

Bharatiya Temple of Lansing

955 Haslett Road, Haslett MI 48840

FOREWORD

Dear Devotees:

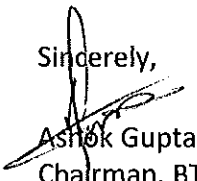
We the Board of Trustees are pleased to present to you the revised Constitution and Bylaws 2014 as unanimously approved on December 7, 2014 in the Annual General Body meeting of the Bharatiya Temple.

This document is a result of numerous meetings of the Constitution Committee with extensive discussions between the committee members, the Board and members of the community over a two year period. My sincere appreciation to all of the Constitution Committee Members Ved Agrwal, Ved Gossain, Vidyadhar Mandrekar and C.A.Reddy, Temple Board members Sanjay Gupta and Madan Lalwani, and others for their assistance in putting this document together.

We believe that the operations of our Temple under the revised documents will run more smoothly, make the Temple financially more viable and stronger over the long run, and provide foundation for an "Endowment" type arrangement. We look forward to your continued support and involvement in the operations of the Temple for years to come.

As a historical note, the first Temple constitution was written in 1982 and later amended in 1994 and 2012.

Sincerely,

 12/7/14  
Ashok Gupta

Chairman, BTL Board of Trustees

December 7, 2014



*BHARATIYA TEMPLE OF LANSING, INC.*

955 Haslett Road, Haslett, MI 48840

<http://lansingtemple.org>

Phone: (517) 339-6337

**Tax Exempt ID: 38-2399465**



## **THE BHARATIYA TEMPLE OF LANSING, INC.**

### **CONSTITUTION**

October 2014

955 Haslett Road  
Haslett, Michigan 48840  
Telephone: 517-339-6337  
<http://www.lansingtemple.org/>

LR.S. No. 38-2399465

State of Michigan Incorporation No. 881 - 085

12/27/14

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ARTICLE I - *NAME*

Section 1

The name of this organization shall be the Bharatiya Temple of Lansing, Inc., hereafter referred to as the Temple or by the abbreviation BTL.

Section 2

The Temple shall be registered as a Michigan Non-profit, Ecclesiastical Corporation.

ARTICLE II – *OBJECTIVES*

Section 1

The objectives of the Temple are as follows:

- a. Preserve and maintain Hindu deities in the main sanctum and Jain deities in the Jain Sanctum and perform traditional Puja, Bhajans, Havan and Satsang.
- b. Preserve the Hindu, Jain and Arya Samaj religion, culture and traditions for future generations.
- c. Promote Indian culture and values.
- d. Provide humanitarian services to the local and world community.
- e. Promote study and understanding of all religions and develop and maintain harmonious relations with all faiths.

ARTICLE III - *TEMPLE ACTIVITIES*

Section 1

- a. The Temple activities will be open to all persons. There will be no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, beliefs or sexual orientation.
- b. All activities shall be in keeping with the dignity and respect for the sanctity of the holy places according to “Hindu, Jain and Arya Samaj” traditions.



- c. Consumption of alcoholic beverages, smoking, or eating non-vegetarian food shall not be permitted on the Temple premises.

*ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING*

Section 1

Any individual subscribing to the objectives of the Temple and paying the necessary dues and donations as set forth herein and in the Bylaws may become a member upon approval by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2

To be eligible to become a member, individuals must be at least 18 years of age on January 1 of the year in which they apply to become members and must have contributed the dues and initial donation according to the Constitution and the Bylaws.

Section 3

Each individual will have a single vote. A couple with family membership will have two votes, one vote for each spouse.

Section 4

Membership shall be for a calendar year.

Section 5

All members shall have full use of the facilities of the Temple as prescribed in the Constitution and in the Bylaws. Membership shall be considered as a privilege for admission to and utilization of the facilities of the Temple for designated activities.

Section 6

- a. The Temple will have Life Members, Patron Members, Annual Members and Honorary Members. Honorary Members will not pay any dues and will not have any voting

rights. The members shall meet the following requirements and will have privileges as stated below:

Membership Category	Minimum Donation	Annual Membership Dues Per Bylaws	Voting Right	Right to Serve on Board of Trustees	Right to Serve on other Committees
Life Member	\$10,000	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Patron Member	\$2,500	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual Member	\$250 (*)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Honorary Member	None	No	No	No	Yes

Note (\*): The first time (new) members will be required to pay the initial donation amount of \$250, in addition to the annual membership dues (if the total accumulated donation is less than \$250).

