

Is there Afterlife: Bhavaṅga Citta going beyond Quantum Physics in the Concept of Afterlife



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ABSTRACT

Is there afterlife? To answer this question, scientists partake in studying mind and consciousness through their experiments. In the field of Quantum Physics, Prof. Dr. Robert Lanza has introduced “Theory of Everything” namely Biocentrism, to prove that space and time are simple tools mind uses to weave information together into a coherent experience of the language in consciousness. However, Biocentrism is unable to prove that mind uses the same algorithm to create a spatio-temporal reality in dream is a real, 3-D and flesh-and-blood as the one you are experiencing now. For that, Visuddhimagga, a prominent Buddhist treatise, exceeds beyond the level of understanding in mind and consciousness that Biocentrism has reached currently. It describes how to proactively discern the underlying consciousness-layer in mind called life-continuum (*Pali. bhavaṅga citta*). This stream arises once the ordinary mind is in unconsciousness, such as, in sleep. In the case of death, the bhavaṅga citta turns from one form to another with its nature of continuity. Therefore, to apprehend the concept of afterlife is to study the continuity of bhavaṅga citta in the empirical experience of Quantum Physics and Visuddhimagga.

Keywords: *Afterlife, Bhavaṅga Citta, Consciousness, Quantum Physics, Visuddhimagga.*

Introduction

Human consciousness continues even after death although no one could prove scientifically what consciousness is like and where it goes once the human physical body die. Prof Dr. Dean Carroll recently claimed that there is NO life after death supporting the scientist's claim that afterlife is impossible. According to the journal, Express, dated 3rd, September 2017, Sean Martin reported that: "Dean Carroll, a cosmologist and physics professor at the California Institute of Technology, believes he has put the debate surrounding the afterlife to bed after extensively studying the laws of physics." (Sean Martin, 2017) It is even better if one could prove his philosophy with practical experiences, instead of the laboratory experiment. About 2,600 years ago, the Buddha has explicitly emphasized that: "Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, "This contemplative is our teacher." When you know for yourself that, "These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness" – then you should enter & remain in them." (AN 3.65) One should practice on whatsoever conceptual belief that he is concerned for leading to happiness, or for relieving pain and suffering of his own life. Spiritual cultivation on one's consciousness is once again examined here.

Referring to quantum physics, Prof. Carroll said: "Claims that some form of consciousness persists after our bodies dies and decay into their constituent atoms face one huge, insuperable obstacle: 'the laws of physics underlying everyday life are completely understood, and there's no way within those laws to allow for the information stored in our brains to persist after we die.'" (Sean Martin, 2017). The key word that Prof. Carroll uses in his message is "constituent atoms" of what is analogous to a physical form of consciousness, and he draws conclusion that it certainly vanishes after the demise of physical body. He struggles in identifying atomic particles which is caught by the laboratory experiment that ascribing these as the information originated in the brain, and the consciousness is in the brain. On the other hand, Ven. Buddhaghosa, a Buddhist monk of the 5th century in Visuddhimagga, expounded the consciousness thus: "Herein, there is neither restraint nor non-restraint on the occasion of the life-continuum, or on any of the occasions beginning with advertizing. But there is non-restraint if un-virtuousness or forgetfulness or unknowing or impatience or idleness arises at the moment of impulsion. When this happens, it is called "non-restraint in the eye faculty." (Ven. Buddhaghosa, 2011, p.24). Life-continuum is not a new term in Buddhist philosophy, but is something that scientist is ever limited in

considering it a consciousness. Prof. Doctor Robert Lanza is a contemporary bio-physicist striving to prove that human consciousness conceives, governs and becomes a physical world. It is the ground of our being in which both subjective and objective reality come into existence. (Deepak Chopra, ISBN-13: 978-1944648657)

