ETERNAL CONUNDRUM

Lonely Time, to while away the hours,
Fashions a game of moving pieces
Set upon a board that shakes and tips
In turn each one whose play is over
Into Space from which he conjured it.

He constructs round each a changing scene
Of locations and relationships
And, using his creator's power,
Implants in each a separate will
According to which it interacts.

But once this game is set in motion
It poses Time its own conundrum,
Challenging him to give the answer:
Are the moves and motives of each piece
Autonomous or pre-determined?

Life seems to be a haphazard mix of chance and planned encounters, slight and lasting relationships, inconsequent and fateful decisions, and happy and sorrowful times. Surely everyone has tried at some stage to discern a pattern in their own particular chain of events and ties, and to answer the question *why*.

Yoga philosophy subscribes to the view that this current life can only be understood in the context of an unending series of lives which each soul undergoes. The unfinished business of past lives must be finished in a future life, in accordance with the immutable law of cause and effect. This is *karma*, the sum of actions which we all carry about with us as invisible baggage and which transmigrates along with the soul.

It is stated that the fruition of actions operates in three spheres, determining the life form, longevity and experiences of each individual.[1] Experiences are happy or miserable according to previous good or bad actions.[2]

Thus Yoga philosophy asserts that one's destiny is in one's own hands. Just as the present is shaped by the past, so the future is shaped by the present. Following this logic, Yoga concludes that suffering in times to come can be avoided by right actions.[3]

[1] Yoga Sutra 2.13
[2] Yoga Sutra 2.14
[3] Yoga Sutra 2.16

22.4.14