

Validation of *Shtar* i.e. Verification of Witness Signatures

Ref: *Sefer Shoftim, Hilchot Edut, Chapter 6*



Written testimony of witnesses (i.e. signatures) is allowed *Derabanan*. (so as to facilitate the flow of loans)

The authenticity of witness signature is verified in one of **5** ways. This has to be verified by a court of **3** judges (in the day time) – ordinary judges (without (real) *semichah*) allowed. i.e.

- Judges recognise the handwriting
- Witnesses sign in judge's presence
- Witnesses testify to judge's that this is their signature
- Other witnesses testify to the first witnesses signatures (if first witnesses are away or dead)
- Witness signature already available on previously verified documents.

Judges compare signatures.

Allowed documents are

- **2** Deeds of sale of **2** fields where owners have been there for **3** years or more
- **1** Deed of sale of **1** field which has been challenged in court, and verified as authentic
- **2** *Ketubot*

These documents would have to have been in possession of a third party (i.e. not in possession of the one hoping to validate the document).

The judges only verify signatures of *shtar* and not its content. i.e. for validation of document, judges are only looking at signatures and do not have to know what was written.