born from what the eyes have made welcome to the heart. **[05:00:41]** For as all true loves know, love is perfect kindness [00:01:00], which is born there is no doubt from the heart and the eyes.

[Music Playing] **[05:01:11]**

Moyers: Joseph Campbell once wrote an essay called the mythology of love. It was one of his most eloquent. What a wonderful theme he wrote and what a wonderful world of myth one finds in celebration **[05:01:44]** of this universal mystery, so ways of love have long fascinated the human race and Campbell made his interpretation one of the great passions of his own life as a scholar and teacher. Like a [00:02:00] weaver of fine cloth, he spun the tales and legends of love into an amazing tapestry of the human psyche. He gathered his materials everywhere from the erotic mysticism of India to the Old Testament Song of Songs from the Life of Christ and the teaching of the Ramakrishna, the Saint Paul, **[05:02:11]** and Bernard of Clairvaux, and William Blake, Thomas Mann and many others. Campbell especially likes the stories of love and courtship in the middle ages when noble and gentle hearts as he called them produced the romantic love that transcended lust. This love between individuals and more was celebrated by wandering minstrels the saying of what the eyes have made welcome to the heart. They help to create a distinctive western consciousness. The consciousness that encourages men and women to challenge even the **[05:02:44]** dogma of church and the decrease of state; love you see led to revolutions of the heart [00:03:00].

Moyers: Let's talk about the love.

Joseph Campbell: Let's talk about love, fine.

Moyers: But it's such a vast subject that if in mythology that if I had come to you and said let's talk about love, but where should we begin, what would your answer have been.

Joseph Campbell: I think my answer would have been the troubadour **[05:03:11]**s and the Twelve Century that's begun there -.

Moyers: Why the troubadour?

Joseph Campbell: Well because that the first one is in the west that really considered love in the sense that we think of it now as a person-to-person relationship.

Moyers: You're talking about romantic love?

Joseph Campbell: Yes, it is the seizure that comes in recognizing as various souls counterpart in the other person and that's what the troubadours [05:03:41] stood for and that has become the ideal in our lives today.

Moyers: What had it been before that?

Joseph Campbell: Well, the idea of [0:04:00] love as Eros, the God who excites you to sexual desire, this is not the person-to-person thing of that falling in love in a way the troubadours understood it. I have a definition [05:04:11] for Eros the erotic biological urge as the zeal of the organs for each others and the personal factor doesn't matter.

Moyers: Where did Eros come from?

Joseph Campbell: Well Eros is Cupid and in India the God of love is Kama and he is no cupid, he is a big vigorous youth with a bow and the quiver of arrows and the names of the arrows are such things as death [05:04:41] bringing agony and open up and really he just drives this thing into you so that it's a total physiological, psychological explosion that takes place; then the other love [00:05:00] the Christian love of Agape, spiritual love, love thy neighbors as thyself. Again, it doesn't matter who the person is. It's your neighbor, you must have a kind of love, but the kind of seizure that comes from the [05:05:11] meeting of the eyes as they say in the troubadour tradition and the purely a personal, person-to-person thing as far as I know it originates as an ideal to be lived for with a troubadours.

Moyers: You've said that what happen in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was one of the most important mutations of human feeling [05:05:41] and spiritual consciousness that a new way of experiencing love came to expression and it was an opposition to that ecclesiastical despotism of the heart.

Joseph Campbell: Yes.

Moyers: Which required people particularly young girls barely out of adolescence, to marry whomever the church of their parents wanted them to marry [00:06:00].

Joseph Campbell: That's right.

Moyers: And has this done to the passion of the heart.

Joseph Campbell: Well, to say a word for the other beside to this, the usual marriage in traditional cultures is arranged for by the families [05:06:11]. It's not the person-to-person decision at all and this is true to this day in many parts of the world. This is not to say that in arranged marriages of this kind, there is no love. There is a lot of love. There is family love and it's a rich love life and on that level, so in the middle ages of course that was the kind of marriage that was sanctified by the church [05:06:41] and so the idea of a real person-to-person marriage was very dangerous.

Moyers: Dangerous because it was heresy.

Joseph Campbell: It was not only heresy, it was adultery and that was punishable by death [00:07:00]. For incidence in the Tristan romance that's the crucial romance.

Moyers: Tristan and Isolde?