Exactly, consciousness is not a mere-faculty of what being received and operated from the six-sense doors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, tangible and thought). It is in there a mind-door called the life-continuum that Ven. Buddhaghosa clearly elucidating in the passage above. It is the resultant of the entire cognitive process, and it is also that initially triggers for this process functioning independently to the six-sense doors. The mind-door is analogous to where the information is received and stored. Meditation helps to practically discern this conceptual life-continuum. At some stage of meditation practicing, yogis would experience that: “reach either access (*Pali.upacāra*) or absorption (*Pali. appanā*) concentration. It is called access concentration because it is close to and precedes *jhāna* (*Pali.*). Absorption concentration is *jhāna*. Both types of concentration have the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* (*Pali.*) as their object. The only difference between them is that in access concentration the *jhāna* factors are not fully developed. For this reason *bhavaṅga citta* still occurs, and one can fall into *bhavaṅga citta*. The yogi will say that everything stop, and may even think it is *Nibbāna* (*Pali.*). In reality the mind has not stopped, but the yogi is just not sufficiently skilled to discern this, as the *bhavaṅga* are very subtle.” (The Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, 2003, p.49) The name of that conceptual life-continuum is *bhavaṅga citta* according Buddhist philosophy. Therefore, to understand the afterlife is to study the continuity of *bhavaṅga citta* based on the scientific perspectives with the objective to discern afterlife with meditative practice in Visuddhimagga.

Body

In order to understand significant factors that yield human daily activities, scientists tenaciously study the consciousness. There is more conference organized just with the only-purpose to assist the humanity to answer the curious question about afterlife. Whoever can propose what they believe and that might oppose other’s belief, is the most significant to life. For that, Neuroscience of consciousness is a branch discussing about the functions of brain and they believe consciousness is a part of so-called self-structuring process. Simultaneously, Quantum physics is to working-out the behavior of particles. By using the experiment of wave-particle duality, quantum physicist finds that the electron behaves differently when being observed by a human. Quantum Physics infers that apart from the

six-sense in human, there must be something existing that interfere the structure of nature. Consciousness is thereby studied in three categories: the nature of consciousness, the property of the brain that enables consciousness to operate within the brain, and a model that explains the behavior of the brain and consciousness as practically observed.

Science believes in fact and experimental evidence, and Buddhism assists them in proving the scientific findings through practical experience, in common term – meditation. Visuddhimagga is a Buddhist texts compiling Buddha's teachings systematically expounding mind (*Pali. citta*) and consciousness (*Pali. vijñāna*) in notation of the seventeen-moments of each single incidental life-event. This continuous process of appearing, existing and disappearing of mind in life is subtle and evanescent. Through the six-sense doors, mind is portraying the sequences in the concept of *bhavaṅga citta* starting from past *bhavaṅga*, vibrating *bhavaṅga*, arrested *bhavaṅga*, five-door adverting, object-consciousness, receiving, investigating, determining, impulsion, and registration. This is operation of life-continuum. Visuddhimagga also teaches how to know and see the existence of *bhavaṅga citta* through the meditative *jhāna* (absorption) five-stages. It is done through the understanding of the consciousness, in the categories of the nature of consciousness, functions of consciousness and a model that explains the behavior of heart and consciousness as meditative practices being observed.

Jhāna stages are where meditator could know and see their own consciousness in the movement of mind, *bhavaṅga citta*, and more sophisticatedly discern all the elements constituting their own physical body (*atman*) and the universe (*brahman*). *Jhāna* stages are the states of mind which is attributed to both physics and metaphysics. To the laws of physics, photon is shot out in aiming to discover its behavior as if it is staying with its identity in relation to human consciousness. To the metaphysics, universe is adhered neatly combining of all individual galaxies. A loathsome interfered by another loathsome is inevitable but understandable due to physical tenet. The science is out there to explore the secret of laws. Could that be still in the inaccessible missionary task but each has to be responsible for the survival of humankind. Experimental evidence from Quantum Physics assists in updating the sufficient facets. It is a proof in explaining the meditative practice progress through what is described in Visuddhimagga. Therefore, afterlife is just a continuity of *bhavaṅga citta*, which is shown clearly if one does experiment based on the quantum physics and Buddha's teachings compiled in Visuddhimagga.

The nature of consciousness is a quantum mechanical entity that can have an independent existence. It localizes in the human brain when the electron is in a particle

state. This provides the necessary quantum mechanical base conducive for interaction with the function in the brain. Visuddhimagga doesn't stop there, consciousness operates in the rebirth-linking modes in a total of fourteen modes of occurrence, the one kind of unprofitable resultant mind-consciousness-element without root-cause occurs as rebirth-linking; This is how the occurrence of nineteen kinds of resultant consciousness should be understood as rebirth-linking. It is in the form of *paṭisandhi citta* – another name of *bhavaṅga citta* after death. Not just only mention the rebirth-linking, Visuddhimagga also portrays in the details by enumerating the list of thirty-one planes in three different realms that one person might either go to or become enlightened.

