

Written during a trip to Iran with a Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Delegation.

5/15/06 Isfahan, Iran

While we listened to the guide give us the background about the Palace of Forty Pillars, a group of tiny young girls wearing turquoise uniforms with a variety of light colored chadors, to indicate age, came into the hall with their teachers.

As the girls moved into the room they noticed the strange group of foreigners sharing the space with them.

We were consumed by a pool of dark innocent, inquisitive eyes as they slowly moved around the large room. Shy smiles creased their tiny lips when their glances met one of the delegation's as they looked us over.

Like a herd of little lambs one or two would wander from the group and stray over to us for a closer look.

They bravely approached, eyes wide open, taking in our differences, until one of the teachers would gently herd them back to the group.

As they left the four hundred-year-old hall several peered back, giving us parting glances.

Once they were gone so was the warmth of their youthful peace, innocence, and beauty. The magic was gone, and it was just a room once more.

Only memories were left behind.

Later when leaving the grounds I saw a young man wearing a Green Bay Packers shirt, and the day before, a boy with a New York baseball cap on.

We have an opportunity to bring a future of peace, friendship and compassion or war, violence and suffering.

Before we decide we should look into the eyes of a child.

Steve Fryburg