Joseph Campbell: Yes, Isolde was engaged to marry King Mark[05:07:11]. They had never seen each other and Tristan was sent over to fetch Isolde to Mark and Isolde's mother prepares a love potion, so that the two who are to be married will have real love for each other and these two youngsters they think the love potion is wine and they drink it and then they are overtaken with this love, [05:07:41]but Brangain the nurse of Isolde realized what had happened. She went to Tristan and said you have drunk your death and Tristan said, "if by my death you mean this agony of love that is my life; [00:08:00] If by my death you mean the punishment that we are to suffer, if discovered which is namely execution, I accept that, but if by my death [05:08:11]you mean eternal punishment in the fires of hell in which these people believe I accept that too."

Moyers: That was quite -.

Joseph Campbell: As big stuff.

Moyers: For Medieval Catholic because they believed in a literal hell.

Joseph Campbell: Well, these people did.

Moyers: Yes, so what's the significance of what you were saying?

Joseph Campbell: What I was saying is that this love is bigger even than death, than pain, than anything. [05:08:41] This is the affirmation of the pain of life in a big way.

Moyers: And I would choose this pain for love now even though it might mean everlasting pain and damnation and hell.

Joseph Campbell: That's right.

Moyers: And that was a marked change in how people -.

Joseph Campbell: Well that is -- any life carrier [00:09:00] that you chose in following your bliss -- it should be chosen with that sense, nobody can frighten me off from this thing.

Moyers: This is sort of the beginning [05:09:11]of the romantic idea of the western individual taking matters into his or her own hand.

Joseph Campbell: Well absolutely, I mean you can see the examples in oriental stories of this kind of thing, but it did not become a social system. It has now become the ideal at any rate of love in the western world.

Moyers: Love from ones own experience.

Joseph Campbell: Yea, right. This is a very mysterious thing – that electric thing that happens and then the agony – that can follow which is that which the troubadours [0:09:51] celebrate –[05:09:41] the agony of the love, the sickness that doctors can't cure. The wounds that can be healed only by the weapon that delivers the wound.

Moyers: Meaning?

Joseph Campbell: What the wound is the wound of my passion and agony of love for this creature [00:10:00] and the only one who can heal me is the one who delivered the blow you know.

Moyers: So, we often hurt most the person we love and heal the hurt by the love that hurt. [05:10:11]

Joseph Campbell: That's something like that – that's the paradox of the job.

Moyers: What did you mean Joe when you said that the triumph of Tristan's view of love and vision of love – this beginning of romantic love in the west was libido over credo?

Joseph Campbell: Well the credo, I believe and I believe not only in the laws, but I believe that these laws were instituted by God and there is no arguing with God. [05:10:41] I mean these laws are just heavy weight on me and disobeying those are sin and it has to do with my eternal character.

Moyers: And the libido.

Joseph Campbell: And libido is the impulse to life.

Moyers: Comes from where [00:11:00].

Joseph Campbell: Comes from the heart.

Moyers: And the heart is what?

Joseph Campbell: The heart is the organ of opening up to somebody else. That's the human quality[05:11:11] as supposed to the animal qualities, which have to do with primarily with self interest opening up to that which is other is the opening of the heart. Next is the troubadour saw it; it is the opening of the heart.

Moyers: I can certainly understand, though why the church was threatened by this because how can you have a church if everyone's libido is his/her own god.

Joseph Campbell: Why not, why can't the church handle that? **[05:11:41]** If you can sanctify a marriage that has been arranged, why can't you sanctify a marriage where two people have joined each other?

Moyers: So the courage to love, became the courage to affirm against tradition whatever knowledge **[00:12:00]** stands confirmed in ones own experience.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah.

Moyers: Why was that important in the evolution of the west?

Joseph Campbell: Well, it was important in that it gives the west this accent **[05:12:11]** as I had been saying on the individual. That he should have faith in his experience and not simply mouth terms that have come to him from other mouths. I think that's the great think in the west. The validity of the individual's experience of what you humanity is, what life is, what values are against the monolithic system.

Moyers: Was there some of this in the legend of the Holy Grail. **[05:12:41]**

Joseph Campbell: Yes, Wolfram has a very interesting statement about the origin of the Grail. He says, the Grail was brought from heaven by the neutral angels. There was the war in heaven **[00:13:00]** between God and Lucifer and the Angelic Hosts that sided one group with Lucifer **[05:13:11]** and the other with God, pair of opposites Good and Evil, God and Satan. The Grail was brought down through the middle, the way of the middle by the Neutral Angels.

Moyers: What is the Grail representing then?

