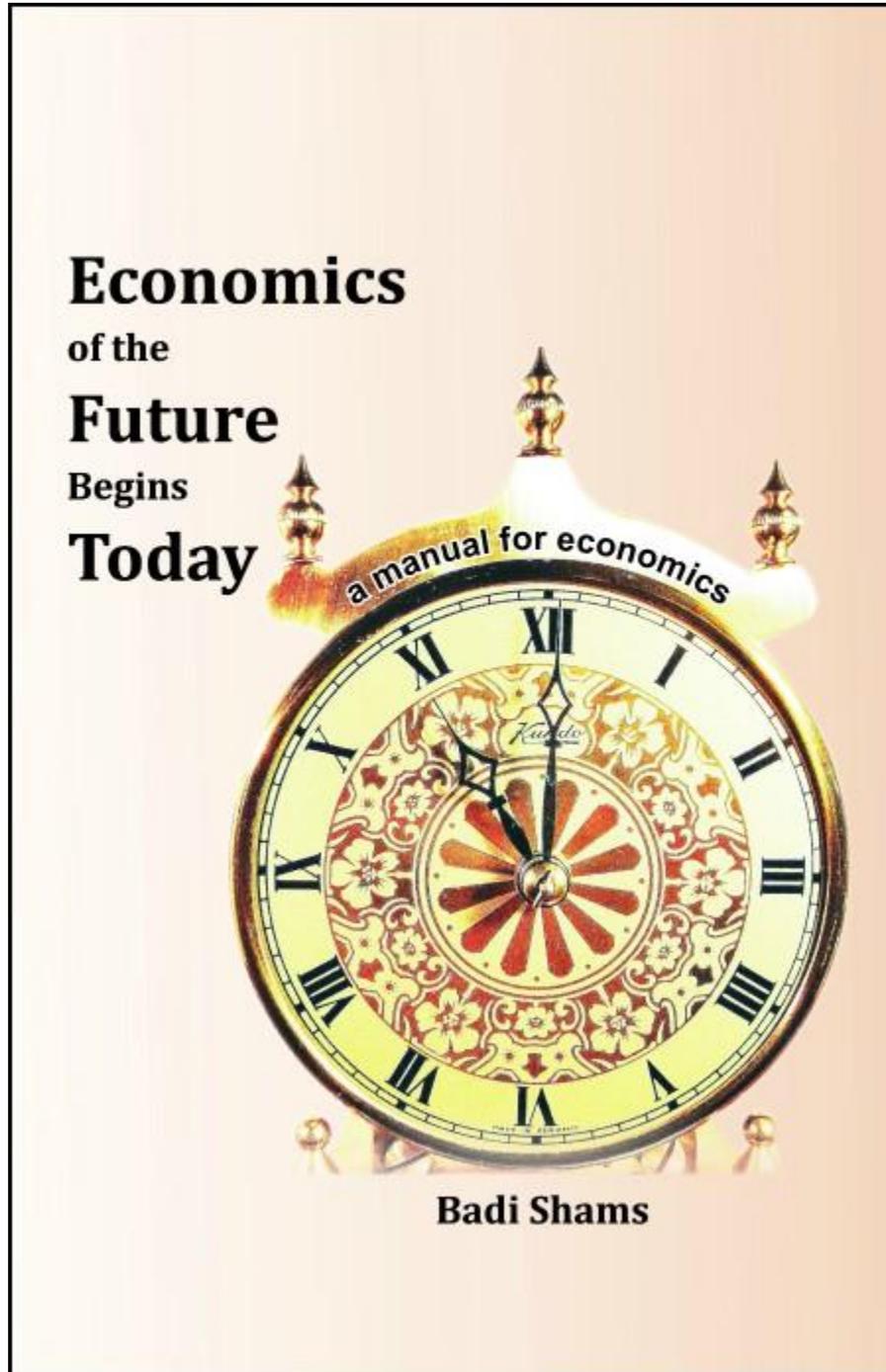


# **‘Economics of the Future Begins Today’: A Book by Badi Shams**

Books, Interviews December 14, 2017 Sonjel Vreeland



Badi Shams has combined his love of economics and his ardor for the Baha’i Teachings in his book *Economics of the Future Begins Today*. This book explores some possible ideas for how we can implement Baha’i principles in our daily economic dealings. He gave us a little teaser in

his article [Practical Economic Suggestions for Everyday Use](#) and my interest was piqued. Badi lovingly agreed to tell us more about his book.