- b. All members eligible to vote can serve on all standing committees and will have other membership privileges as specified above. The required minimum donation amount ascertains the category of membership.
- c. The honorary membership shall be limited to scholars, spiritual leaders, and dignitaries visiting the Temple. This exclusive membership honor shall be awarded by the Board of Trustees at its discretion to persons of exceptional standing in spiritual and religious matters.

#### Section 7

Organizations, corporations and businesses may donate money, goods or services to the Temple but shall not exercise any rights of individual members in any aspect of the governance of the Temple. Donations by organizations, corporations and businesses shall be acknowledged only in the name of the organizations, corporations and businesses and not in the name of individuals.

ARTICLE V - *FINANCIAL POLICY*

Section 1

- a. Annual membership dues shall be as set forth in the Bylaws and are due on January 1 of the calendar year.
- b. The membership can be restored by payments of the dues at any time. However, if dues are paid after June 30<sup>th</sup>, such members will not be able to vote in the General Body meeting of that year.
- c. Membership must be received prior to June 30th for a member to be eligible to serve as a board of trustee for the current and next calendar year

Section 2

- a. Annual membership dues shall not be considered for the purpose of deciding membership categories.
- b. Any amount contributed in excess of annual dues in a calendar year will count towards donations. Donations shall be considered on a cumulative basis for deciding membership level under Article IV, Section 4(a).

Section 3

- a. No loans will be taken for the purposes of acquisition or construction of new or used capital improvement assets.
- b. If future acquisition or construction of new or used capital improvement assets is undertaken, then such proposed acquisition or construction must be approved in advance by a vote secured in writing through ballot with approval from at least three-fourths (75%) of all Life Members AND at least three-fourths (75%) of all other members of the BTL (Temple) eligible to vote. Absentee votes and proxy votes (in writing) will be counted as if the voting member were physically present at the meeting.
- c. Once the proposal for acquisition of capital assets referred to in Section 3(b) above is approved by the members according to Section 3(b), an amount equal to One Hundred and Thirty percent (130%) of the future estimated cost (including inflation factor) of the proposed acquisition or construction must be deposited in a separate and designated bank account of the Temple for that purpose.



- d. The provisions in this section shall not apply to Repair and Maintenance of the currently existing temple building and structures.

Section 4

Section 3 and its sub sections 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) and Section 4—under Article V- (Financial Policy) - cannot be amended or deleted except as provided specifically for this in Section 1(f) of ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

Note: Provisions of section 3 above were inserted as sections 4 and 5 of Article V by a written ballot in the December 2012 general body meeting by 90% of total members.

Section 5

- a. Devotees may make Estate Gifts to the Temple.
- b. The funds actually realized from Estate Gifts will be deposited in the bank under a restricted “Estate Gift” account. The earnings on such deposits may be used for Temple operations.
- c. In case the Temple goes into financial distress, funds may be withdrawn from this account with the approval of at least three-fourths (75%) of affirmative votes from the Life Members and three-fourths (75%) of the annual members.

*ARTICLE VI - BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND COMMITTEES*

Section 1

- a. The main governing body of the Temple shall be called the Board of Trustees.
- b. A total of nine trustees shall be elected by the voting membership of the Temple. Elected Trustees shall execute a pledge accepting their responsibilities.
- c. The members of the Board of Trustees shall serve for one three (3) year term. Any member of the Board found negligent in his/her duties may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board (by written ballot). Absence at four consecutive board meetings by a member shall constitute negligence of duty by the board member unless such absence was approved by a majority of the board by a written ballot.





- d. A vacancy on the Board resulting from any reason shall be filled only by appointment by two-thirds majority vote of the board. The term of the new appointed board member will expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of that year.
- e. Each year, three members of the Board of Trustees shall be replaced by three newly elected members resulting from the regular annual election process.
- f. No candidate for the member of Board of Trustees shall serve for more than two consecutive full terms. He/she may be reelected to the Board after a break of one year. This will not preclude them to serve on any Temple committee.
- g. The Board of Trustees, in addition to having overall responsibility for the smooth running of the Temple, shall have the following specific functions:
  1. Elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer and a secretary for a term of one year at the first scheduled meeting of the board following the General Body meeting.
  2. Appoint a Nominating and Election Committee once a year to seek nominations for the vacant positions on the Board of Trustees.
  3. Hold Board meetings regularly with adequate advance notice to all board members.
  4. Conduct meaningful Board meetings with full disclosure of operating results.
  5. Maintain minutes of each meeting and keep the general membership informed by posting the minutes of the meeting on the Temple website.
  6. Require the Temple's financial records to be audited by a qualified accountant who is not a member of the Temple's Board of Trustees. The qualified accountant should be appointed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.
  7. Appoint Standing Committees, deemed necessary for conducting Temple activities, before March 31<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year.
  8. Avoid conflict of interest.
  9. Maintain a good credit standing for the Temple by maintaining adequate capitalization.
  10. Coordinate activities of all standing committees, review their major decisions and act upon the committee reports.
  11. Maintain records of its proceedings and those of its standing / special



committees.