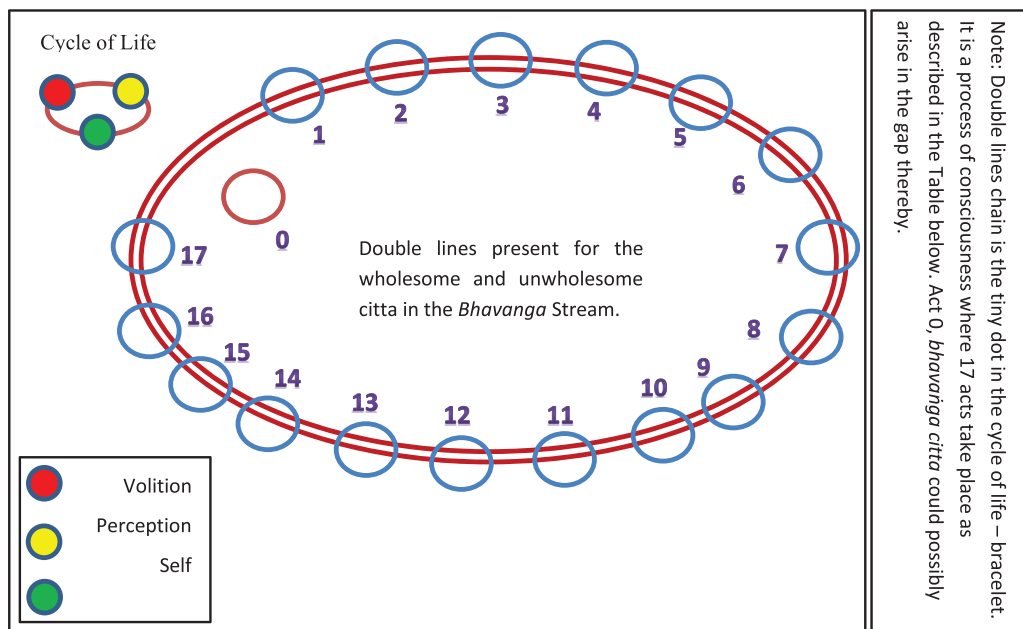
Paṭisandhi citta is the continuity of *bhavaṅga citta* persisting afterlife. It is a stream of occupying consciousness which is formed different *citta* and, the characteristic is dependently on the pairs of six-sense and six-door. The concept consciousness refers to the sixth-consciousness. There are two different cases to explain the different performance of *bhavaṅga citta*. One is sleeping without dreaming, *bhavaṅga citta* is to keep the life operating in the passive mode. The other is sleeping with dreaming, some particular *cittas* is therein evoked from the stream of consciousness dependently on the dream image. This circumstance is illustrating another manifestation of *bhavaṅga citta* as life-continuum under another aspect. The pair of dream-image and dream-reflect are volatile, however, thought-consciousness still formed or could be purified otherwise. The property of the brain that enables consciousness to operate within the brain, whenever the electron wave function collapses, the OBE and NDE ends (Out-of-Body Experience and Near-Death Experience) and the person returns to their physical body and its perception of reality is similar to the collapsing of the wave function in the double slit experiment. For which, if experimenters watch a photon passing through two slits in a barrier, the photon acts like a bullet going through either one slit. It happens differently as turning into wave passing both slit in the case watched by human. So how can a particle change its behavior depends if you watched it. The answer is simple – reality is a process that involves your consciousness. (Robert Lanza, 2018)

The ability of a person to describe what his/her consciousness had observed or heard while it is in a des-embodied state makes us believe that memory is, at least partly, non-material and unaffected by collapsing the wave function. Quantum systems are essentially unified, and so are our thought processes. (Dirk K. F. Meijer and Simon Raggett, p.150) As first, sleeping without dreaming is examined as having the existence to keep the life alive. That something is hereby stipulated acting as *bhavaṅga citta*. It is consciousness maintaining all the manners of human even though he or she might not be awaked. Secondly, there are many moments within daily life that human is not thinking, with

no wholesome or unwholesome action, but in consciousness with the sense-internal-external object, the sense-thought-door then is not relatively active as for the sense-consciousness is to arise. *Bhavaṅga citta* is then present to prolong life with the absence of mind. These two explanations are generating the third circumstance without scientific proof in terms of rebirth. It is just a transformation when the physical body dies.

