**Oktzim, Chapter One, Mishnah Three**

**Introduction**

Today's mishnah lists part of produce that are considered part of the produce for matters of defiling and being defiled. If they are defiled, the rest is defiled and vice versa. But they do not join together to make up the requisite minimum because they are not food.

**Mishnah Three**

1. The following are both defiled and defile, but do not join together [together with the rest]:
   1. Roots of garlic, onions or leeks when they are dry,
   2. the stalk that is not within the edible part,
   3. the twig of a vine a handbreadth long on either side,
   4. the stem of the cluster whatsoever be its length,
   5. the tail of the cluster bereft of grapes,
   6. the stem of the ‘broom’ of the palm-tree to a length of four handbreadths,
   7. the stalk of the ear [of grain] to a length of three handbreadths,
   8. and the stalk of all things that are cut, to the length of three handbreadths.
2. In the case of those things not usually cut, their stalks and roots of any size whatsoever.
3. As for the outer husks of grains, they defile and are defiled, but do not join together.

***Explanation***

**Section one**: Most of the items listed here can be used to hold the produce but are not edible. Thus they are considered "handles" to food but are not "food". They are defiled and defile but since they are not "food" they are not reckoned to reach the requisite minimum needed to be susceptible to impurity. I will explain just a few of these things that are unclear:

The "broom of the palm-tree" is the part of the tree that has the dates on its end. It is a "handle" for the dates.

Stalks are not eaten but are used to handle grains. It's only necessary to have about three handbreadths so only three handbreadths counts as a handle. Beyond that, the stalk is impervious to impurity and doesn't convey impurity.

**Section two**: If produce is generally not "cut," meaning it is not harvested with something like a scythe, then any sized stalk or root could be used as a handle. Since these parts will not usually be attached, if he leaves them attached then he must have intended them to be used as a handle.

**Section three**: The outer husks of grains are not edible but they are "handles."