



APRIL 2023

# BRAHMA KUMARIS PHILIPPINES

SERVICE NEWS



## Brother Charlie's April 2023 visit

**With the blessings of Bapdada, gratitude and respect from the heart was extended by the BK Philippine family to the divine presence of Brother Charlie.**

It seemed only fitting for Baba's instrument, Divine Brother BK Charles Hogg of Australia, to be Brahma Kumaris Philippines' first visiting senior teacher post-pandemic. He has earned the Filipino nickname "Kuya" (Older Brother) Charlie, having long been our most frequent guest for speaking engagements and family retreats.

This time around, he was in the country for seven full-packed days, traveling from Metro Manila in the north to Davao City in the south. He spoke in three public programs and conducted our first national retreat in over three years.

## 'Together as One, with the One'

**April 17, In-Person Program open to Connections  
Brahma Kumaris Retreat Center for Spiritual Learning  
Tagaytay City, 65 km. from Manila**

*"Cooperation enables organizations to achieve a common goal. It is premised on such other virtues as humility, patience and tolerance. Love is the seed of cooperation. The sources of love are usually family and friends but, more profoundly, the love that every person is looking for is found by going deep into the self and connecting with God. Ego, the enemy of love, does not make cooperation possible. When there is conflict rather than cooperation, we try to facilitate negotiation by way of mediation. However, it is in meditation that everyone finds the wellspring of peace, love and all the other virtues like compassion and respect, making cooperation possible."*



This was just part of the wisdom that Bro. Charlie shared with some 50 guests from various organizations in Tagaytay City, among the first local government units to initiate a character building program in the early 2000s. The guests included the City Administrator, the heads of City Tourism and Character City Offices, the president and high school principal of Mater Dei Academy, nuns from the Benedictine congregation, the mother superior and nuns from the Daughters of Charity, the captains and several councilors from two barangays, the former dean of United Theological Studies, currently committee member of the Association of Southeast Asia Theological Association, who came with 17 faculty members.



## 'The Power of Cooperation'

April 18, In-Person Program at Hotel Tropika  
Davao City, 1,484 km. from Manila

In partnership with the City Government of Davao through the City Cooperative Development Office and the Mindanao Peace Council, Brahma Kumaris was host to a multi-sectoral audience of over 200 participants. They represented cooperatives, grassroots organizations, non-government organizations, interfaith and peace advocacy groups.

Bro. Charlie's talk emphasized how values, the "future of life," are made richer by love, respect, and kindness. Love is the seed of cooperation, he said, as it gives birth to truth. He gave the metaphor of human beings breathing in oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide, while plants take in carbon dioxide and expend oxygen. This is natural cooperation he pointed out, *"It follows the law of nature."*





The greatest obstacle to cooperation is ego, he said. *"When there is ego, there is less love— and therefore less cooperation."* That's because ego works toward self-interest, he added. *"It distracts the thread of unity and sparks conflict."* To increase one's capacity to cooperate, he pointed to quality of love for oneself as the foundation. *"This is where meditation helps. One gets to closely observe the original and real self as a soul, just a point, peaceful and immortal. It is the basis for having a loving relationship with the self, with God and with others."*



*BK Arlene and BK Cha organized the event with the good wishes of Sister Shanti*

After Bro. Charlie's talk, four special guests gave individual responses: Bishop Guillermo V. Afable of the Diocese of Digos, Davao del Sur; Vince Molejon, Secretary General of Mindanao Peace Council; Nelia Tumarao of the Cooperatives Movement; and Atty. Randolph Parcasio of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority. All four expressed resonance with everything that they had just heard, and gratitude for the guest speaker's deep insights.

For the recorded link, please visit [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\\_permalink&v=2386840701493037](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=2386840701493037) which registered a reach of close to 600.





## 'Be Still, My Heart'

April 20, OnStage Theater, Makati City  
Metro Manila

The 800-seat venue, about three quarters-filled, was quiet from start to finish, having been prepped in meditation by three yogis from different centers across the country.

Board of Trustees (BOT) President Merle Pimentel welcomed the guests and introduced the Brahma Organization. BK Tina, a professional musician, performed "Into the Womb (Be Still, My Heart," a song that she composed especially for the event.

