

Thirty-six thousand

שלשים וששה אלף –

OVERVIEW

in the ברייתא teaches us that thirty-six thousand חלוצי כתף went out to the יהודה of יהודה מלך חזקיה. Our תוספות explains how the ברייתא derives this number.

לו¹ בגימטריא² הכי הוי:

The גימטריא of the word 'לו' in the פסוק of 'וכבוד עשו לו במותו' is equal to this number of thirty-six [thousand].

SUMMARY

The ברייתא understands that there were thirty-six thousand חלוצי כתף by the לוייה of חזקיה since the גמטריא of the word לו is thirty six.

THINKING IT OVER

How does the ברייתא know that it was thirty-six thousand; perhaps it was just thirty-six or thirty-six hundred?!³

¹ Others say that תוספות is bothered by the expression שלשים ושש. The גמרא in א, נה, א (see there רש"י) states that ר' יהודה would first count the פרט and then the כלל. Therefore he should have stated here שלשים ושש. The answer is that in the word לו the thirty precedes the six. See אמ"ה.

² There is an observation that the word גימטריא is a combination of two Greek words גימ (or gamma, the third letter of the Greek alphabet [similar to קודש לחול to our third letter – ג]) and טריא (which is the number three). This indicates a connection between the order of the alphabet letters and their equivalent number. [It is not clear why they chose the third letter and number three to indicate this connection.]

³ See נח"מ.