Joseph Campbell: Well, the Grail becomes the – what we call it that which is attained and realized by people who have lived their own lives. So the story very briefly is of this – I am giving it now as **[05:13:41]** Wolfram **[0:13:51]** gives it, but this is just one version] The Grail King was a lovely young man, but he had not earned that position and the Grail represents the fulfillment of the highest spiritual potentialities of the human consciousness **[00:14:00]** and he was a lovely young man and he wrote forth from his castle with the war cry **[05:14:11]** Amor and as he is riding forth, a Muslim, a pagan warrior, the Mohammedian warrior comes out of the woods at night and they both level their, lances at each other. They drive at each other and the lance of the Grail King kills the Mohammedian, but the Mohammedian's lances castrates the Grail King. What that means is that the Christian separation of matter and spirit **[05:14:41]** of the dynamism of life and the spiritual, Natural Grace and Supernatural Grace has really castrated nature and the European mind, **[00:15:00]** the European life has been as it were emasculated by this, the true spirituality, which would have come from this has been killed **[05:15:11]** and then – what did the **pagan** represent. He was a person from the suburbs of Eden. He was

regarded a nature man and on the head of his lance was written the word Grail that is to say nature intends the Grail. Spiritual life is the bouquet of natural life not a supernatural thing imposed upon it and so[05:15:41] the impulses of nature what give authenticity to life not obeying rules come from a supernatural authority that's the sense of the Grail.

Moyers: And the Grail that these romantic legends were searching for is the union once again of what had been divided [00:16:00] the peace that comes from joining.

Joseph Campbell: The Grail becomes symbolic of an authentic life that has lived in terms of its own [05:16:11]volition in terms of his own impulse system which carries it between the pairs of opposites of good and evil, light and dark. Wolfram starts his epic with a short poem saying every act has both good and evil results, every act in life yields pairs of opposites in its results, the best we can do is lean toward the light as they intend the light [05:16:41]and what the light is that of the harmonious relationships that's comes from compassion with suffering, understanding of the other person. This is what the Grail is about.

Moyers: When we say God is love, [00:17:00] does that have anything to do with romantic love, does mythology ever link romantic love and God?

Joseph Campbell: Well that's what did they do – love was a divine visitation and that's why it was superior to marriage[05:17:11] that was the troubadour idea. If God is love well then love is God, okay?

Moyers: There's that wonderful passage in Corinthians by Paul where he says, "love beareth all things, endureth all things...."

Joseph Campbell: Well that's the same business, love knows no pain.

Moyers: And yet one of my favorite stories of mythology is out of Persia where there is the idea that Lucifer was condemned to hell because[05:17:41] he loved god so much.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah that's a basic Muslim idea about Iblis that's the Muslim name for Satan being God's greatest lover. Why would Satan thrown into hell? Well the standard story [00:18:00] is that when god created the angels, he told them to bow to none, but himself, then he created man [05:18:11]whom he regarded as a higher form than the angels, and he asked the angels then to serve man, and Satan would not bow to man. Now this is interpreted in the Christian tradition as I recall from my boyhood instruction, as being the egotism of Satan, he would not bow to man, but in this view, he could not bow to man because of his love for God. He could bow only to God [05:18:41]and then God says, get out of my sight, now the worst of the pains of hell and so far as hell has been described is the absence of the beloved, which is God. So how this Iblis sustain [00:19:00] the situation in hell by the memory of the echo of God's voice when god said, 'go to hell' and I think that's a great sign of love[05:19:11].

Moyers: Oh it's certainly too in life that the greatest hell one can know is to be separated from the one you love.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah.

Moyers: That's why I would like the Persian myth for so long, Satan is God's lover.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah and he is separated from God and that's the really pain of Satan.

Moyers: You once took the saying of Jesus 'love your enemies and pray for those who prosecute you, **[05:19:41]** so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven for he makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust', you once took that to be the highest and noblest, the boldest of the Christian teaching, do you still feel that way?

Joseph Campbell: Well, I think that the main teaching of Christianity is, love your enemies **[00:20:00]**.'

Moyers: Hard to do.

Joseph Campbell: I no well that's it. When Peter drew his sword and cutoff the servant's ear there**[05:20:11]** and Gethsemane affair **[0:20:18]** and Jesus says put up your sword Peter and put the ear back on. Peter has been drawing his sword ever since and one can speak about – Petrine or Christian Christianity in that's sense and I would say the main Doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of Agape **[0:20:38]** of true love for he who., him who is your enemy.

Moyers: How does one love one's**[05:20:41]** enemy without condoning what the enemy does, accepting his aggression?

