When an eruptive affection occurs in a cloth of wool or linen fabric, 48 in the warp or in the woof of the linen or the wool, or in a skin or in anything made of skin; 49 if the affection in the cloth or the skin, in the warp or the woof, or in any article of skin, is streaky green or red, it is an eruptive affection. It shall be shown to the priest; 50 and the priest, after examining the affection, shall isolate the affected article for seven days. 51 On the seventh day he shall examine the affection: if the affection has spread in the cloth—whether in the warp or the woof, or in the skin, for whatever purpose the skin may be used—the affection is a malignant eruption; it is impure. 52 The cloth—whether warp or woof in wool or linen, or any article of skin—in which the affection is found, shall be burned, for it is a malignant eruption; it shall be consumed in fire. 53 But if the priest sees that the affection in the cloth—whether in warp or in woof, or in any article of skin—has not spread, 54 the priest shall order the affected article washed, and he shall isolate it for another seven days. 55 And if, after the affected article has been washed, the priest sees that the affection has not changed color and that it has not spread, it is impure. It shall be consumed in fire; it is a fret, whether on its inner side or on its outer side. 56 But if the priest sees that the affected part, after it has been washed, is faded, he shall tear it out from the cloth or skin, whether in the warp or

TZARA-AT IN FABRICS AND LEATHER

This section deals with tzara-at-type infections that damage fabrics and worked leather. They may have been some kinds of fungoid or sporoid infections.

47. Although most medieval and modern commentators see the eruption of tzara-at in clothing as a natural phenomenon, a form of rot or fungus, Maimonides and Ramban see it as supernatural, something that could take place only in the Land of Israel. Because of that land's sensitivity to immorality, even the clothes one wears would bear witness to the moral decay of the person wearing them.

Although the laws of tum-ah seem very foreign to us, they flow directly from the Israelites' sense that being able to come into God's presence is an irreplaceable privilege. This led them to be profoundly concerned with anything that might estrange them from the divine presence.
in the woof; 57and if it occurs again in the cloth—whether in warp or in woof—or in any article of skin, it is a wild growth; the affected article shall be consumed in fire. 58If, however, the affection disappears from the cloth—warp or woof—or from any article of skin that has been washed, it shall be washed again, and it shall be pure.

59Such is the procedure for eruptive affections of cloth, woolen or linen, in warp or in woof, or of any article of skin, for pronouncing it pure or impure.

* For the haftarah for this portion, see p. 671.