## Section 2 Committees

The committees shall be categorized as “standing committees” and “special (ad hoc) committees”. The terms of the standing committees shall expire after the new standing committees have been appointed. The special (ad hoc) committees shall dissolve as soon as their assigned duties are completed.

- a. Finance Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
  1. Prepare an annual budget for discussion and approval of the Board of Trustees.
  2. Prepare annual financial statements for approval of the Board of Trustees and dissemination to the membership.
  3. Keep financial and tax records for a minimum period of seven years.
  4. The Treasurer will be the chair of the Finance Committee and will coordinate the activities of this committee.

### b. Special Committees

1. Nomination and Election Committee - Each June the Board of Trustees shall appoint a Nomination and Election Committee of at least three members to seek nominations and conduct elections for new members of the Board of Trustees. Current members of the Board of Trustees are not eligible to serve on this Committee. The current Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the chairperson of the previous Nomination and Election Committee shall be ex-officio members of this Committee. The Nomination and Election Committee shall recommend the best qualified candidates for the new members of the Board of Trustees.
2. Other Committees - Other standing/special committees may be formed from time to time as seen necessary by the Board of Trustees. For the purpose of this Constitution and Bylaws, the ex-officio members of the standing/special committees shall act in an advisory capacity without voting rights.



ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 1

There shall be at least one General Body Meeting on the first Sunday of December of each year. Notice of this meeting shall be sent by mail/email at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting. The purpose of this meeting is:

- a. To elect new members of the Board of Trustees.
- b. For the Board of Trustees' to
  - i. Present reports regarding the financial position and activities of the Temple,
  - ii. Present the annual budget, and
  - iii. Seek input from the membership for improving the operations of the Temple.

Section 2

Additional meetings of the entire membership may be called at the discretion of the Board of Trustees or upon the written request of at least ten percent of Life members and ten percent of the annual members for the purpose of conducting special business of the Temple.

Section 3

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least four times a year for its business. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson to conduct special business. In the event a Board member is unable to be present at any scheduled meeting, he/she shall be able to exercise his/her role by written proxy given to a Board member.

Section 4

The meetings of the general body and the Board of Trustees shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees who will exercise his/her vote only if a tie vote develops on any issue.

Section 5

All meetings of the Temple shall follow Roberts Rules of Order and shall remain open to any member who wishes to attend. The meeting proceedings (except election and amendments) will be conducted by a voice vote, a show of hands or a written ballot as ruled by the Chairperson.



## ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

## Section 1

All proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be referred by the Board of Trustees to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

- a. An amendment to the Constitution shall be proposed in writing by at least ten percent of the life members and ten percent of the annual members of the Temple.
- b. A simple majority of the Board of Trustees may approve the motion of amendment for consideration by the general membership and send it to the entire eligible voting membership by mail (including electronic mail) one month prior to voting.
- c. The Constitution can be amended by general membership only at a general body meeting.
- d. To become effective, the amendment must receive affirmative votes from at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the life members and two-thirds (2/3) majority of the annual members. Members voting by paper ballot, electronic ballot or by proxy will be accepted for the purpose of counting the votes. Once approved, the amendment will be effective 30 days after approval.
- e. Sections 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 4 and 5 in Article V (Financial Policy) and the subsection (g) below can be amended only by a written ballot and only with the approval of at least three-fourths (75%) of all the Life Members and three-fourths (75%) of all the other members of the BTL (Temple) who are eligible to vote. Note: Provisions of this subsection were inserted as subsection (f) in the December 2012 general body meeting by 90% of total members.
- f. No amendment(s) to the motion of amendment shall be permitted at the General Body Meeting.
- g. Article II, in its entirety or any of its sections or subsections thereafter, shall only be amended by three-fourths majority of the life members and three-fourths of annual members. The amendment to Article II of the Constitution shall become operative only after one year from the day of the amendment.



ARTICLE IX - CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Common courtesy and discipline must be observed on the premises of the Temple. Disruptive action(s) and vandalism which undermine the principles set forth in this Constitution shall result in termination of membership by simple majority of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2

In no case shall the membership dues or donations paid by a member be refunded.

Section 3

If it is judged proper by the Board of Trustees, a cancelled membership may be reinstated. In such cases, the judgment expressed by the Board of Trustees by a simple majority vote shall be considered final.

