According to the 1947 Partition Plan for Palestine, when Arabs and Jews were to create their respective separate states, each was to have had a written constitution. The Palestinian Arabs and Arab states rejected the partition plan, and therefore no constitution for an Arab state was written. In December 1948, not yet at the end of its Independence War, Israel published its draft constitution, but the Knesset never adopted it into law. On June 13, 1950 Israeli leaders decided that the constitution would be legislated “chapter by chapter.” Thus in lieu of a constitution, over the life of the state, Israel’s parliament passed a series of Basic Laws that have become essential to the country’s constitutional foundations.

Ken Stein, September 2014

February 12, 1958: First Basic Law of Israel, the Knesset
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset started to legislate basic laws on various subjects. The First Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Third Knesset on February 12, 1958. It did not define the powers of the Knesset, but stated that its seat is in Jerusalem and should include 120 members. The law deals with the electoral system, the right to vote and be elected, the Knesset’s term of office, the principles relating to the Knesset elections, the service of Knesset members, the parliamentary immunity of the Knesset members and the Knesset buildings as well as the work of the Knesset and its committees.

July 25, 1960: Second Basic Law of Israel, Israeli Lands
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Second Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Fourth Knesset on July 25, 1960. The basis of the law is the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel and its redemption. The law ensures that the state owned lands, which constitute about 90% of the lands in Israel, should remain national property. The law prohibits the transfer of ownership over lands owned by the state, the Development Authority or the Jewish National Fund, either by sale or by any other means, with the exception of types of land or transactions, which have been specified in the law.

June 16, 1964: Third Basic Law of Israel, the President of the State
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Third Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Fifth Knesset on June 16, 1964. The law was basically a re-enactment of previous instructions which were scattered in other laws. It deals with the status of the President of the State, his election (by the Knesset), his qualifications and powers, and the procedures of his work.
Since the Constituent Assembly and the first Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Sixth Knesset passed the Fourth Basic Law of Israel on August 13, 1968. The law essentially breaks down the logistics of the government: of whom it is comprised, the parameters of the positions, the expression of a no confidence vote, and the ability for the Prime Minister to dismiss the Government.

July 21, 1975: Fifth Basic Law of Israel, the State Economy
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Fifth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Eighth Knesset on July 21, 1975. The law lays down the framework for budget laws, rules for taxation, compulsory loans, payments, fees and other aspects of the economy. Regulations were likewise stipulated for state assets, the state budget, and the printing of money.

March 31, 1976: Sixth Basic Law of Israel, the Military
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Sixth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Eighth Knesset on March 31, 1976. Until this Basic Law was passed, the constitutional and legal basis for the operation of the Israel Defense Forces was to be found in the IDF Ordinance of 1948. The Basic Law reiterated the subordination of the military forces to the government and the status of the Chief of Staff. The law stated that the IDF is the army of the state, dealt with the compulsory military service and enlistment, as well as the instructions of the army and its orders. It stated that "outside the Israel Defense Forces no armed force is to be set up or maintained, except in accordance with the law."

July 30, 1980: Seventh Basic Law of Israel, Jerusalem the Capital of Israel
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Seventh Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Ninth Knesset on July 30, 1980. The intention of the law is to establish the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, to secure its integrity and unity and concentrate all the instructions, which were scattered in various laws, regarding the location of national institutions. The law deals with the holy places, secures the rights of the members of all religions, and declares that Jerusalem will be granted special preferences with regards to its development.

February 28, 1984: Eighth Basic Law of Israel, the Judiciary
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Eighth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Tenth Knesset on February 28, 1984. The law dealt with the Israeli judicial system, including judicial authority, its institutions, the principle of independence on matters of judgment, the openness of judicial proceedings, the
appointment of judges, their qualifications and tenure of office, the powers of the Supreme Court, the right of appeal, further hearing, retrial and the principle of settled law. The law does not deal with the authority of the courts to examine the legality of laws. This will be dealt with in the Basic Law: Legislation, when it is enacted. The law includes an instruction regarding its permanence and protection from changes by means of emergency regulations.

February 15, 1988: Ninth Basic Law of Israel, the State Comptroller
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Ninth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Twelfth Knesset on February 15, 1988. Most of the law is a re-enactment of previous instructions, which were scattered in other laws. The law deals with the powers, tasks and duties of the State Comptroller in his/her supervision of government bodies and as ombudsman, the manner in which s/he is elected (by the Knesset) and the budget of the comptroller's office. The law states that the State Comptroller is responsible solely to the Knesset.

March 17, 1992: Tenth Basic Law of Israel, Human Dignity and Liberty
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Tenth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Twelfth Knesset on March 17, 1992. It states that human rights are based on recognition of the value of man, the sanctity of life and the fact that he is free. Its aim is "to defend Human Dignity and Liberty, in order to establish the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state." It defines human freedom in Israel as being the right to leave and enter the country, to privacy, intimacy, refrainment from searches of private property, body, possessions, speech, writings, and notes. Violations of the dignity or freedom of man is permitted only in accordance with the law. The law includes an instruction regarding its permanence and protection from changes by means of emergency regulations.

March 9, 1994: Eleventh Basic Law of Israel, Freedom of Occupation
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Eleventh Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Thirteenth Knesset on March 9, 1994. The law lays down the right of "every citizen or inhabitant to engage in any occupation, profession or trade" unless "a law which corresponds with the values of the State of Israel, and which was designed for a worthy end" determines otherwise. The law includes an instruction regarding its permanence and protection from changes by means of emergency regulations. Only a majority of the Knesset members can amend the law.

March 7, 2001: Twelfth Basic Law of Israel, the Government
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Twelfth Basic Law of
Israel was passed by the Fifteenth Knesset on March 7, 2001. It stipulated rules and conditions for the direct election of the Prime Minister simultaneously with the Knesset elections, as of the elections to the Fourteenth Knesset. It dealt with elected Prime Minister and his government’s service, government formation, qualifications for becoming minister, procedures leading up to a government’s formation, its actual formation, the way it functions, ministerial and governmental powers, continuity of government, general elections, and resignation or removal of the Prime Minister. Only a majority of the Knesset members can amend the law.

March 12, 2014: Thirteenth Basic Law of Israel, Referendum
Since the Constituent Assembly and the First Knesset were unable to put a constitution together, the Knesset legislated basic laws on various subjects. The Thirteenth Basic Law of Israel was passed by the Nineteenth Knesset on March 12, 2014. This law requires that if a treaty is proposed for Israel to give up lands, specifically the Golan Heights and east Jerusalem, more than 80 MKs must support the treaty, which is ratified without a referendum. If 61 or more MKs support the treaty, then a public referendum will be held, where a majority of those voting must be in favor of the treaty proposing giving up lands. If fewer than 61 MKs do not back the treaty, then it will be rejected without the nation voting on it. Notably, the lands included in the treaty do not mention the West Bank. As a precedent, on September 29, 1978, the Knesset voted to approve the Camp David Accords, which include the removal of Sinai settlements that was completed in April 1982.