

The Naming of Stellan Yann Beck!

Invocation

We have gathered on this fine day in the beautiful outdoors to welcome Stellan into his life, into his family, into his community, and into the world. We'll begin by invoking the presence of the sacred as it manifests in the physical world. Please join me responsively; the response we're looking for, to each of these blessings, is "For all of these, we are grateful."

This is a season of harvest: fall foliage and bright pumpkins, cold nights and fragrant woodsmoke. And this is also the season of Stellan's birth!

For all of these, we are grateful.

Ahead of us lies his first winter: soft snowfall, frost spidering the windowpanes, the comfort of a cosy hearth on a cold winter's night.

For all of these, we are grateful.

In time we'll reach his first spring: reddening twigs, muddy driveways, his first drop of maple syrup from local trees.

For all of these, we are grateful.

And he'll take his first steps in the summertime: the riotous explosion of new green, vegetables grown in local soil, the sun warming the deck until the pool beckons.

For all of these, we are grateful.

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Lighting the Havdalah Candle

We light this havdalah candle as a symbol of the families and communities within which Stellan will be raised. As the flames join each other, making one brighter and more lasting flame, so too does our coming together create a community that is more than the sum of its parts.

Blessing wine

In Jewish tradition wine is a symbol of gladness; it's part of every celebratory and ritual occasion. Because we want everyone here to savor the reality of Stellan's birth, we're passing around little cups of wine; please take one, and share in our joy!

This cup is the vessel of our hopes. It is filled with the new wine of life just begun. The sweetness of its taste is the added joy that this new child brings.

Please join with me in blessing the wine, in Hebrew and in English.

All:

Baruch atah adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

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Family Prayers

Parents:

We join together in welcoming Stellan into his family and into the world. May he be blessed with the ability to learn from the lessons life gives him, and to be joyful, kind and strong.

Though none can escape sorrow and pain, we hope Stellan grows to have the courage to face them and the strength to transcend them. It is our hope that he grow to be curious and kind, and that he be endowed with a generosity of spirit that he will bring to all of his relationships and experiences.

Grandparents:

Ellen: Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique. It is the duty of every person to know and consider that he is unique and that there has never been anyone like him before. For if there had been something like him before, there would be no need for him to be in the world. Every single person is a new thing and is called upon to fulfill his particularity in the world. (Adapted from Martin Buber)

The Becks: As we welcome our grandson into this family and into the world, our hearts are full of wonder and awe. May our children be blessed with strength, humor, compassion, and love as they grow into parenthood—and may Stellan always know that his grandparents love him unreasonably and cherish him immeasurably.

Explanation of the name

[Parents explain Stellan's names and what those names mean to them.]

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Written on the human heart

One of the traditions into which Stellan is born is Judaism. In light of that tradition, a *midrash*, an interpretive teaching from Torah.

When our community stood at Sinai to receive revelation, the Holy One said, "Present to Me good guarantors that you will guard these words which aim toward wisdom, and I will give these teachings to you."

They said, "Our ancestors are our guarantors."

The Holy One said, "Your ancestors are not sufficient guarantors. Bring Me better guarantors."

They said, "Our prophets are our guarantors."

God said to them, "Your prophets are not sufficient guarantors. Bring Me yet better guarantors."

They said, "Our children will be our guarantors."

The Holy One said, "These are certainly good guarantors. For their sake I give you these words which aim toward wisdom, these aspirations and inspirations written on the human heart."

From this we learn that our history, and those who called us to aspire toward justice, are important...but our future of hope and wide-open possibility is more important still.

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Blessings from the community

Each of us here has a unique role to play in Stellan's life. By being part of this naming ceremony, we affirm our intent to be a part of his growing up.

I'm going to ask you three questions; please respond with all your hearts by saying "We do."

Do you promise to be involved with Stellan and to care for him?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to listen when he needs to talk, and provide support when he needs to lean; to teach him the things that you alone can teach?

(Community: We do!)

Do you promise to be his friend, to encourage him as he grows, to help him take pleasure in life's beauties and to weather life's storms, to help him connect with others and with himself; to encourage him to laugh and to cry, to hope and to dream, and to grow into the best Stellan he can be?

(Community: We do!)

Stellan, we pledge to you that we will be your community. We will be here to teach you what we know, to listen to what you have to say, and to support you into growing into the baby, the kid, and the adult you will become.

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Shower of blessings

We're going to shower Stellan with blessings. He's coming into the middle of the circle now...

One or both parents brings Stellan into the middle of the circle.

In a moment, when I give the cue, I ask all of you to quietly speak aloud some of the things you hope for him. Don't worry about whether you're saying the same thing as someone else; just take this chance to articulate to the Universe, to God high above or God deep within, to us and to yourself some of your hopes and wishes for Stellan. Ready...set...go.

Everyone murmurs blessings simultaneously; after a moment or so, Rachel brings it to a close with "Amen."

Parents' Blessing

E&D (alternating lines):

We, your parents, promise to nourish you and sustain you.

We promise to raise you with confidence in yourself and kindness towards others,

to love you unconditionally, and forgive you consistently.

We promise to let you make your own mistakes and achieve your own victories;

to give you access to the whole world, not just our corner of it;

to help you when you need help, and to let you choose the path which calls you;

to create a home for you in which the passage of the seasons and the cycles of time are sanctified and celebrated;

and to raise you in respect for the earth and all its creatures.

May you be blessed with the absolute certainty of our love;

and may you always know that you belong in our family, in the world, and in our hearts.

Closing: Song of Welcoming

Source of all being, we thank you for this beautiful day, for this beautiful baby, and for the community connections that will sustain him and his family as he grows.

Truly, Stellan is blessed: with loving parents and grandparents, and with an extended family that includes a closeknit and farflung tribe of friends. His life will be enriched with the traditions into which he was born, the traditions his parents have chosen, and the traditions he will someday claim as his own.

One of the chosen traditions of this household is drumming, and we'll close today's welcoming ceremony with a Song of Welcoming. An invitation: listen to the rhythms, take them in and savor them, and then as the drummers continue, our circle will naturally devolve into hugs and conversation. Stellan, welcome to our world!

Drummers drum; after a few moments, people start hugging and talking.