Life cycle is like a bracelet connecting numerous chains, where *bhavaṅga citta* is understood as thread holding the bracelet in shape. There are two parallel lines drawn to represent wholesome and unwholesome performance in which each tiny bead is itself a phenomenon affectedly ostentatious having the three characteristics of sufferings, impermanence, and non-self. Bead is the same as presenting itself in another appearance of *bhavaṅga citta* with different names. This can be illustrated (diagram-1) below:

Diagram-1: A Cycle of Life and Seventeen-moments



Note: this diagram is constructed by the author of this paper.

Explanation of Diagram: Cycle of life is formed basing on the foundation of three main factors as illustrated those are volition, perception and self which are all considered as the subject determining each other. According to the twelve *nīdanas* in the independent origination theory, this is a core frame that makes up a life. Self is made up of *Bhavaṅga*, *Jāti*, *Jarāmarāṇa* and *Avijjā*; Perception is of *Viññāṇa*; Volition is made up of the seven which are *Sankhāra*, *Nāmarūpa*, *Salāyatana Phassa*, *Vedanā*, *Taṇhā*, and *Upādāna*.

Double lines chain is the tiny dot in the cycle of life – bracelet. It is a process of consciousness where 17 acts take place and Act 0 – *bhavaṅga citta* could possibly arise in the gap. Cycle of life is formed based on the foundation of three main factors as illustrated in (diagram-1) these are volition, perception and self which are all considered as the subject determining each other. According to the twelve *nidānas* in the dependent origination theory, they have explained clearly a core frame making up a life. Self is made up of four factors: Becoming, Birth, Aging-Death and Ignorance; Perception is made up of Consciousness; and, Volition is made up of seven factors: Formations, Name-and-Form, Sixfold-Sense-Bases, Contact, Feeling, Craving and Clinging.

<i>Bhavaṅga Kicca – Function of Bhavaṅga</i>				
Seventeen Acts of Consciousness Process				Stream of Bhavaṅga
Emerging <i>Bhavaṅga</i>	1	***	<i>Atīta-Bhavaṅga</i>	Past Bhavaṅga
	2	***	<i>Bhavaṅgacalana</i>	Vibrating Bhavaṅga
	3	***	<i>Bhavaṅgupaccheda</i>	Arrested Bhavaṅga
14 acts of Consciousness Process Submerging <i>Bhavaṅga</i>	4	***	<i>Pañcadvārāvajjana</i>	Five-door advertng
	5	***	<i>Manodvārāvajjana</i>	Object-consciousness
	6	***	<i>Sampticchanād</i>	Receiving
	7	***	<i>Santīraṇa</i>	Investigating
	8	***	<i>Voṭṭhabban</i>	Determining
	9	***	<i>Javana</i> (Impulsion)	The Function of apprehending object. This is an active process in which a procedure of cultivating wholesome and unwholesome manners as illustrated in (diagram-2.4.2). The meditation aims to equip the practitioners the skills of discerning the wholesome and unwholesome and modifying them. These moments are the most important parts in the purification.
	10	***		
	11	***		
	12	***		
	13	***		
	14	***		
	15	***		
	16	***	<i>Tadālamhana</i> (Registration)	Registration means possessing object which apprehended by the Janava and submerging thereafter into the bhavaṅga citta stream.
	17	***		
Life Continuum				Stream of <i>bhavaṅga citta</i>
Note: The triple asterisks represent the three characteristics of each citta as arising, persisting and dissolving.				

As illustrated in table above, *bhavaṅga* stream is abstractly understood like artesian-river. It flows continuously a current of joining water particles which are called *bhavaṅga citta*. Let's take a slow motion for the action of dropping a stone toward that river.

Act (Act means instantaneous event) no.1 - Past *bhavaṅga*: by the time the stone gets near the river surface, it reflects itself with an image of stone in the current. This interprets the first moment of the process, when *bhavaṅga citta* is virtually having a mirage made up of water particles, but not of the stone yet.

Act no.2 – Vibrating *bhavaṅga*: impinging the water surface, the stone makes an oscillation onward the surface of water. The river stream is consequently vibrating.

Act no.3 – Arrested *bhavaṅga*: the lump goes in the water, the friction density gradually slows the oscillation and eventually ceased, stone is arrested.

