

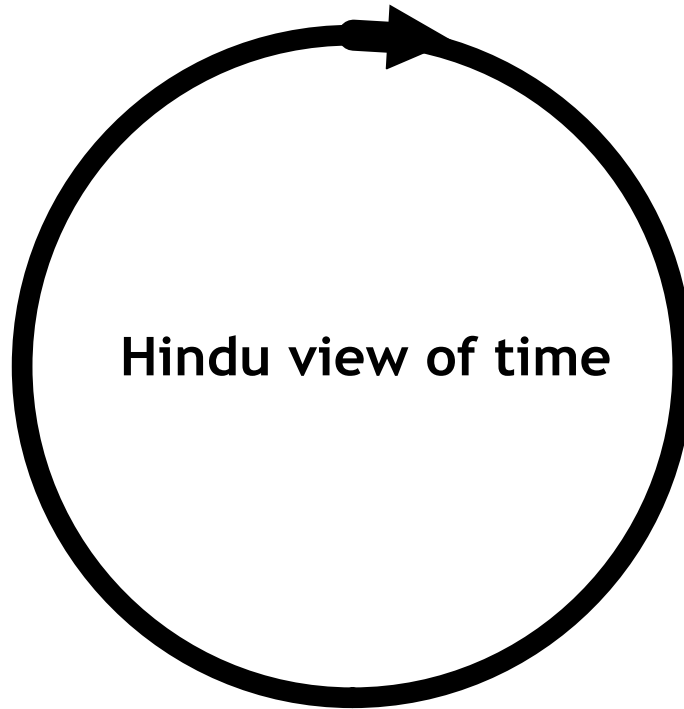
If you could be any
animal or person, what
would you choose
and why?



Jewish/Christian/Muslim view of time



Hindu view of time



" Single is each man born; single he dies; single he receives the reward of his good, and single the punishment of his evil deeds.

When he leaves his corpse, like a log or a lump of clay, on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces ; but his virtue accompanies his soul."

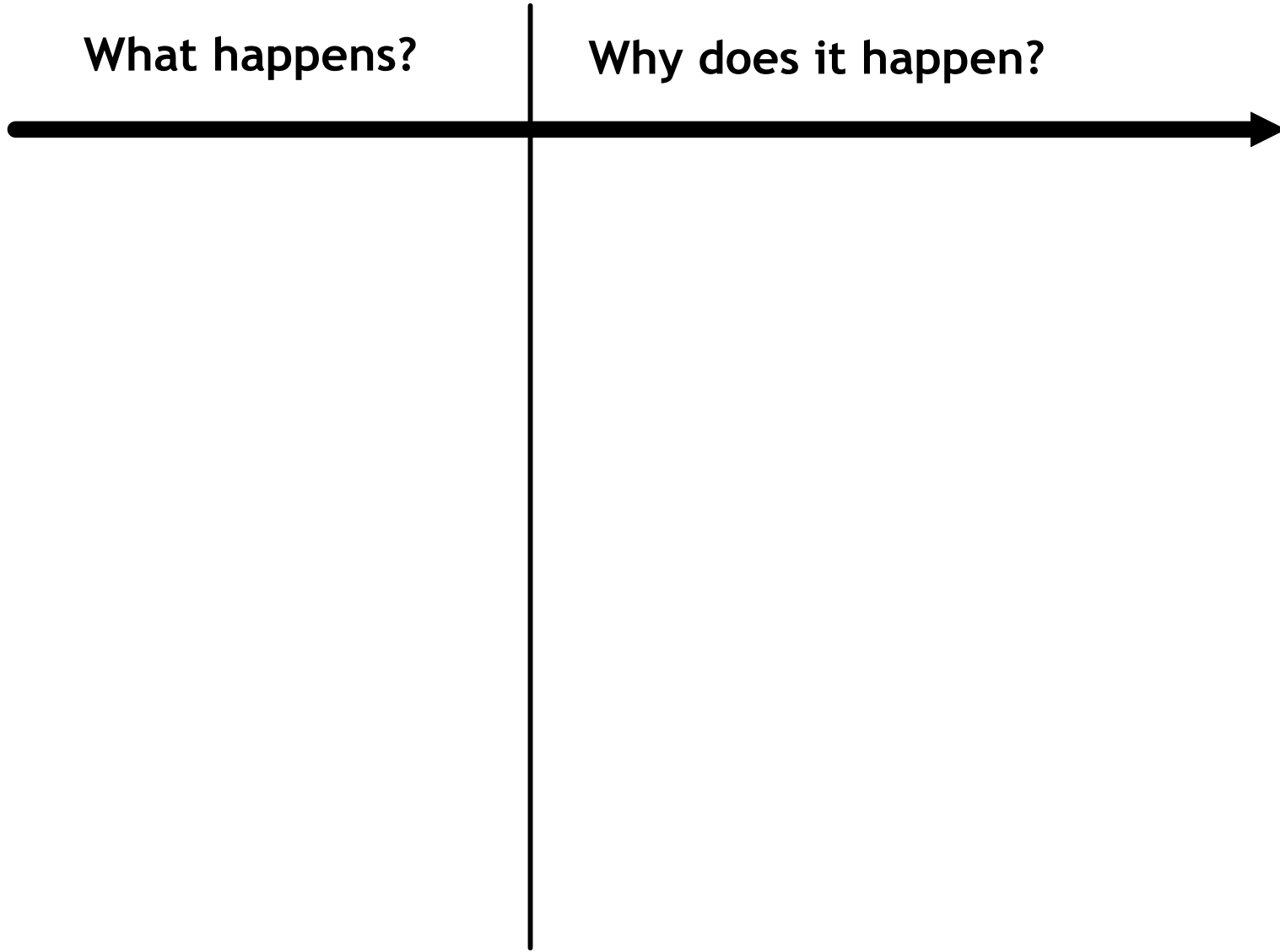
"As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones."

Bhagavad-gita 2.22

Title: Hindu funerals

What happens?

Why does it happen?



Celebration

Death is a sad occasion, but Hindu priests emphasise the route ahead for the departed soul and so a funeral is as much a celebration as a remembrance service.



Cremation

Hindus cremate their dead, believing that the burning of a dead body signifies the release of the spirit and that the flames represent Brahma, the creator.



Clothing:

Family members will pray around the body as soon as possible after death. People will try to avoid touching the corpse as it is considered polluting. The corpse is usually bathed and dressed in white, traditional Indian clothes. If a wife dies before her husband she is dressed in red bridal clothes. If a woman is a widow she will be dressed in white or pale colours.



Purification:

After the cremation, the family may have a meal and offer prayers in their home. Mourners wash and change completely before entering the house after the funeral. A priest will visit and purify the house with spices and incense. This is the beginning of the 13-day mourning period when friends will visit and offer their condolences.



Shradh

'Shradh' is practiced one year after the death of the person. This can either be an annual event or a large one-off event. This is the Hindu practice of giving food to the poor in memory of the deceased. A priest will say prayers for the deceased and during this time, usually lasting one month, the family will not buy any new clothes or attend any parties. Sons are responsible for carrying out Shradh.



Homework:

You all know quite a lot about Hindu rites of passage (samskaras) now.

Your homework is to put together all this information into a piece of work explaining everything that you have learned. It could be a:

- Booklet
- PowerPoint presentation
- Essay
- Poster

Be sure to mention dharma, karma and reincarnation!