ARTICLE X -- DISSOLUTION

The Temple shall not be dissolved except by unanimous vote of the General Body who shall also determine the disposition of the assets. In the event of the dissolution of the Temple, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities, dispose off all the assets of the Temple exclusively for the purposes of an organization operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code as per the decisions of the Board of Trustees.

  
12/7/14



**BHARATIYA TEMPLE OF LANSING, INC.**

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<http://lansingtemple.org>  
Phone: (517) 339-6337

**Tax Exempt ID: 38-2399465**



**THE BHARATIYA TEMPLE OF LANSING, INC.**

**BY-LAWS**

October 2014

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Haslett, Michigan 48840  
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ARTICLE I - *NAME*

These Bylaws pertain to the Constitution of the Bharatiya Temple of Lansing, Inc. (BTL or Temple) which is registered with the State of Michigan under incorporation # 881-085.

ARTICLE II – *OBJECTIVES*

The objective of these Bylaws is to ensure smooth functioning of the Temple's activities and its day-to-day operations under the guidance of the Temple's Board of Trustees to meet the objectives outlined in Article II of the Temple's Constitution.

ARTICLE III - *TEMPLE USE AND PRIVILEGES*

Section 1

The Temple facilities shall be used for non-profit, religious, educational and cultural activities. Prior approval of the Board of Trustees (Board) would be required. However, no activity shall be permitted if it is against the objectives of the Temple contained in Articles II and III of the Temple's Constitution.

Section 2

Member(s) may rent the facilities for private use for a fee. Such use of facilities will require prior approval by the Board or its designees. The request for the use of Temple facilities would be approved for use by the Board of Trustees according to the policies and procedures as established by the Board.

Section 3

All activities organized by the Temple shall have the first priority on the Temple facilities. Under situations deemed unavoidable by the Trustees, the Board has the right to cancel or rearrange any reservations with advance notice.





Section 4

- a. Request for the use of Temple facilities requires advance reservation which shall be considered on a first-come first-served basis.
- b. Amounts predetermined by the Board of Trustees shall be deposited in advance as a security and it may be refundable if the reservation is cancelled with two weeks' notice.
- c. Loss and damage of property of the Temple while in use shall be charged to the member(s) making the reservation.

ARTICLE IV - *MEMBERSHIP DUES*

Section 1

- a. Annual membership dues of \$75 for single or \$150 for a family or such other amounts as determined by the Board of Trustees are due on January 1<sup>st</sup> each year and are payable in a lump sum by June 30<sup>th</sup> of that year.
- b. First time members are required to pay the initial donation amount of \$250 in addition to the annual membership dues (if the total accumulated donation is less than \$250).
- c. Any payments received in excess of the annual membership amount will first be applied towards the membership dues for that year and the remainder for donation, unless donor specifies otherwise.

Section 2

If membership dues are not paid/renewed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, the membership will lapse.

- a. The membership can be restored by payments of the dues at any time.
- b. However, if dues are paid after June 30<sup>th</sup>, such members will not be able to vote in the General Body meeting of that year.

Section 3

Annual membership dues shall not be considered for the purpose of deciding membership categories.

- a. Any amount contributed in excess of annual dues in a calendar year will count towards



donations.

- b. Donations shall be considered on a cumulative basis for deciding membership level.
- c. Recognition as Life Members requires a minimum cumulative donation of \$10,000. Life members are not required to pay annual membership dues.
- d. Members with a cumulative donation of \$2,500 are recognized as Patron Members, but these members are required to pay annual membership dues.

#### Section 4

At its discretion the Board may award “honorary member” status to scholars, spiritual leaders, and dignitaries visiting the Temple. Honorary members do not pay annual membership dues, but do not have voting rights and are not eligible to serve on Temple standing committees or on the Board of Trustees. Additional details on various membership categories are available in Article IV, Section 6 of the Temple’s Constitution.

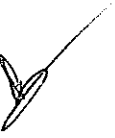
#### Section 5

“Life member” status of the Temple is recognized by a wall plaque in the lobby of the Temple in four categories based on the timing and amount of the cumulative donations to Temple as follows:

- a. “Diamond” status for cumulative donations totaling \$100,000 or more;
- b. “Platinum” status for cumulative donations totaling \$50,000 or more;
- c. “Gold” status for cumulative donations totaling \$25,000 or more; and
- d. “Silver” status for cumulative donations totaling \$10,000 or more.

