

Welcome on behalf of the Rabbi and Congregation to the Lower Manhattan Tribute to our deceased parents that has taken place here for almost a century. For more than 90 years, this has created the opportunity for the people of Lower Manhattan to remember and pay tribute on holidays and festivals to our parents and forbears during the Yiskor services when our tradition says honor your father and mother. Our sages tells us that this commandment engraved on the stone tablets and known as the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment applies to our parents even when they are no longer among the living. Our obligations remain and it is also our way to pledge some charity or another act of goodness in their memory. So that we go beyond mere words, the Yiskor text contains an explicit promise of the performance of our charitable deeds in their memory.

Our Yiskor in the Wall Street Synagogue has a historical dimension as well. We commemorate those who came a short time before Rosh Hashanah of 1664 to Lower Manhattan who braved the opposition of Peter Stuyvesant and here they laid the foundation of the first Synagogue community. Their building was known as the Mill Street Synagogue - Mill Street was located close to where the Wall Street Synagogue is located today and is on the street maps of New York as South William Street. And we remember the first Rabbi to officiate there on a regular basis in New York.

The first Rabbi Gershom Seixas (Shay-Shess) (pronounced as a Portuguese name) who served valiantly several blocks from where we are conducting our own Yiskor services. He has a place of burial close to us as well. It is in the Chatham Square cemetery that is nearby.

And so Yiskor here at the Wall Street Synagogue is also in remembrance, and historical link to our unfolding of the religious history of American Judaism Society. So American Judaism began right here in Lower Manhattan in 1640 when the Jewish Pilgrim fathers arrived here after Rosh Hashanah and laid the foundation of the Jewish community.

Our synagogue has kept lit and burning the torch of traditional Judaism by maintaining year-round traditional Jewish services day after day. And so the light lit back in 1640 has flamed as a living memorial for centuries. Your support and active participation as we hold our services for Yiskor memorials and at other times is a link in our continuous service.