

# Davvenology



Photo credit: Yehudit Goldfarb, 1987.

Davvenology (a term coined by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi for use in Jewish Renewal) refers to the study and practice of *davvenen* (a Yiddish word, possibly derived from the Latin, *divinum*, ‘the divine work’), meaning, deeply experienced prayer. As such, *davvenen* is contrasted with *tefillah* (Heb.), formal prayer, or prayer as a formality. It is the investigation of how to achieve a deeper experience of prayer. Davvenology is also used inclusively in Jewish Renewal to talk about all aspects of worship and the Jewish liturgical life, from prayer and meditation techniques, to adjuncts of prayer (such as the *tallit* and *tefillin*), to the location of prayer and the prayer service in Judaism.

**“*Davvenen* is living the liturgical life in the presence of God. It is transformative of the individual, the group, and the situation.”**

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Paradigm Shift*

**“When I speak about *davvenen*, I am talking about an inner process that goes way beyond ordinary prayer and worship; it is something that encompasses one’s entire spiritual life. My sense is that a person can recognize that one who is *davvenen* is actually in touch with God.”**

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *The Gates of Prayer*