

## The Wheel of Dhamma Rotates around the World – Israel

Israel Vipassana Trust

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*Course venue in Israel*

Since having the first Vipassana course in the early 1990s, the demand for courses has increased steadily, as has the number of courses each year. Earlier, courses were held in temporary locations, but in 2000 the Israel Vipassana Trust rented a 1 1/4-acre site for year-round use near Hatzeva -- a remote village in the Arava Desert, overlooked by the Mountains of Edom in neighbouring Jordan. The site can accommodate about 65 students and 12 Dhamma workers.

In 2004, almost 1500 students participated in 24 ten-day courses, two Satipaṭṭhāna tthana courses and two three-day courses at Hatzeva. Despite the many courses, almost all were full that year with a lengthy waiting list. Accordingly, the trust rented a neighbouring facility for a month in order to offer two courses with double capacity.

Every year the trust organizes three one-day courses for children aged 8 to 16, with 50 to 70 participants in each course. Added to these in 2005 was Israel's first course for teenagers aged 13 to 16. The courses are held on weekends in the Tel Aviv area, which is within easy access for much of the population.

The term 'Vipassana' has become current in Israel, although it is often taken to mean 'silent workshop'. Articles on Vipassana appear regularly in national newspapers and magazines. There have even been humorous references to Vipassana in commercials.

Given the limitations of the present course site, for some time the trust has been looking to purchase a property where it can develop a permanent Vipassana centre. In 2004 negotiations appeared close to success on purchase of a suitable property, and meditators within and outside Israel offered generous support. Ultimately, however, the trust was outbid by another party. Even so, much was learned from the experience. The trust continues to give high priority to establishing a Centre that will help suffering people in this part of the world.

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