



KARMA

Stimulus

Once upon a time, there was a traveller. She rode to far distant lands in her carriage and had reached the Northern deserts of India. One day she was looking for a place to rest and saw a farm by the side of the road, where a woman was feeding animals.

The traveller asked the woman on the farm if she could buy something to eat from her. The farmer brought her some bread. Then the farmer brought her a jug of water and a cup to drink it from. The traveller reached into her pocket for a few coins to cover the cost, but the farmer shook her head.

As she ate and drank, the traveller noticed that the woman was working very hard, feeding animals, washing clothes and grinding grain to make bread. But she was wearing old clothes and didn't seem to have much money. Again, the traveller offered to pay for her meal.

'There is no need,' the farmer said, 'because I was kind to you, and because I work hard, I get good Karma.'

'What is Karma?' asked the traveller. The farmer explained:

'When we die, our souls come back to live again in another body. So I will be born again after this life and again after that life, forever. If I do good things in this life then after I die I will come back to a better life. I will have rich parents, or live in a place where it is easy to grow food, and I will have lots of luck. If I do bad things in this life, I will come back as a very poor person, or even an animal - maybe even a chicken like these here. Everything we do is rewarded or punished in the next life. So I know that because I gave you food and water for free, that will be good Karma for me. And because I work hard on this farm to make my living honestly, that will be good for my Karma too.'

The traveller was very interested to hear this. But then she had a secret to tell the farmer:

'What you didn't know before you gave me that food is that I am a genie. I have the power to release you from Karma. That means that what you do in this life will make no difference because you won't come back into the world after you die.'

The farmer refused immediately, explaining: 'Then I will lose all the good Karma I have. All the good things I did will be wasted.'

'Alright,' replied the traveller. 'Let me give you a choice. I will still free you from Karma and so your soul will not come back as anybody else, or anything else. But I will also let you choose between these three ways: One, you will get more rewards than you deserve in this life. Two, you will get less reward than you deserve in this life. Three, you will get exactly what you deserve in this life. Now will you take my offer? And which of the three ways will you choose?'

TASK QUESTION

- ✓ Should the woman take the offer?

Possible extension:

The farmer refused immediately, explaining: 'Then I will lose all the good Karma I have. All the good things I did will be wasted.'

'Alright,' replied the traveller. 'What if I offer you that you will have good Karma whatever you do in this life, good or bad?'

- ✓ Do you think Karma is true? / Would you like Karma to be true?
- ✓ What makes us do good things? Or bad things?