

## **PRESS RELEASE 6 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Birmingham experienced a unique and historical event this week. In keeping with the United Nations Declaration of 21 September as the annual International Day of Peace, Birmingham had its first WORLD PEACE TREE planted by His Holiness Vishwaguru Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda Ji and the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Len Gregory, in the presence of a truly international audience. People from as far as Australia, Canada, America, South Africa, India, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Germany, France, England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland participated in the event at the City Centre Gardens on Monday 6 September, close to the new Central Library site.

Dignitaries and special guests came from social, political and spiritual spheres, representing the local Birmingham community, including the Lady Mayoress Mrs Gillian Gregory, accompanying the Lord Mayor; Mr Kartar Singh, Consul and Head of Chancery from the Indian Consulate General of Birmingham; Reverend Chris Dowd, vicar of the Journey Metropolitan Community Church and Vice Chair of Believing in Birmingham, Christian partnership; Sister devotees from the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Birmingham branch; Mr Joginder Bola, Director of Moseley Holistic Health Centre & Tree Of Life Spiritual Network; Jean and Maurice Varney, President and Secretary of the Civic Centre Estate Residents Association; Mr Lee Southall, Birmingham City Council Parks Manager.

Gifted this tree to the people of Birmingham and people of the world, His Holiness Swami Ji blessed it with everlasting powers. He initiated the tree with ancient mantras, including the peace mantra. It is intended that people will find peace and inner calmness by the tree and a plaque has been installed to indicate its presence. His Holiness Swami Ji declared, "If people go near the tree, touch it or pray there, their wish will be fulfilled".

On 21 September, International Peace Day, a special event will be held in the City Centre Gardens by the Peace Tree at 7.30pm, where anyone can attend in the spirit of peace and unity between all. Participants are requested to bring a candle for an informal ceremony of a candlelight vigil with universal prayers for peace.