

The Sukkah of Non-Domination

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · 23 September 2026

After Yom Kippur's seal, the commanded act is to sit under schach — temporary covering under permanent covenant — not to seize the sky.

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Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren

Companion to the series *From Judgment to Dwelling* and Essay I *From the Field to the Booth*

Opening claim

After the seal of Yom Kippur, Torah does not authorize a throne of arbitrary power. It authorizes a sukkah: a roof of faith that covers a people without owning the horizon, a dwelling that can be dismantled, a sovereignty that remains answerable.

Banner for the day: the commanded act after judgment is not to seize the sky. It is to sit under schach.

I. Season and through-line

- **Secular / Hebrew:** Wednesday, 23 September 2026 · 12 Tishrei 5787
- **Liturgical hour:** Two days after Yom Kippur (10 Tishrei / 21 Sep). Erev Sukkot: Friday 25 Sep. Sukkot I: Shabbat 26 Sep.
- **Just-passed parsha:** Ha'azinu on Shabbat Shuva (19 Sep). Weekday Chumash: Vezot HaBerakhah. Next Shabbat is festival Sukkot.
- **Seasonal theme:** Not Elul's "King in the Field." The King has judged. The commanded act now is to build a dwelling.
- **Hayom Yom, 12 Tishrei:** A covenant is cut over wide, counselled, companionable labor; it does not return empty.

Series continuity: Elul field → RH coronation under higher law → Ten Days / Ha'azinu → Yom Kippur seal → **architecture after judgment**. Kapparah on the tenth; ritzui on the fifteenth; between them we build (Essay I).

Israel calendar only. Sukkot I on Shabbat this year: dwell first, take Sunday.

II. Clouds and booths without mashup

Sukkah 11b holds R. Eliezer and R. Akiva together: remembrance of the clouds of glory, and the obligation of actual booths. Protection remembered; structure commanded. Neither voice cancels the other.

The Zohar's *tzila di-meheimanuta* — shade of faith — names what the structure does to a people: it covers without claiming to be the Source. Temporary covering under permanent covenant. *Teishvu ke'ein taduru*: sit as you dwell. Visiting is not enough.

This essay takes up **non-domination as the political grammar of the booth**. Full Ushpizin night-by-night belongs to Essay VI; full Kohelet to Essay VII; Arba Minim midrash to Essay II.

III. What non-domination means here

In republican theory, non-domination names freedom as the absence of arbitrary power — not merely the absence of interference. A master who seldom interferes still dominates. Torah's booth presses a stricter and older claim: even legitimate human rule is limited dominion under Heaven.

Rambam's Hilchot Melachim binds the king to Torah scroll and law. Hilchot Teshuvah binds return to action that remakes life. Neither text licenses a crown that owns the horizon. The sukkah rehearses the opposite: a roof you did not invent, a covering you will take down, a table that must still seat the dependent classes named in Devarim 16:14.

Criticisms held open:

- **Quietism** that treats the booth as escape from civic answerability.
- **Triumphalism** that treats temporary covering as a throne.
- **Secular non-domination** without higher law — useful as a diagnostic, insufficient as a foundation. Torah remains corrective framework.

Hazon's biblical particularism and Elazar's covenantal federalism are conversation partners. They do not replace Vayikra 23 or Sukkah.

IV. Judgment → booth (the series hinge)

The series' through-line is covenantal architecture across Tishrei. Essay I states: teshuvah that does not issue in dwelling has mistaken the hospital for the house. This companion essay states the political face of the same hinge:

Forgiveness that crowns arbitrary will has misunderstood kapparah.

Power that refuses a dismantlable roof has misunderstood ritzui.

5787's calendar already teaches the order: bind Friday in the sukkah; sit Shabbat; take Sunday (Essay XIV). Encompassing dwelling before particularized taking is pedagogy written into the year.

V. Anti-sukkah and earned restraint

Where a power claims the sky as personal roof — strait, corridor, or blockade treated as private canopy — the image to measure against is the booth, not the throne. The State is keili, never Source.

Hayom Yom's labor pursued wisely and with friendship answers the same measure: covenanted effort that does not return empty, not domination dressed as productivity.

VI. Family and the dependent classes

Devarim 16:14 includes son, daughter, servant, Levite, stranger, orphan, widow. A booth that excludes dependents has not fulfilled the mitzvah. Chinuch is not an appendix (Essay VIII). Kid-table:

1. After we are forgiven, we build a small house that reminds us Heaven covers us.
 2. The roof has gaps on purpose — we do not pretend we own the sky.
 3. Guests who need help belong at the table; Heaven's guests notice.
 4. This year we sit before we shake the plants — sitting is the first mitzvah of the holiday.
 5. A king under Torah is not the same as a king who does whatever he wants.
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Sources (selected)

- Vayikra 23:33–43; Devarim 16:13–17; Devarim 16:14
- Sukkah 2a, 11b, 26a–28b; Sukkah 27b (all Israel in one sukkah)
- Zohar on *tzila di-meheimanuta*
- Rambam Hilchot Teshuvah; Hilchot Melachim (king and scroll)
- Rama OC 624–625; Hayom Yom Tishrei 11–15
- *From Judgment to Dwelling — Sukkot 5787* (series)
- Conversation partners (not replacements): Pettit on non-domination; Hazony; Elazar

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