
Pierre Rabhi's Quotations

Symposium at La Gendronnière - 12 and 13 October 2019

1/You can eat organic food, recycle your waste, heat yourself with solar energy and still exploit your neighbour...

Humanism, as we understand it, is based on a society change achieved through individual change. This is no opportunist moralism, but an inescapable realism, because society - as it is and as it will be - is the result of human subjectivity. This is why agroecology cannot be dissociated from rigorous ethics, which makes moderation and right measure a constructive power, in a society where the satisfaction of vital needs also produces psychological, emotional and moral satisfaction, while responding effectively to the imperatives of life and biological survival, respecting and regenerating the nurturing heritage. By being accessible to the poorest peasants, without any recourse to chemical inputs extracted from petrol and with many other advantages, agroecology is today the only relevant and rational answer to the food problem.

2/Agroecology:

It is much more than a set of simple, economical, biodiversity-friendly agricultural techniques, accessible to all and having proven their effectiveness under the most difficult conditions. Underpinned by a humanistic thought, made up of respect, equity, solidarity and cooperation, agroecology leads to autonomy, favours the local economy and does not forget to leave room for beauty and poetry. It is a global alternative for each individual and for the community; it is based on respect for the living: to care for the earth, all the lives it contains and carries - including our lives - and to care for human relations.

3/Happy sobriety:

The revolutionary efforts of protest movements, such as the 1968 movement, have often been reduced to nothing (or nearly) because of a confusion between flippancy and freedom, which has been also assimilated to a refusal of any constraint. An objective and rational vision is in fact indispensable to satisfy material needs. So, we managed our small farm like a small business, following the rules of such a management. But, contrary to what happens in other structures for which extension and success are synonymous, we opted from the beginning for self-limitation. That is what has been our success, because sobriety is a strength. The added value to the basic product was obtained by commercial relationships integrating the social factor: convivial encounters at the market, at the farm etc. Moderation as life principle and moderation as inner experience are the obverse and reverse of one and same quest for meaning and coherence.