Joseph Campbell: Well, I will tell how to do that, do not pluck mote **[0:21:00]** from your enemies eye, but pluck the beam from your own, do you know. Now, I have a friend whom I met by chance, a young Buddhist Monk from Tibet. You know in 1959, **[05:21:11]**the communist crash down and bombed the palace of the Dalai Lama, bombarded Lhasa and people murdered and all that kind of they and they escaped, he escaped at the time of the Dalai Lama and those monasteries, I mean there were monasteries with 5000 monks, 6000 monks, all wiped out, tortured, and everything else. **[05:21:41]** I haven't heard one word of incrimination of the Chinese from that young man that is absolutely no condemnation of the Chinese here and you hear this from the Dalai Lama himself, you will not hear a word of condemnation. This recognition of the way **[00:22:00]** of life through which that vitality of the spirit is moving in its own way, I mean these man are suffers of terrific violence and no animosity. I learnt religion from that. **[05:22:11]**

Moyers: Do most of the stories of mythology from whatever culture say that suffering is intrinsically a part life and that there is no way around it?

Joseph Campbell: I think, I would be willing to say that they do. I can think of anything now that says if you are going to live you won't suffer[05:22:41], it will tell you how to understand and bear and interpret suffering that it will do. And when the Buddha says there is escape from suffering, the escape from sorrow is Nirvana. Nirvana is psychological position were you are untouched by desire and fear [00:23:00].

Moyers: But is that realistic, does that happen?

Joseph Campbell: Yes, certainly.

Moyers: And your life becomes what?

Joseph Campbell: Harmonious, [05:23:11]well centered and affirmative of life.

Moyers: Even with suffering.

Joseph Campbell: Exactly. There is a passage in Paul's epistles to the Philippians, isn't there? For Christ for Christ did not think godhood something to be hung on to, to be clung to, but let go, and came down and took life in the form of the servant, a servant even unto death, [05:23:41]lets say come in, and accept the suffering, and affirm it.

Moyers: So you would agree with Abelard in the Twelfth Century who said that Jesus' death on the cross was not as a ransom paid, [00:24:00] as a penalty applied, but it was an act of at onement, atonement, at one with the race[05:24:11].

Joseph Campbell: That's the most sophisticated interpretation of why Christ had to be crucified. Abelard's idea was that, this is connected with the Grail King and everything else that the coming and of Christ to be crucified, and illustrating thus the suffering of life removes mans mind from commitment to the things of this world in compassion, its in compassion with Christ that we turn to Christ and so the injured one[05:24:41] becomes the savior, it is the suffering that evokes the humanity of the human heart.

Moyers: So you would agree with Abelard that mankind yearning for god and god yearning for mankind in compassion met at that cross.

Joseph Campbell: Yes and by contemplating [00:25:00] the cross you're contemplating the true mystery of life and that love for this experience, [05:25:11] no matter how horrific the experience they would love for it.

Moyers: To this joy and pain in love.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah that there is, love you might say is the burning point of life and since all life is sorrowful, so is love and the stronger the love the more that pain the love bears of things. Love itself is a pain to my say that is the pain of being truly alive. [05:25:41]

Moyers: As Joseph Campbell pursued his quest across Europe for the stories of love and shivery, he paused often to visit the great cathedrals. They two reflected [00:26:00] the glory of love, the love of Mary, Mother of God. Reverence for the power of a female is another grand theme in ancient mythology. **[05:26:11]** In the primitive planting cultures, woman contributed importantly to the economic life of the community by participating in the growing and reaping of crops and as the mother and nourisher of life, she was thought to assist the earth symbolically in its fertility, in fact some believe there was even a golden age of the goddess until she was driven from the imagination by the emergence of patriarchal authority, off late however, side is to have resurrected the name of an ancient Goddess Gaya to express the idea of earth as a living body, **[05:26:41]** on which we depend for life. In the last half of this conversation with Joseph Campbell, he takes us back to the time when the love of god met the love for mother goddess and unites these themes in one image, the virgin birth, which to him represents the birth of spirit from matter [00:27:00] the birth of compassion in the heart.

Moyers: The lord's begins, 'our father [Indiscernible] [0:27:13] in heaven.'

Joseph Campbell: Yeah.

Moyers: Could it have begun, our mother? **[05:27:11]**

Joseph Campbell: This is a metaphorical image. This is a symbolic image and to make the point that is not your father, your physical father; we have our father who are in heaven, but heaven again is a symbolic idea where it would heaven be, it is no place. All of the references of religious and mythological images are to planes of consciousness or fields of experience, potential and the human spirit **[05:27:41]** and these are to evoke attitudes and experiences that are appropriate to a meditation on the mystery of the source of your own being I would say. So there have been [00:28:00] systems of religion where the mother is the prime parent, the source and she is really a more immediate parent than the father because one is born from the mother and then the first experience of any infant is the mother, so that the image of woman is the image **[05:28:11]** of the world, you might say the mythology is simply a translation of the world into a mother image and we talk of mother earth and so forth.

