

Extract from letter of Shoghi Effendi to Leroy Ioas through H. Rabbini dated Nov. 14, 1935

Concerning your question relative to the duration of the Baha'i dispensation there is no contradiction between Baha'u'llah's statement in Iqan about the renewal of the city of God once every 1000 years and that of the Guardian in the "Dispensation" to the effect that the Baha'i cycle will extend over a period of at least 500,000 years. The apparent contradiction is due to the confusion of the terms cycle and dispensation. For while the dispensation of Baha'u'llah will last for at least one thousand years, His cycle will extend still further, to at least 500,000 years. The Baha'i cycle is indeed incomparable in its greatness. It includes not only the Prophets that will appear after Baha'u'llah, but all those who have preceded Him ever since Adam. These should indeed be viewed as constituting but primary stage leading gradually to the appearance of this supreme Manifestation of God. After Baha'u'llah many Prophets will, no doubt appear, but they will be under His shadow. Although they may abrogate the laws of the age in which they appear, they never the less draw their spiritual from this Mighty Revelation. The Faith of Baha'u'llah constitutes indeed, the stage of maturity in the development of mankind. His appearance has released such spiritual forces as well continue to animate, for long years to come, the world in its development. What progress may be achieved in later ages-- after the unification of the whole human race is achieved, will be but improvements in the machinery of the world. For the machinery itself has been already created by Baha'u'llah. The task of continually improving and perfecting this machinery is one which later prophets will be called upon to achieve. They will thus move and work within the Baha'i cycle.