### **Baha’i Blog: To begin, could you please tell us a bit about yourself and your interest in economics?**

I was born in Iran and became a Baha’i at the age of 15 but I didn’t realize the importance of the Faith till at 19 I had a serious accident that almost blinded my eye but opened my spiritual eye. At the time, 1974, there was a plea for pioneering which I obeyed and went to India. There I studied, learned English and tried to serve in various capacities that I could. I made a change of direction in my education from engineering to economics because I dreamt of doing my Ph.D in Baha’i economics and that was my idea of service to the Faith. In order to do that I had first to do my Bachelors and Masters degrees. After completing those I wrote to the beloved [House of Justice](#) to request the Baha’i Writings on economics. It informed me that the Research Department did not have a compilation on economics and that maybe I should collect the Writings. It also reminded me that there is no Baha’i economic system so the best title for my research would be “Study of the Baha’i Writings on Economics.” This was the 1970’s and there was no computer or internet so I spent a few years collecting and cataloguing the Writings related to economics which was published by the Baha’i Publishing Trust of India as a compilation in 1989 called “Economics of the Future”. I couldn’t finish my academic research because I had to leave the country and so I came to Canada in 1988 after the dedication of the Baha’i Temple in India.

### **Baha’i Blog: What inspired you to write ‘Economics of the Future Begins Today’?**

I always think that economics is such an important subject and the Baha’is should know more about it (but I would like to add that this book was published in 2016, before the [1 March 2017 letter](#) from the Universal House of Justice came out). Economics covers almost all areas of our life and has a great effect on our spiritual life so the more we know about it, the better decisions we can make. My plan was to write my research paper which I never got to do, so it had always been an unfulfilled desire. And coming to Canada derailed my plans and I had to make a new life from scratch. So that project was put on hold for many years and there were times I thought I would never get the chance to do this. All these years I’ve been studying and collecting material and made workshop material and gave talks and hoped to write this book. But after retirement, I had no more excuses for my procrastination and the message from the House of Justice for Ridvan 2012 reminding us to introduce more spiritual values into our economic lives urged me to finish this book as a means of contribution towards laying the foundation for the future Baha’i economic system. I believe that we are in a turning point in human history and the old order is dying out, so we need to start preparing for a new system which is more spiritual based. So the awareness of Baha’is on this important subject is absolutely essential. This book, unlike the compilation I put together that has a very similar title, includes quotations from the Writings but also offers a brief study of economics and economics-related terminology and suggests practical actions for everyday use which could become the beginning of a foundation for the future economic system.

### **Baha’i Blog: How has putting this book together impacted your life?**

It has always been a motivation behind everything I did and kept me in touch with the economic happenings of the world. I had my share of setbacks and confusion to find the best direction to present my ideas. And so many times I changed the direction of my efforts. But generally it was a good motivator. And now since it is done, a sense of relief has finally come over me.

### **Baha'i Blog: Did you face any tests and difficulties when putting this book together?**

Yes, and that was finding a way to present the economic ideas in a simple way. I strongly believe that economics does not have to be complicated and daunting, especially when it comes to action so I tried to present this subject as simply as I could so that more people get encouraged to try to understand it and implement the Baha'i Writings on this subject in their daily lives in order to transform their economic life which in turn transforms the economic condition of society. And that was not an easy task to do because traditionally economics is very confusing and is a field full of contradicting ideas, theories and arguments. And that was the biggest challenge, to try to simplify all those concepts and introduce them in a manner that was easy to understand. I am not sure that I have achieved that but I sure tried.

### **Baha'i Blog: What was your favourite part of writing this book?**



**Author Badi Shams**

The pleasure of conveying the fact that we do not have to be bystanders but rather active participants. We do not have to wait for a new economic system to arrive. There is so much that can be done and we are the ones who are going to start doing it and the sense of purpose and the awareness that we can make a difference, knowing that we are laying a spiritual foundation for the future economic system. The other good part of the book, for me, is the practical suggestions for everyday use that I put together, (I devoted a chapter for it) and feeling that this is really direct, simple and to the point and useful and wishing that these ideas may affect someone's

approach to economics. The fact that I tried to make the book a manual that provides a variety of information and can be used as a reference for the Writings on economics pleases me too.

I have observed that we sometimes miss the point that economic actions are the extension of our spiritual values. So many times I've seen that individuals with a good understanding of the Writings, once they go to their place of work or business do not practice those spiritual Writings in their business activities. They follow society's norm of success, without realizing that, as Baha'is, we have to look at business and do business from a different angle and that is the spiritual angle. We cannot blindly follow the prevailing business practices of society. We have to be spiritually the guiding lights and leaders and not blind followers of a decaying and morally bankrupt system.

### **Baha'i Blog: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

If I may, a word of caution. Today more than any time before we have to be aware of the world around us and observe its effects on us. Changes are happening fast and sometimes we think we are losing the control of our lives. So it means we have to be more vigilant and be on our guard. Every day the spiritual struggle between the constructive and destructive forces is happening and this is visible in our economic life. Increasing our knowledge about our material side or economic side is essential for our spiritual health and growth.

### **Baha'i Blog: Thank you so much, Badi, for sharing this with us!**

If you're interested in purchasing a copy of Badi's book, you can do so directly from the [Baha'i Publishing Trust of India](#) or from [the US Baha'i book distribution service](#). And if you'd like to read Badi's article, [here's the link!](#)