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500,000 year cycle of Bahá’u’lláh [[1]](#footnote-1)

Extract from letter of Shoghi Effendi to Leroy Ioas through [his secretary] H. Rabbani[[2]](#footnote-2)

Dated 14 November 1935

Concerning your question relative to the duration of the Bahá’í dispensation. There is no contradiction between Bahá’u’lláh’s statement in Íqán about the renewal of the City of God once every 1,000 years, and that of the Guardian in the “Dispensation” to the effect that the Bahá’í 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 Bahá’u’lláh will last for at least one thousand years, His cycle will extend still further to at least 500,000 years.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Bahá’í cycle is, indeed, incomparable in its greatness. It includes not only the Prophets that will appear after Bahá’u’lláh, 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.[[4]](#footnote-4)

After Bahá’u’lláh many Prophets will, no doubt, appear but they will be under His Shadow. Although they may abrogate the laws of this Dispensation in accordance with the needs and requirements of the age in which they appear, they nevertheless draw their spiritual force from this mighty Revelation. The Faith of Bahá’u’lláh constitutes, indeed, the stage of maturity in the development of mankind. His appearance has released such spiritual forces which will continue to animate, for many long years to come, the world in its development. Whatever progress may be achieved, in later ages, after the unification of the whole human race is achieved, will be but improvement in the machinery of the world. For the machinery itself has been already created by Bahá’u’lláh. 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 orbit of the Bahá’í Cycle.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. This document is from the Emma Maxie Jones Collection, https://bahai-library.com/emma\_maxwell\_jones\_collection , prepared by E. Jones, M. Thomas, and J. Winters (2021-2022). Transcribed with minor typographical and spelling corrections from scanned photographic image of typewritten copy. Newer copies used where available. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ḥusayn Rabbání, brother of Shoghi Effendi. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Shoghi Effendi, *Directives from the Guardian*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. idem, pp. 7–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. idem, pp. 61–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)