Act no.4 - Five-door adverting: the way to identify what type of object in order to issue a correct action accordingly. The property of water particles is measured with the tension in which the water stream cohesively and adhesively responds upon the properties appearing on the stone's surface. Stone-door is in general used for this event in responding to five-door of human being, etc. eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body accordingly.

Act no.5 – Object consciousness: the cavity in the water body that the stone occupies at the very first moment dwelling in the water is compared to stone-consciousness. For the human being, eye-consciousness is to recognize the shape, ear-consciousness is to the sound, nose-consciousness is to the odor, tongue-consciousness is to the taste, and touching-consciousness to tangible body, thought-consciousness to those five and itself as responding to the concept, a mental object.

Act no.6-8 – Operating: receiving is a process of water particles touching the substance of stone. Weighing it and deciding it whether submerging into or floating onto the water are equivalently experimented as the act no. 5, 6, and 7 accordingly.

Act no.9-15 – *Javana* – Impulsive process: the purity of water stream depends on what substances it contains in. It is a process of absorbing and dissolving that happen after the moment of recognizing stone till stone touching the riverbed. Easier to comprehend if one artificial stone which is made up of flour, would take few seconds to be dissolved at the time stone touches the water surface. In A Manual of *Abhidhamma*, section *Java – Niyamo*, ver 11 writes: *Sabbatthā' pi samāpattivīthiyam pana bhavvangasoto viya vithiniyamo natthī' ti katvā bahūni pi labbhantī' ti, veditabbam*. In the process of attainment there is no regularity of thought-processes, as in the stream of the life-continuum.

Nevertheless, it should be understood that many (Sublime and Supramundane) *javanas* take place; Ver 12 writes: *Sattakkhattum parittāni maggābhiññā sakim; Avasesāni labhanti javanāni bahūni’pi. Ayam’ ettha Javana-Niyamo*. It should be known that minor *javanas* arise seven times, the Path and Super-intellect only once, the rest (Sublime and Supramundane) several times. Herein this is the procedure of *javanas*.

Act no.16, 17 – Registration: there is no settlement of the stone to the riverbed if it is artificially made of flour instead. The settlement is therefore depending on the hardness of affliction that the impact has created. This is explained more detail in (section-2.5).

Act no.0 - Stone is consequently becoming settled in the sediment of riverbed, another *citta* goes in *bhavaṅga citta*s. Absorbing, dissolving, and erosion are the process of accumulating, changing and participating to the properties of the river stream. The stone could sit firmly in the sediment or flow simultaneously with the stream of *bhavaṅga citta*s. Whether admitting or not, the river stream has turned into a different soul although very microscopic.

Humanity is living in a three-dimension world where each individual observes himself as a part of conjunctural relation. One of his six-senses in turn associates with the outer world. Sitting right in front of an interface stacked with signal digital chips, time and space are imbued into a flatten world exhibiting the virtual society of the conventional interwoven images about life. There is no definition on how to draw a line demarcating between real and virtual. Spatio-tempo is newly coined to describe the insouciance of emotion. An icon of smiling face is posting in social media that easily makes others indulged. Consciousness is now taking turns of sending-receiving signals in the dimension of two where human acts as a third party of indifference. The universal vocabulary should not be limited with the boundary in the dimension of time and space but also in emotion with its two-dimensional world which complies with multi-operating-interfaces. Engineers simulate the every first obligation for which the scientist takes on investigating. The existing facets displayed in the media are thence equivalent to the subject’s memory. Using mind to operate the artificial arm is another way to illustrate its existence for which brain is ascribed as a place for mind accommodated. Nerves are put in consideration and cerebrals amputated with aims of adventure to new findings about what is hidden behind the real fact that governs the universe vice versa.