Brother Charlie asked one key question: "What is going to take me to that sweet place of a still heart?" A new approach is imperative, he said, if we must adapt to the rapid, unprecedented and head-turning changes. *"It's like time saying that we need a new wisdom, a new skill—the art of stilling the heart, the mind, the conscience."*

He offered his own personal experiences as an example. *"I have been a meditator for about 48 years. In this practice, I get to observe my inner world. I find that when my heart is full of love, I feel very easy about myself, very self-accepting, relaxed, content and definitely I'm a lot more understanding and compassionate towards others. But when the heart lacks love, the mind cannot rest. It goes on seeking, because something is missing."*

Pure love, true love, authentic love is the key, he said. *"The first need, the first desire in life is love. If these are not fulfilled, a million other needs and desires emerge—for recognition, respect, power, material possessions, control."*



*Sister Rajni Daulatram, National Coordinator for Brahma Kumaris Japan and the Philippines, led the ending meditation experience, bringing the whole theater to a sweet stillness and silence.*



The world is suffering from a "spiritual heart disease," Brother Charlie pointed out. *"There's so much pain in the heart of humanity because of a blockage—love can't come in or go out. This is why we need to begin to still and heal the heart. This is spiritual intelligence—to have a rich and loving relationship with myself—my first relationship. If this relationship is dysfunctional, it pollutes every part of my life moving forward."*

He proceeded to dissect what he called the "spiritual anatomy." *"Two of them make my heart increasingly disturbed; only one calms my heart. The first is the eye of arrogance or the eye of superiority. The second is the eye of inferiority which is, simply, lack of self-respect. When either of these eyes is ruling my inner world, I compare with others. The more ego, the less love. The less love, the more my heart stays in discomfort."*

Finally, Brother Charlie brought it home: *"The third eye, the original eye. This is the one that sees the lovable me. I am a soul. A soul is a wonder. It is just a point, it has no physical size, it is subtle. It sits in the front of the brain. I, the soul, lived before this body, and will continue to live after. I am immortal, non-physical. I have no labels. Forgetting this gives birth to both ego and lack of self-respect. As soon as I replace them with this awareness of who I am, peace becomes my nature. No more need to remind myself, 'I must relax, I must calm down.' My heart is still."*

BOT Vice President Jonathan Batangan, was both the master of ceremonies and moderator for a half-hour question-and-answer portion.





*As a gesture of appreciation, BOT Chair Maria Lourdes Aseneta presented a bouquet of flowers each to Brother Charlie and Sister Rajni.*



*Brahma Kumaris Philippines' raja yoga meditation practitioners with "Kuya Charlie" at OnStage Theatre*



*Every guest received toli and a blessing card.*

"Be Still, My Heart" was livestreamed at <https://www.facebook.com/rajayoga.makati/videos/148574997975805>, where it registered a reach of more than 1,600.





## 'UNLIMITED'

In keeping with the theme structure, the retreat was conducted in four parts. "Unlimited" started with a vibrant ceremony, with close to 200 BKs from centers and gita pathshalas across the country being welcomed with shimmering, colorful ethnic sashes and crowns of flowers. Each one then quietly proceeded to the murli hall, there to behold onstage—and stand before, in unlimited drishti—photo posters of ancestor souls.

Our very special guest set the tone with what he declared was "the greatest story" of God coming and the children following Him. In our memory track remains the recollection of Baba having found us, Bro. Charlie said, "making this gathering an extraordinary meeting of the oldest souls that have been together for the longest time."

He described the signs of being limited and forgetting our greatness as akin to finding newness in "doing" (service) rather than staying in yoga, observing what others are doing, slackness in effort and starting to drink from the energy of the world and designing our lives to stay in our comfort zones.

## BK Sustenance: National Retreat

April 21-23, BK Center for Spiritual Learning  
Tagaytay City

With so much anxiety in the world caused by the collapse of everything that people have invested in, he said, it is time to step up, together, into the vision that Baba has of us becoming unlimited. It is important to connect with our roots, he stressed, to remember who we are. He urged each BK to once again become the angels that the whole world has been looking for: "Those who are in love with One, and for whom every second of life means to give love."



## 'CONNECTED'

During morning class on the first official day of the retreat, Bro. Charlie focused on love, "the greatest power of the Confluence Age." He borrowed the words of the late Dadi Prakashmani: "It is love that makes me move, that takes me beyond these limits." We should learn to take love from Baba, he said, emphasizing that the highest and purest love is available only at this time. He led the class to a reflection on how much each one can take from God, and to ask the heart: "Why did I come to Baba?" This is the connection of all connections, he said. "God the Almighty Authority, the one who has the truth, has invited me to remember Him."

The Q&A session that followed covered a wide range of inquiries, including: how to post consistent messages on social media about the kind of meditation that BKs do, how Brahma Baba attained the karmateet stage, the process of forgiveness, remaining in love with BapDada, how to help suicidal souls, and the other meditation techniques.