Moyers: But what happened along the way Joe to this reverence that in primitive societies was directed toward the goddess figure the great goddess the mother earth. What happened to that?

Joseph Campbell: **[05:28:41]** That comes in primarily with agriculture and the agricultural societies.

Moyers: Fertility and all of that.

Joseph Campbell: It has to do with the earth. The human woman does give birth as the earth gives birth to the plants [00:29:00]. She gives nourishment as the plants do, so woman magic and earth magic are the same, **[05:29:11]** they are related and the

personification then of this energy which gives birth to forms and nourishes forms is properly female and so it is in the agricultural world of ancient Mesopotamia, the Egyptian Nile, but also in the earlier planting culture systems that the goddess is the mythic form that is dominant. **[05:29:41]**

Moyers: Because of this obvious perception of creation [00:30:00] issue --fertility

Joseph Campbell: That's right. When you have a goddess as the creator? It's her own very body that is the universe. **[05:30:11]** She is identical with the universe and in Egypt you have the mother heavens nude, the goddess's nude is represented as the whole heavenly sphere.

Moyers: I was really taken when we went to Egypt upon first seeing the figure of nude in the ceiling of one of those temples.

Joseph Campbell: Yes, I know that temple.

Moyers: It's over whelming.

Joseph Campbell: Yes.

Moyers: There's one scene of her swallowing the Sun.

Joseph Campbell: The idea is that she swallows the sun**[05:30:41]** in the west and gives birth to the sun in the East and it passes through her body at night and so she is the heavens.

Moyers: So it would be natural for people trying to explain the wonders of the universe to look to the female figure [00:31:00] as the explanation for what they saw in their own life.

Joseph Campbell: Not only that, but then when you move to a philosophical point of view, the female represents what in the**[05:31:11]** Kantian terminology, we call, the forms of sensibility. The female represents time and space itself. She is time and space and the mystery beyond her is beyond pairs of opposite. So it isn't male and it isn't female, it neither is nor isn't, but everything is within her, so that the god's are her children. Everything you can think of, everything you can see**[05:31:41]** is the production of the goddess. Oh, this is a wonderful story, the Vedic gods are together and they see a strange sort of amorphous thing down the way, like a kind of smoky fog they say what's that? They don't know what it is and [00:32:00] Agni, the God of Fire says, 'I'll go find out who that is,' so he goes up to this smoky thing and he says, 'who are you?' and from the smoky thing, **[05:32:11]** a voice says, 'who are you?' And he says, 'I am Agni, I am the Lord of Fire. I can burn anything.' And out of the fog, there comes a piece of straw, it falls on the ground. It says, 'let's see you burn that.' He can't burn it. He goes back, he says, 'this is strange, well, Vayu, the Lord of Wind says, 'I'll try.' Now he goes and the same thing, 'I can blow anything around.' It throws it down, 'let's see

you blow that.' [05:32:41] But he can't, goes back. Then, a woman arrives, a beautiful, mysterious, mystic woman. And she instructs the gods and tells them who that is, that is the ultimate mystery of being from which you boys have received [00:33:00] your strength and he can turn it on or off for you know and There she comes as the one who illuminates the gods themselves concerning the ultimate ground of there own being. [05:33:11]

Moyers: It's the female wisdom.

Joseph Campbell: It's the female as the giver of forms. She is the one who gave the forms and she knows where they came from.

Moyers: I wonder what it would have meant to us if somewhere along the way we had begun the prayer our mother, instead of our father. What psychological different would have been made?

Joseph Campbell: Well it makes a psychological difference in the character of the cultures. You have the basic [05:33:41] birth of civilization in the near East with the great river valleys then as they the main source areas. The Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates, and then over in India the Indus valley and **later the Ganges**. This is the world of the goddess. All these rivers [00:34:00] have goddess names finally. Then there come the invasions and these fighting people are hurting people [05:34:11]. The semi's are heard as if goat and sheep and the Indo-Europeans of cattle. They were formally the hunters. They translate a hunting mythology into a herding mythology, but its animal oriented and when you have hunters, you have killers and when you have herders, you have killers because they are always in movement no matter coming into conflict with other people and they have to conquer the area they move into. This comes into the near East and this brings [05:34:41] in the warrior gods like Zeus, like Yahweh.

Moyers: The sort in death instead of fertility.

