

## The Queen Honours Two Eminent Jains in The UK

The Queen bestowed National Awards, in the New Year honors list, to Dr. Vinod Kapasi and Mr. Ajay Gudka - two eminent members of the Jain Community in the UK for their services.

**Dr. Vinod Kapashi**, a Civil Engineer who moved to the UK in 1968, has received an Honour of OBE (Order of the British Empire, equivalent to Padma award) in the Queen's Honours list for his services to Jainism.



During his stay in the UK, he took an active interest in many literary activities and Jainism related works. His novels were widely acclaimed by the critics in India. He also wrote several plays, many of which were staged in London.

However, he started devoting more time for promoting Jainism and wrote many books and articles on Jain subjects. His book on Hemchandracharya was a result of four years of study and research. His mammoth work 'Nava Smarana - Nine Sacred Recitations of Jainism' was a Ph. D. thesis and the book is widely referred by people all over the world.

Vinod Kapashi became a founder trustee of a Jain Charity called Mahavir Foundation, where he has also served as president for 20 years. During the course of his activities, Vinod Kapashi has met Royals and various dignitaries including the Pope in the Vatican. He has attended Parliament of the World's Religions and presented his research papers there.

After the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, he organized a fundraising drive, visited the affected areas and chose a village to be rebuilt. He is also working for the betterment of lonely and retired people through an organization called Navjivan Vadil Kendra. This charity has received Queen's award for voluntary services. Vinod Kapashi has continuously received support from his wife, Sudha, and daughters.



**Ajay Gudka** on being honored with an MBE in the Queen's 2019 Honours Awards for services to Charity and the community in Gujarat, India.

Ajay set up a registered charity, BEHT in the UK in 1998 to help underprivileged children receive

education in India. From starting a school for 100 children in Gujarat, the charity and its activities have grown and currently, over 8,000 underprivileged children are receiving education and thousands more have done so over the last eighteen years in 5 educational centers all in Gujarat which BEHT helped to set up. There is also a school for blind children, a hospital which treats around 200,000 rural patients annually free of charge as well as several residential homes for the elderly all based on charitable purposes.

In summary, a countless number of lives have been changed for the better, directly as a result of the path that Ajay chose to adopt and has followed so diligently for the past twenty years.