And then, in a short workshop, the retreat participants were asked to break out into groups to relate how they had grown spiritually in the past two years.



# BK Sustenance: National Retreat

April 21-23, BK Center for Spiritual Learning  
Tagaytay City



*Sister Rajni being back in Manila after three years (owing to Covid-19 restrictions) was a special treat amply celebrated in every part of the much-awaited weekend gathering,*

## 'CO-CREATIVE'

Another Q&A hour on the second and last evening explored the subject of "Co-Creation." The following key points surfaced during the discussion moderated by BK Emmie of Makati:

What are we being called upon to co-create with Baba?

To bring change in the soul and remain pure, which is our real service. Baba needs a certain number of souls to think, act, and behave in an elevated world. We work together for self-transformation. We co-create together as a family. The role of this divine family is to make us pure. We are co-creating a new world. We become the instruments of God; I do not have to do it alone.

If co-creation is a role, shouldn't we also talk about qualifications?

Baba sees what we are capable of and the challenge is to accept the role of an angel. When I have self-respect it is like seeing how Baba sees me. Self-respect is stepping into the vision that Baba has for me. At the end of the cycle, we remember our part as angels. If I am knowledgeable, I will accept my part.

How do I choose what I should bring to the table?

Baba directs us in a certain way because it is really His task and we use our specialties accordingly.

I

Is it a reasonable prospect for BKs to also work with drama in this task? Not all scientists and artists—who, according to the drama, do important enough work that Baba mentions them in some murlis—become BKs.

Drama is playing its own part. Scientists do not recognize Baba, but they somehow feel His vibrations. There are some scientists in gyan, and they will come in Golden Age, too.

The Dadis were prepared for 14 years prior to world service. We newer BKs, who were steeped early in service, are now called to introspection in an apparent reversal of procedure.

As it was the beginning, so it will be at the end. We need to do tapasya as the Dadis did for 14 years as a preparation for what is to come.



*Co-creators of the new world through the launch of the 40th year of Philippine service*

# BK Sustenance: National Retreat

April 21-23, BK Center for Spiritual Learning  
Tagaytay City

## 'COMPASSIONATE'

On the final day, Brother Charlie tackled the subject of Compassion. The sign of being knowledge-full is that in the process of change, one does not overreact to the self, he said. "As we age, old sanskars emerge. In this process, we need so much compassion and kindness for the self."

He cited examples of how Brahma Baba soothed some children's hurt feelings. "We have to be big-hearted and understanding towards each other rather than reacting with a whole lot of assumptions and judgments," he said. Again, he recalled Dadi Prakashmani's counsel, to make it a point to listen before jumping in and offering advice.

Sister Leela of Tagaytay anchored the succeeding half-hour Q&A, with questions and clarifications that included: how to merge one's day-to-day life with Baba, open-eyed versus close-eyed meditation, creating newness in yoga, the BK view of the LGBTQIA+ community, how to create fortune, and the Swastika symbol's origin.



*Mothers*



*Brothers*

## Some concluding insights from Bro. Charlie:

\*"I have to merge my life with Baba. There shouldn't be a distinction between my spiritual life and my daily life."

\*"Those who meditate with open eyes sustain their vision throughout the day."

\*"To create newness in yoga, one formula is: Apply a full stop to thinking, become a point, remember the point."

\*"Each soul plays its own part, so everybody is entitled to respect, including members of the the LGBTQIA+ community. See virtues in everyone."

\*"Renunciation creates fortune. Renounce waste and the vices."

\*"In BK service, there is no discrimination between rich and poor."

\*"No matter what happens, do not leave the BK life."

## Heartfelt gratitude and respect

It came as no surprise at the conclusion of the retreat that the BK family thanked Bro. Charlie with a heartfelt gratitude and respect.



*Kumaris and CNs*



# BK Sustenance: A National Retreat

April 21-23, BK Center for Spiritual Learning  
Tagaytay City



BK Baguio



BK Cebu



BK Naga



BK CSL



BK Makati



BK Mindanao



BK Quezon City

Brief but festive closing rites consisted of a first-ever cutting of multiple cakes, one for each of the 10 centers represented. This also served as the launch for the 40th year of seva in the country.

Deep thanks to BapDada, Didi Nirmala, Sister Rajni, the instrument souls and the BK family for the utmost cooperation and loving feelings manifested in all possible ways! Doubtless, the spiritual synergy brought newness, renewed energy and enlivened awareness to the gathering, and invigorated the inner journey of every BK from the Philippines.