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WHEN THE BUYING STOPS, SO CAN THE KILLING.

Assembly 52 – March 31st 2003

Yesterday, I told you about two birds – do you remember which they were? *(larks and owls)* What was special about the lark? It's singing. I am sorry to tell you that, up to quite recently, you could buy tins of lark's tongues in grocery shops in some parts of Europe. Can you imagine the awfulness of that? But it is all part of some very strange beliefs about animal parts that you and I are asked to say, "No!' to.

Horrible men who liked shooting birds for sport, used to shoot down the larks and kill them and cut out their tongues and sell them to people who put them in tins. The song of the lark is such magic – and there is something in human beings that wants to try and capture the magic of animals and by eating it, bring the magic things into themselves. But this is a very pagan belief and very stupid and terribly damaging to nature. The way for the magic of the song of the lark to enter you is through your ears, not your mouth, and then it will fill you with wonder. That is the magic. People who try to preserve the habitat of larks, so that they can live in peace and breed, are those who receive their blessing from hearing them singing.

So the fight is on against the stupidity of those wanting animal body parts to eat for magic and pagan reasons. How can we fight this stupidity? One of the reasons why the numbers of tigers, rhinoceros, the great apes and many other animals is dropping is because people can sell the body parts of such animals to those who eat them or make medicines out of them and sell them for a lot of money to people who think that, if they drink a medicine made out of tiger bones, then they will be like a tiger! But how much better to keep the tiger alive so that everyone can enjoy it and the balance of nature be kept!

When I was your age, people liked to have tiger-skin rugs and fur coats and there were even people who used the hand of a gorilla, or other ape, as an ash-tray for their cigarettes. People liked things made out of the ivory of an elephant's tusks but nowadays, most people have more understanding. But many people, most of them in Asia, are still demanding medicines made out of rare animals and as long as they are prepared to pay a lot of money for this, then people will go out and kill these animals in order to make money.

How many of you watch Animal Planet on television? In between the programmes, you may see some famous or beautiful person talking to you, telling you NOT to buy things made out of rare animals. And the slogan is, "When the buying stops, the killing can stop too." If people do not buy these things, then those who want money, will not do the killing. I hope that now you know what that means. We do not want larks' tongues in tins and tiger bones in medicine, nor any other rare wild animals to die because of people who are stupid and wrong. We want them alive, singing and roaring their praises to God, roaming the world in all their beauty and grace and, by having healthy babies, building up the numbers again. Large numbers of people care for animal welfare and they tell us they love the work and receive many blessings from it – and that is a magic that is far better than any false medicine. So, as we become more civilized, more understanding, we are learning how to take better care of our world and all the wonderful creatures in it.

God bless you.