Joseph Campbell: Right. Particularly the Hebrew's, they really wipe out the goddess. [00:35:00] The term for the goddess, the Canaanite goddess that's used in the Old Testament is the abomination and so many of the Hebrew kings are condemned [05:35:11] in the Old Testament for having worshiped on the mountain tops, that's the goddess and there was a very strong accent against the goddess in the Hebrew, which you do not find in the Indo-European. There you have Zeus marrying the goddess, and then the two play together, I think it's an extreme case that we have in the Bible [05:35:41] and our own Western subjugation of the female is really I think a function of the biblical thinking.

Moyers: Because when you substitute the male for the female, you get a different psychology, a different cultural bias.

Joseph Campbell: Particularly, if you cut the female out and don't have any [00:36:00] I mean if the male is on top like this and the female is the subordinate all the way, you have a totally different system from that when the two are facing each other. [05:36:11]

Moyers: And it's permissible in your culture to do what your god's do so you just -.

Joseph Campbell: No that's exactly it. So I would see three situations here. One the early one of the Shea goddess when the male is hardly significant divinity, you see, she is the total thing and then this other one of the Hebrew of the goddess the male the total thing in fact he takes over her role [05:36:41] and finally then the classical one where the two are in interaction.

Moyers: There are woman today who say that the spirit of the goddess has been in exile for five thousand years since the -.

Joseph Campbell: Well not that – you can't put that far back, five thousand years [00:37:00] she was a very potent figure in Hellenistic times, in the Mediterranean and she came back [05:37:11] with the Virgin in the Roman Catholic tradition, I mean you don't have a tradition with the goddess celebrated anymore beautifully and marvelously than in the Twelfth to Thirteenth Century French cathedrals everyone of which is called Notre-Dame.

Moyers: What about the virgin birth, suddenly the goddess reappears in the form of the chaste and pure vessel chosen for god's action.

Joseph Campbell: Well in the history of western religions, this is an extremely interesting development. [05:37:41] The virgin birth comes in by way of the Greek tradition when you read your four gospels the only one with the virgin birth in it is the gospel according to Luke and Luke was a Greek.

Moyers: And there was in the Greek tradition images, legends, [00:38:00] myths of virgin births.

Joseph Campbell: All of them I mean the leader and the swan and Persephone and the serpent and this one and that one and the other one, the virgin birth [05:38:11] is represented throughout.

Moyers: This was not a new idea then in Bethlehem and-.

Joseph Campbell: No – what is the meaning of the virgin birth. In India, there is the system of Kundalini as is – call the idea of the centers – psychological centers up the spine and they represent a psychological plains of concern and consciousness and action. [05:38:41] First is at the rectum and this is that of alimentation, the serpent represents this, a traveling esophagus going along just eating, eating, eating, eating, and all of us are proud – we wouldn't be here if we weren't eating and then the second center [00:39:00] is at the sex organ center and that's the urge to procreation. The third center is at the

naval [05:39:11] and this is where eat and want to consume, and it's not the alimentary eating, it's the mastering and smashing and trashing of others, do you see this is the aggressive mode. Now the first is an animal instinct and the second is an animal instinct, the third is an animal instinct and these three centers [05:39:41] are located in the pelvic basin as you see. The next one is at the level of the heart and this is the opening of compassion and there you move out of the field of animal action into a field that is properly human and spiritual [00:40:00]. Now in each of these centers, there is a symbolic form, at the base the first one, there is the form of the lingam and yoni, the male and female organs in conjunction, [05:40:11] at the heart chakra there is again male and female organs in conjunction, but in gold this is the virgin birth. Is the birth of spiritual man out of the animal man, do you understand that?

Moyers: And it happens -.

Joseph Campbell: When you are awakened at the level of the heart to compassion and suffering [05:40:41] with the other person. That's the beginning of humanity and the meditations of religion properly are on that level the heart level.

Moyers: You say it's the beginning of humanity, but in these stories that's the moment when gods are born. The virgin birth [00:41:00] it's a god who emerges from that chemistry.

Joseph Campbell: Yeah and you know who the god is? It's you. All of these symbols in the mythology refer to you [05:41:11] and you can get stuck out there. And think it's all out there and so you are Jesus and all the sentiments about how he suffered and all, what that suffering is what are to be going on in you. Have you been reborn? Have you died to your animal nature and come to life as a human incarnation?

Moyers: Why is it significant that this is of a virgin?

Joseph Campbell: Well it is that the begetter is the spirit. [05:41:41] It is a spiritual birth. The virgin conceived of the word, but through the ear.

Moyers: The word came like a shaft of us.

Joseph Campbell: Yes and now the Buddha was born from his mother side at the level of the heart chakra [00:42:00]. That's a symbolic birth, he wasn't born from his mother side, but symbolically he was.