An empty bottle is sitting there on the desk waiting to be filled up of water. It will be not astoundingly if there more living organism plunged within it as bring it a definition of

existence. The bottle is itself only meaningful once full of water and the entire of bundle of H₂O thence molded perfect within the shape of it as presenting a soul or even a combination of consciousness from which the living microorganisms perhaps emit. Talking about a drop of water is talking about an admixture of joy and grief. It is also talking of the findings that scientists have encountered in the laboratory. Bidirectional interface is again utilized for watching the emission of one particle split out its stream for designating a new regulation of the game, the game of virtual existence and real survivals. How to find one-self in the present multitudes is how to define the next consecutive moments in a sequence of biological changes. Demise is a stage of body where a state of mind is communal decaying along but still or not persisting is mystery. Let's experience this mystery through the interwoven knowledges of quantum physics and Buddhism through practicing oneself in developing wisdom (*Pali. pañña*) through the process of cultivating the concentration (*Pali. samādhi*). *Bhavaṅga citta* is present as if the practitioner is not in awareness of his presence at the times he is heedful enough but still may not knowing himself in those certain moments. However, it is possible that he reviews the achievements before and after falling in this black-hole. The black-hole is scientifically not a hole but a tremendous weighty material form that swallows things into it or *bhavaṅga citta* as considered in this sense. It is not nothing but an extremely forceful *kamma*-flow which could indispensably sweep all mental thinking into it. It is formed by *citta* with the primitive purity as the nature and the *jhāna* factors (*vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā*) helps to portraying this ideal, if not, as in pure medium the practitioner could not remain himself within the five *jhānic* affections after emerging from the four-stage of meditative absorption.

Metabolism is a term used to describe all the chemical reactions happening contingently complied with the physical laws in order to maintain a life. It is the breaking down of molecules to provide energy and an abolishing synthesis of all indispensable compounds to prolong that life. Similarly, to the impact of a stone thrown into the river, *bhavaṅga citta* is itself retrieved and modified contingently upon the behavior of river and the appearance of stone. These processes are demonstrated thoroughly as the process of absorption. The correlation is hereby explained clearly as the preliminary *citta* is emerging from the stream of *bhavaṅga* attached thereby and absorbed back to the *citta* stream themselves. Like a river-water particle initially separates attaching to the stone and then collecting the stone particle to dissolving to the river stream, however water particle itself stays the same nature as pure. There is only the characteristic of the river stream is now different as consisting of more stone particle. Let's think of the garbage floating in the

river over time, one could possibly mis-see garbage as river but after purifying the water, it returns to freshness, the defilements are considered similarly in this aspect. The only way to know the water whether is fresh or not is to taste it. The taste is like the nature of five *jhāna* factors. The garbage has dissolved its contamination in the water and the freshness thence varies in certain amount of degrees. Tasting water is the work of reviewing the quality of water as the quality of *jhāna* retrieved from the *bhavaṅga* with the pure essence. The meditator could not only see but know what the *bhavaṅga* is like from the taste of *jhāna* factors once having possessed *jhānabala* – the power of concentration.

Occult force is not examined like a main factor maintaining the changing of karma. It is probed as analogously as the elementary debris that participates in the journey of finding as either it chooses to dwell in or go forth from the sufferings. Liberation is the way to rectify the stream and remove its components wholesome and unwholesome, and thence emancipating oneself. Stream of consciousness is namely *bhavaṅga citta* with the capacity of containing *kamma* like a store, and it behaves with its own characters of that *kamma* which cumulated from previous habits. This is conventional truth for one to comprehend in order to achieve the ultimate. To explain a cognitive function, we need only specify a mechanism that can perform the function. The methods of cognitive science are well suited for this sort of explanation and so are well suited to the easy problems of consciousness. By contrast, the hard problem is hard precisely because it is not a problem about the performance of functions. The problem persists even when the performance of all of the relevant functions is explained (David Chalmers, 2010, p.6). Mechanism here is referred to human biological body in the case for considering where if there is an intuitive function collaborating along but is independent of others functions in the body. Specular consciousness exists to operate that function. Quantum physics has just known the existence of it and via Visuddhimagga it is called life continuum mind, the *Paṭi* term is *bhavaṅga citta*.

Conclusion

The final goal of whatsoever its concern is to bring the humanity to happiness – emancipation of sufferings. Quantum physics especially the new theory of biocentrism is there to help science resolve the outer-universe, and Visuddhimagga Treatise of Buddhism it to get human to go inwards but both are aiming to find the true reality where consciousness is not a mere-functional product of brain or even the entire physical living mechanism. In a different approach, Visuddhimagga demonstrates the meditative stages of a practitioner

(experimenter in empirical sciences) seeing the life continuity as *bhavaṅga citta*. Present life is a part of functional role of consciousness but whether it persists or not after demise is the case for scientists to continue their solemn mission to bring humanity to understand that death is not the end, so they would be responsible for what they do.

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