#### Section 6

The Board may recognize members who make the Temple a beneficiary in their estate. Members must provide a written intent of such “Estate Gift” commitment to the Temple. Estate gift commitments may be recognized on a wall plaque in the lobby of the Temple with names of “Planned Estate Donors” in the following categories: greater than or equal to \$100,000, \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000. Such recognition may be based on the expected value of the gift.



ARTICLE V - *FINANCIAL POLICY*

Section 1

No remuneration shall be paid for voluntary services to the Temple.

Section 2

Any unbudgeted payment exceeding \$250.00 shall require prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3

Checks in amounts greater than \$250.00 shall be signed by the Treasurer and the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson.

ARTICLE VI – *BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND COMMITTEES*

Section 1 Board of Trustees

- a. In the first meeting of the Board for the year, the Board shall elect the chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer and secretary.
- b. The chairperson shall conduct the meetings of the Board as a facilitator and follow Roberts' Rules of Order.
- c. The chairperson shall submit an annual report about the affairs of the Temple to the general membership.
- d. The vice chairperson shall officiate as a chairperson in chairperson's absence. He/she shall also perform such other duties as assigned by the chairperson from time to time.
- e. The secretary shall act as the recording officer of the membership and the Board of Trustees. He/she shall record and keep approved minutes of the meetings and shall send out proper notices of all the meetings called and of other meetings when necessary.

Section 2

To assist the Board in conducting the Temple activities, the Board shall appoint before March



31<sup>st</sup> of each year various standing committees, its chairpersons and members.

### Section 3

Ad-hoc committees shall be appointed by the Board from time to time to give special assistance to the Board in performing activities such as conducting elections to the Board and various other services

- a. Ad hoc committees are dissolved by the Board upon completion of their assigned duties.
- b. Ad hoc committees have no fixed tenure except as determined by the Board.

### Section 4

No person including current board members shall serve on more than two standing committees simultaneously.

- a. For the purpose of this section, standing committees are defined as permanent committees with fixed tenure such as: the Long Range Planning committee, Constitution and Bylaws committee, Public Relations committee, Publications committee, Membership committee, Fund Raising committee, Finance committee, Educational and Cultural committee, Religious activities committee and Priest Management committee.
- b. All committee chairs report to the Board and no committee shall have authority that supersedes the authority of the Board.

### Section 5

Any committee deemed inactive may be dissolved by the Board.

### Section 6

The Treasurer shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Maintain proper accounts of the Temple and hold the funds in a suitable manner as determined most appropriate by the Board of Trustees.
- b. Make payments when authorized by the Board;
- c. Present quarterly financial reports to the Board of Trustees and annual reports to the membership;
- d. Present the annual budget, as prepared by the Finance Committee;



- e. Arrange to prepare and submit necessary corporate papers as required by law to the State of Michigan;
- f. Make records available to the Audit Committee or others when required by the Board of Trustees;
- g. Manage and coordinate the mailing of donation receipts, W-2s, 1099s and other tax reports to State and Federal agencies;
- h. Maintain a record of donations for tax reporting purposes and update for accumulated total donations at the end of each year for reporting and recognition of membership categories; and
- i. Prepare financial statements at the end of the Temple's fiscal year for the Board, members and others as necessary.

## ARTICLE VII - *MEETINGS*

### Section 1 **General Body Meeting**

Annual General Body meetings of the Temple will be held on the 1st Sunday of December each year.

- a. The General Body consists of the members of the Temple in good standing.
- b. Each year three new trustees will be elected by a majority vote of membership.
- c. Nominations for election of trustees shall be submitted in entirety to the Nominating Committee at least 21 days prior to the election date.

### Section 2 **Board and Committee Meetings**

- a. Five members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute the quorum for the Board meetings.
- b. For the Standing and Ad hoc committee meetings, more than 50% of the members shall form a quorum.
- c. Proxy vote and ex-officio members' vote shall not be considered to satisfy the requirement for any quorum.
- d. A majority vote of the members present at any meeting shall be sufficient to conduct



business.

*ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS*

Section 1

- a. Any amendment(s) to the Bylaws can be proposed by 10% of the Life members and 10% of general membership of the Temple to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.
- b. The proposed amendment(s) must be in writing and must be accompanied with the reasons for the amendment.
- c. The Board shall refer the proposed amendment (s) to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for its recommendation.
- d. The recommendation of the latter committee shall be debated by the Board and a simple majority of the Board may approve a motion to submit the proposed amendment and the recommendations of the Committee and the Board for consideration by the general membership.

Section 2

If a conflict arises in the interpretation of these Bylaws, then the ambiguity should be resolved by keeping the interest of the Temple supreme and referring the same to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

*RA*  
12/27/14