Moyers: But the Christ came the way you and I come.

Joseph Campbell: Yes, but of a virgin. [05:42:11]

Moyers: Which is a power greater than -?

Joseph Campbell: And then according to Roman Catholic doctrine her virginity was restored. So nothing happened physically you might say. It's not a physical birth, it's a symbolic of a spiritual transformation, that what the virgin's birth is about and so deities are born that way who represent beings who act in terms of compassion [05:42:41] and not in terms of the lower three centers.

Moyers: If you go back into antiquity, do you find images of the Madonna as the mother of the savior child?

Joseph Campbell: Well what you have as the model for the Madonna actually is Isis [00:43:00] with her child Horus and her breast. This was the actual model for the Madonna's symbol.

Moyers: Isis? Tell me that story.

Joseph Campbell: This is a prime myth [05:43:11] in this period of the goddess as the redeemer, the one who goes in quest of the lost spouse or lover and through her loyalty and descent into the realm of death recovers him. Isis and her husband Osiris were twins who were born of the Goddess Nut and their younger relatives [05:43:41] were Seth and Nephthys who were also twins born from Nut. Seth planned to kill his brother Osiris and he took Osiris's measurements secretly and had a wonderful [00:44:00] sarcophagus belt that would exactly fit Osiris. So there is a hilarious party in progress one time among the gods and Seth trapped [05:44:11] in this sarcophagus and he says anyone who is perfectly fit can have it as his sarcophagus and everybody at the party tried and when Osiris got in of course he perfectly fit, just at that time 72 accomplices [0:44:39] come rushing out and they strap the lid on and strap it together and throw it in the Nile. Now this is the death of the god [05:44:41], whenever you have a death of an incarnation, a god like this you're going to have a resurrection; you can wait for that.

So he goes slowly down to Nile and is washed to shore in Syris and a beautiful tree grows up and incorporates the sarcophagus [00:45:00] in its own trunk, so this is this wonderful tree with glorious aroma and the local king has just had a son born [05:45:11] to him and he is also at the same time going to build the palace. The aroma of this tree is so wonderful; he cut it down and brings it in to be a central pillar in the main room of the palace. Poor little Isis whose husband has been thrown into the Nile, starts this wonderful quest for Osiris, so she comes to [05:45:41] the place where the palace is and learns of the wonderful aroma and she suspects this is Osiris and she gets the job as nurse to the just born little child. Well as she lets the child nurse from her finger [00:46:00] and she loves the little child and she decides to give it immortality. So she does this by placing him in the fireplace in the fire to burn away [05:46:11] gradually his mortal body. But by being a goddess she could keep that from killing him you understand; and when that would happen she would convert herself into a swallow and fly mournfully around the pillar where her husband is. Well one evening the child's mother came into this room and while this scene was in progress, so her child in the fire place let out a scream and that broke the spell and they had to rescue [05:46:41] the child from incineration meanwhile the swallow had turned into this gorgeous nurse, Isis and the nurse gave an

explanation of the situation and she said, 'by the way that's my husband is in that pillar there, and I will be grateful if you could [00:47:00] just let me take it home.' So the king came in and he said certainly, so he removes the pillar, gives it to Isis and its put on a barge. **[05:47:11]** So on the way back to the Nile, she removes the lid, the cover of the sarcophagus and lies on top of her dead spouse and conceives of her dead spouse. This is an image that occurs in Egyptian art all the time, out of death comes life and all of this kind of business and when they land, she in the papyrus swamp gives birth to her child Horus**[05:47:41]** with the dead Osiris beside her, this is the motif for the Madonna actually that becomes the Madonna. In Egyptian symbology, Isis represents the thrown, the Pharaoh [00:48:07] sits on the thrown of Isis, as the child sits on the mother lap and when you look in the cathedral of Chartres [0:48:17] in the west portal **[05:48:11]** you will see the Madonna as the thrown with the little child Jesus as the World Emperor on her lap that is the same image that's come over.

Moyers: And you say the Christian father's took this image.

Joseph Campbell: Definitely and they really say so you read the second letter of Peter and he says, 'those forms, which were merely mythological forms in the past are now incarnate and actual in our savior**[05:48:41]**.' There was a mythology of the savior, the dead and resurrected god and it is associated with the moon, which dies and is resurrected every month and you have the three nights dark and you have Christ three nights in the doom and three days in the doom and all this kind of thing. Its an intentional [00:49:00] saying that which was merely talked about is now fact and no one knows what the date of Christmas ought to be, but its put on the date**[05:49:11]** of the winter solstice when the night begin to be shorter and the days longer, the birth of light and so there is a idea of death to the past and birth to the future and our lives and then our thinking all the time. Death to the animal nature, birth to the spiritual and these symbols are talking about one way or another.

