

Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Raghavan

31 May 1953 - 26 Jul 2007



Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Raghavan **Viji** to her friends, **Viji Mam** to her students, and **Amma** to the inmates of Parasparam was a true saint, who gave her life in service of the helpless and abandoned. With no biological children, she was mother to several semi-orphan girls, whom she believed suffered most in underprivileged homes while their single parents tried to make ends meet.

For many years Secretary of Language Department at Goethe Institute (formerly Max Müller Bhavan), Viji was loved by every student who left the place, and one could always see her at office only in the company of one or more of her fans.

In 1993, Viji started working with the Parasparam Trust to take care of semi-orphaned girls, and today, in association with Cattitude Trust, Parasparam is also home to several abandoned cats and dogs. The magic of Parasparam Aashram - Viji did not like to call it an orphanage - was that the girls were made to feel secure and special, are involved by turns in the day to day functioning of the Aashram, which imbues them with responsibility, accountability, self-reliance, and above all, a great sense of belonging. Apart from formal education, the girls are trained in vocational skills like screen printing, tailoring, basic accounting, beauty treatment, to name a few. Their life at the Aashram gives them the courage and the confidence to face the world. Today, with former inmates gainfully and happily employed, Parasparam has been graduating to higher levels.

Viji is truly a child of the Universe, her children come from every kind of background imaginable and she was most particular about preserving the secular nature of Parasparam. She taught the girls to love one another, love the animals, and to take pride in caring for them. Parasparam in Tamil means "mutual" and the exchange of love and compassion between the children and the animals is something unique.

One last dream of Viji, an ardent devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba, was a Shrine for Baba at the Aashram, which was completed recently. On her last visit to Shirdi, she selected a beautiful marble idol of Baba for the shrine; this precious parcel is now on its way to the Aashram.

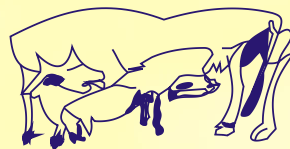
Baba is on His way to Parasparam and Viji is on her way to Baba.

May she rest in peace in the sanctuary of Love she crafted with such devotion and dedication.

For those desirous of participating in the Parasparam initiative, even in small measure, the relevant contact information is provided below.

The Parasparam Trust

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