

# BAM

The Vahdat Camp  
(revisted)  
May 20-22, 2004



What are the two most important things in life? Love and money, the cliché rightly says. Let's get rid of the money, facts and figures part first:<sup>1</sup>

## RECEIVED

Number of people that donated money	23
Number of people that donated things	2
Number of people that donated work	6
Largest single contribution	\$ 5000
Smallest single contribution	\$23
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>\$ 12,168.65</b>
or <b><u>10,440,701 Tomans</u></b>	



Preparing cash envelopes



The stuff to be loaded

## SPENT

Cash	4,100,000
Clothing	1,022,720
Toys	1,000,000
Shoes	929,500
Books	249,900
Food	194,430
Transport	161,000
Miscellaneous	152,237
Packaging	16,200
Stationary	6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>7,831,987</u></b>



Packing till late at night



Loaded van + Patrol near Kashan

## RESERVE

	<b><u>2,608,713</u></b>
or <b><u>\$ 3,040.46</u></b>	

We plan to use the sum in reserve for targeted assistance to just a few of our friends at the Vahdat camp. How and whom we will choose and what we will exactly do is still an open question.

I think that we will look for some of the people that we have met on our two trips and get some "life stories" and then decide what to do. It will be more targeted and focused with the drawback that fewer people will be on the receiving end.

<sup>1</sup> Please let me know if you have not received my first Bam report since this one is the continuation of the first report. If you don't want to receive these reports, please send a mail to [bam@amanieh.com](mailto:bam@amanieh.com) with "unsubscribe" in the title field.

To wrap up the “money facts and figures” part, I will say that:

1. We obtained a discount from the suppliers that knew where their money was going and because of the “good cause” took no or very little profit.
2. Our (Massoud G, Hamid N and I) contribution was just our time and our personal expenses for the trip. Not that much and certainly not worth taking away from the donated sum.

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The Vahdat Camp was a shadow of itself.



The last foreign NGO (from Singapore) left the day before our arrival and what was a very lively place with many foreign and Iranian NGOs has become a desolated campsite.

Those that could leave have left; the remaining ones are fighting a losing battle. They don't want to leave the place thinking, I think wrongly, that the authorities will “cheat” them and move them to a worse place. They even have invented the story that there was actually no earthquake in Bam and that it was some kind of a mysterious nuclear test and that they have been used as guinea pigs for this experiment!



The authorities on the other hand **INSIST** on closing the camp and moving the people to a “better” place. Why, when they are happy here? In the meantime, I was going to say “as usual”, the people suffer because nobody wants to compromise and even try to understand the other party's position. A sad state of affairs.



As it is very often the case the main battle to be fought is an educational one.

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So what is left in the Vahdat camp that we may not even find on our next trip? Many beautiful people that we intend to follow-up, wherever they are, get to know and help them just a little with our love and hopefully with other people's money!



On our next trip we are going to study the possibilities more in detail.

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The amount of money donated was much more than what I expected and what I had planned to carry with my Patrol ended up overfilling a small truck and the patrol's very large roof rack.

It took us over 5 hours to pack all the stuff in the bags (2 toys, one piece of clothing, 2 pairs of shoes, sweets and 10,000 Tomans – abt \$12 - cash in each bag). About 400 bags in total.



We finished packing at about 10 pm just in time to load the truck and the patrol which took us another couple of hours. I went to bed at 1 am, woke up at 4 and we were on our way to Bam at 5 am on Thursday, May 20.

It's about a 15 hours drive (abt. 1200 km) but having 2 drivers, Hamid N and I, taking turns we arrived not at all tired. Massoud G was also helpful by his presence (not falling asleep, taking care of the music and the GPS!).

The Patrol, although old, was also in great shape and did not give us any trouble at all on this 2500 km journey.

The road (**Tehran-Qom-Kashan-Nain-Yazd-Anar-Kerman-Bam**) is freeways and divided highways for most of the way.

There is even at least one very correct truck stop restaurant on the way where we stopped for lunch on the way to and back.

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*The crowd and Nini*

Nini (my wife) and her friend Flore flew to Bam the same day so we met them at the hotel upon arrival for a quick cup of tea and off we were to the Vahdat camp where we had decided to spend the night so as to be closer to the people and also feel what it's like living in a tent there.



*Massoud G & Bami girlfriend*

It was very cool for the season so we did not suffer at all + of course we stayed only one night and had the back-up of the hotel to take showers and change.

It is helpful to have women around in these places (and other places too!) because the families are then



*Relaxing in Bam hotel*

more open to dialogue and socializing.

Nini and Flore were also helpful in the distribution of the packages which took us a whole day of work and sweat and at the end became a little out of control because we were almost attacked by the mob that was fighting for the last packages.

Hamid and I made a last short visit to the camp late Friday evening and Saturday morning we drove back to Tehran. We arrived again not tired at abt 11 pm.

One day travel to, one day work, one day drive back. Total: 3 days.

Next trip there will be no "luggage" so we are flying and staying 2 full days in Bam.....