Moyers: So when the -

Joseph Campbell: And the goddess is the one who brings it about, the second birth is through **[05:49:41]** the second mother, Notre Dame de Paris, Notre Dame de Chartres [0:49:53] our mother church, we are reborn by entering and leaving a church.

Moyers: And it doesn't mean physically, it means -

Joseph Campbell: Spiritually [00:50:00].

Moyers: That there is a power that unique to the feminine [0:50:09] principle.

Joseph Campbell: It can be put that way, you can it's not necessarily unique to her, you can have a rebirth through the male also, **[05:50:11]** but using this system of symbols, the woman becomes the regenerator.

Moyers: There is that wonderful saying in the New Testament of Jesus, in Jesus there is no male or female. In the ultimate sense of things, there is neither.

Joseph Campbell: That would have to be I mean if Jesus represents the source of our being, we are all as it were thoughts in the mind of Jesus. **[05:50:41]** Jesus is the word that has become the flesh in us too.

Moyers: You and I would possess characteristics that are both male and female.

Joseph Campbell: Actually the body does, but something in the fetal period it becomes apparent that this is going to be male and this going to be female. Meanwhile [00:51:00] it is a kind of neutral body with the potentialities for either inflection.

Moyers: So all through life we are honoring or suppressing **[05:51:11]** one or the other.

Joseph Campbell: And in that in Jung figure from China, in the dark fish or whatever you want to call it, there is a light spot and in the light one there is the dark spot that's how it can relate. You couldn't relate at all to something that, of which you do not participate into which you do not participate at all. That's why the idea of god as the absolute other is ridiculous idea **[05:51:41]** that could be no relationship to that which is absolute other.

Moyers: The question arises discussing the male-female principle, the virgin birth, the spiritual power that gives us the second birth, the wise people of all time have said that we can live the good life if we learn in fact to live spiritually, [00:52:00] but how does one learn to live spiritually when one is of the flesh, remember Paul [0:52:12] said the desires of the flesh **[05:52:11]** are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh. How do we learn to live spiritually?

Joseph Campbell: Well that was the – in ancient times and in primitive times the business of the teacher, he was to give you the clues to a spiritual life that was what the priest was for, also that was what the ritual was for, a ritual can be defined as an enactment of a myth **[05:52:41]** by participating in a good sound ritual you are actually experiencing a mythological life and its out of that that one can learn to live spiritually.

Moyers: These stories of mythology actually point the way to the spiritual life.

Joseph Campbell: Yes you've got to have a clue, you've got to have a [00:53:00] road map of some kind and these are all around us they are here.

Moyers: And the road map to which the goddess – stories **[05:53:11]** are pointing is the map of elevating the spiritual to an equality with the physical so that you live in union with those too.

Joseph Campbell: Yes there you come to the real sanctity of the earth itself because that is the body of the goddess. When Yahweh creates he creates the earth and breathes his

life into it. He is not there. **[05:53:41]** She is there. Your body is her body and there's that kind of identity.

Moyers: Well that's why I am not so sure that the future of the race in the salvation of the journey is in space. I think it is well right here on earth [00:54:00] in the body in the womb of all of our being.

Joseph Campbell: Well it's certainly is. I mean when you go out into space what you are carrying is your body and if that hasn't been transformed space **[05:54:11]** will transform it for you, but thinking about space may help you to realize something.

Moyers: You certainly thought about space in this wonderful passage, you are describing a page out of the National Geographic Atlas of the World, which you read this and something happened to you.

Joseph Campbell: What these pages open to me was the vision of the universe of unimaginable magnitude and inconceivable violence, billions upon billions literally **[05:54:41]** of roaring thermonuclear furnaces scattering from each other. Each thermonuclear furnace being a star and our sun among them, many of them actually blowing themselves to pieces, littering the outermost reaches of space with dust and gas out of which new stars [00:55:00] with circling planets are being born right now and then from still more remote distances beyond all these there come murmurs, microwaves, **[05:55:11]** which are echoes of the greatest cataclysmic explosion of all namely the Big Bang of creation, which according to recent reckonings must have occurred some 18 billion years ago as where we are kiddo and they realize that you realize how really important you are and you know one little micro bit in this great magnitude and then out of that must come the experience that you and that are in some sense one and the you part take all of that. **[05:55:41s]**

Moyers: And it begins here.

Joseph Campbell: It begins here.

[Music Plays]

[0:57:42]

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