

The excerpt below is a conversation between Andre Luiz, a man who had recently arrived at his new destination in the beyond, and Laura a woman who had been living in the community (Nosso Lar¹) for some time.

AN OTHER-WORLD DISCUSSION ON THE NOTION OF THE HOME AND THE ROLE OF MAN AND WOMAN AS INTENDED BY NATURE

Female souls in Nosso Lar assume numerous obligations that prepare them for either their return to the planet or their ascent to higher spheres.”

“But is domestic organization in Nosso Lar just like it is on earth?”

She gave me a meaningful look and explained:

“Actually, it is the home on earth that has for so long tried to imitate our domestic institution. With rare exceptions, married couples there are still weeding the soil of their sentiments that have been overrun with the bitter weeds of personal vanity and inhabited by the monsters of jealousy and selfishness. The last time I returned from the planet, I arrived here naturally harboring deep illusions. But it just so happened that during one of my crises involving wounded pride, I was taken to hear a great instructor in the Ministry of Elucidation. On that day, a new train of thought entered my mind.”

“Would you mind telling me something of what you learned?”

“The lecturer was highly versed in mathematics,” she proceeded. “He helped us realize that the home may be compared to the lines of a right angle on the plane of divine evolution. The vertical line is the female sentiment, and has to do with the creative inspirations of life. The horizontal line is the male sentiment, concerned with achievements in the field of common progress. The home is the sacred

¹ Xavier, Francisco Candido. *Nosso Lar* (pp. 122-124)

converging point where man and woman meet in order to understand each other correctly. It is the temple where individuals should join spiritually rather than just physically. At the present time on earth, a great number of scholars who are versed in social matters are advocating various measures, calling for a regeneration of home life. Some go so far as to state that the human family institution is threatened. However, we must bear in mind that the home is in the middle of a sublime conquest, which humankind is slowly winning. After all, where in the circles of the planet can we find a real domestic institution that is based on true harmony, where rights and duties are legitimately shared? The majority of terrestrial couples spend the sacred hours of the day living indifferently and selfishly. When the husband is at ease, the wife seems desperate. When the wife keeps humbly silent, her companion tyrannizes her. The wife makes no attempt to encourage her husband along the horizontal line of his temporal work, nor does the husband try to accompany his companion on her divine flight of tenderness and sentiment towards the higher planes of creation. In social circles, they put on appearances, but in their private life, one takes long mental trips to faraway regions while the other talks about work. If the wife talks about the children, the husband thinks of his business. When the husband tries to study some difficulty at work, the wife's thoughts drift to the fashion designer's office.[1] In these circumstances, it's obvious that the divine angle is far from being properly drawn. The two diverging lines are endeavoring in vain to form the sublime vertex in order to build a new step on the great stairway of eternal life."

I felt these concepts deep down. Highly impressed, I remarked:

"Laura, these concepts open up a whole world of new thought! If we only knew all this down on earth!"

"A matter of experience, my friend," she replied. "Men and women will learn these lessons through suffering and struggle. For the moment, few realize that the home is an essentially divine institution, and within its doors we must live with all our heart and soul.

When ordinary people are crossing through the flowery regions of betrothal, they regard each other while displaying their souls' best resources. That's why it is said that all beings are beautiful when truly in love. The most trivial subject has a peculiar charm even in the most frivolous conversation. During their courtship, the man and

woman blend their sublime energies, but soon after they receive the nuptial blessing, most of them rend the veil of desire and fall back into the arms of the old monsters that tyrannize hearts. There are no mutual concessions; there is no tolerance; sometimes they don't even regard each other as friends. The luminous beauty of love dies out when the couple lose their comradery and the joy of talking to each other. From then on, the polite ones respect each other, while the antagonistic ones can hardly stand each other. There is no mutual understanding. Questions and answers are formulated in terse sentences. No matter how united their bodies are, their minds have already separated and have gone off in opposite directions."

"All of that is so true!" I exclaimed.

"But what can we do, my friend?" replied the kind woman. "On the physical plane in the planet's present evolutionary phase, there are very few unions between twin souls and only a few more marriages between kindred souls, but there is an overwhelming percentage of expiatory relationships. Most human couples are made up of prisoners in shackles."

In returning to the thread of thought suggested by my initial question, she continued:

"Female souls cannot remain inactive here. They must learn to become mothers, wives, missionaries and sisters. A woman's job in the home cannot be confined to a few idle tears of pity and many years of servitude. Of course, the desperate contemporary feminist movement is an abominable offense to the true attributes of the female spirit. Woman cannot duel it out with man in offices and other professions comprised of activities suited to the male spirit. Nevertheless, our colony teaches that there are noble services for women outside the home. Nursing, teaching, textiles, information, and customer-related services are very important. Men should learn to endow the domestic circle with the richness of their experiences, while women should transfer the sweetness of the home to the rough work of men. Within the home, inspiration; outside, activity. One can't live without the other. How could a river be sustained without its source, and how could the water of the source flow on without the river bed?"

I couldn't help smiling as I listened to her question.

Laura proceeded after a long pause:

“When the Ministry of Assistance entrusts children to my home, my work hours are counted as double, which can give you an idea of the importance of maternal service on the earth plane. However, when that isn’t happening, I have my daily tasks of nursing, with a 48-hour work week. Apart from my convalescing granddaughter, every member of our family works somewhere. Eight hours per day working in the collective interest is an easy schedule for anyone. I would feel ashamed if I didn’t do my part.” She stopped talking for a few moments while I lost myself deep in thought....