

# A Handful of Happiness

JEWISH · Walter J. Kin · Rigli Publishing

<https://jewishthemovie.com/music/russian/a-bisele-mazl>

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← Jewish Songs in Russian

Russian Songbook · Sung by Elechka

Горсточка счастья

A Handful of Happiness

A quiet plea for a little luck, just enough to make the load easier to carry.

"A Handful of Happiness" is the Russian voice of a beloved Yiddish song, "A Bisele Mazl," whose title means simply "a little luck." The melody is a Jewish folk tune, and the song has been part of Jewish life since the early twentieth century, sung at family gatherings and community celebrations and growing especially dear in the years after the Second World War. In Jewish tradition the word mazl carries the sense of fortune and destiny, the same word at the heart of the everyday blessing mazl tov. The song asks for only a small share of that luck, a handful of happiness warm enough to comfort the heart even in the hardest times.

Over the years "A Bisele Mazl" was carried by many beloved performers. On the Yiddish stage it was made famous by the actor and singer Benzion Witler, and it was also sung by the Barry Sisters, Molly Picon, Yefim Alexandrov, and others. The Russian version heard here keeps the tenderness and lyric simplicity of the Yiddish, even preserving the Yiddish phrase mazl a bisele glik, a little luck and happiness, so naturally that many listeners take the Russian words for an original of their own.

On this recording the song is sung in Russian by Elechka, who also arranged it and plays the guitar. It is the kind of performance that needs almost nothing: a quiet voice, a few honest words, and a melody that asks for a little warmth rather than glory or gold. Her version belongs to a project that carried these Jewish songs into Russian, opening them to listeners who had never heard them before and bringing them to new generations.

These Russian recordings, made for the RIGLI channel, are also where the English-language musical film JEWISH began. The film grew out of these originals, and a song like "A Handful of Happiness" shows why: it is small, plain, and deeply human, the kind of melody that travels across languages and stays with people. On YouTube it has reached well over two hundred thousand listeners, and some say they come back to it day after day.

Below are a few of the messages listeners have left for this recording, translated into English. They come from people of different backgrounds, drawn together by the same quiet feeling the song carries.

## Lyrics, line by line

The full Russian text of the recording, with a plain English translation under each line.

Вот мне бы хоть чуточку счастья

If only I had at least a tiny bit of happiness

Хоть горсточку счастья бы мне

If only I had at least a little handful of happiness

И ставни распахнуты настежь

And the shutters are flung wide open

А солнца не видно в окне

But the sun is not visible in the window

Но всё что прошу я у неба

But all that I ask of the sky

Уместится даже в горсти

Would fit even in a cupped hand

Мне бы малую горсточку счастья

If only I had a small handful of happiness

Горсточку чтоб было легче нести

A handful so that it would be easier to carry

Мне бы малую горсточку счастья

If only I had a small handful of happiness

Горсточку чтоб было легче нести

A handful so that it would be easier to carry

А в чем я был счастлив когда то

And what I was once happy in

То нынче лишь дым да зола

Is now only smoke and ashes

Не нужно мне славы и злата

I do not need glory and gold

Мне б только немножко тепла

If only I had just a little warmth

Но счастье тоненькой струйкой

But happiness in a thin trickle  
Стекает меж пальцев моих  
Flows down between my fingers  
Ах верните мне горсточку счастья  
Ah, give me back a handful of happiness  
Горсточку счастья хоть на миг  
A handful of happiness even for an instant  
Ах верните мне горсточку счастья  
Ah, give me back a handful of happiness  
Мазл а биселе глик  
Mazl, a bisele glik (Yiddish: luck, a little bit of happiness)  
Приходят за бедами беды  
Troubles come after troubles  
И хрипло кричит вороньё  
And the crows cry hoarsely  
И бродит по белому свету  
And it wanders across the wide world  
Бездомное сердце моё  
My homeless heart  
И я собираюсь в дорогу  
And I am getting ready for the road  
И мне очень нужно найти  
And I very much need to find  
Эту малую горсточку счастья  
This small handful of happiness  
Горсточку чтоб было легче нести  
A handful so that it would be easier to carry  
Эту малую горсточку счастья  
This small handful of happiness  
Горсточку чтоб было легче нести  
A handful so that it would be easier to carry  
Listen on YouTube

## What listeners say

Real comments left under the recording on YouTube, translated into English, with the original Russian beneath each one.

A few days ago I happened to hear one of these songs by chance, and now I listen to it every day. A stunning performance, the voice, the phrasing. I am very surprised that a singer of this caliber has so relatively few plays. It should be hundreds of thousands, at the very least.

Несколько дней назад случайно услышал одну из песен и теперь слушаю каждый день. Потрясающее исполнение, голос, интонации. Очень удивлён, что такого уровня певица и так относительно мало прослушиваний, должны быть сотни тысяч, как минимум

@vladimirrainish841

For some reason, when I listen to this song my heart tightens and my eyes well up...

Почему - то слушая эту песню, у меня сердце сжимается и глаза на мокром месте...

@АллаОрлова-н5ф

Peace to your home! And to each their own handful of happiness.

Мир Вашему Дому! И каждому свою горсточку счастья

@ЛюбовьШадрина-э7т

I came across this song in your performance completely by chance. It reached all the way to my soul. I cried my heart out. And afterward it became so much easier. Your voice is simply fantastic. Thank you so much.

Совершенно случайно услышал эту песню в Вашем исполнении. До души дошло. Нарыдался по полной. И потом стало гораздо легче. Голос у Вас просто фантастический. Большое спасибо..

@ВячеславСапрыкин-л9ф

Thank you for all the songs. This one truly is a handful of happiness. Nostalgia, memory, and everything else.

Спасибо за все песни. вот эта и есть горсточка счастья Ностальгия память и все прочее

@АнатолийРанецкий-ч8о

How I loved this: the phrasing, the melodiousness... like an unhurried, heartfelt conversation. Thank you!

Как же мне понравилось: интонации, напевность... будто неторопливая доверительная беседа. Спасибо!

@ЭляТерн

What a memorable voice... It immediately reminded me of the film Liquidation, Polina Agureeva and the song White Night. Thank you for these feelings.

Какой голос запоминающийся...

Сразу вспомнила фильм Ликвидация...

Полина Агуреева и песня Белая ночь...

Спасибо за эмоции 🌹🌹🌹🌹

@acino\_2010

The sound of the guitar and the words reach straight into the heart. So simple, yet so deep. Thank you.

Звук гитары и слова проникают в самое сердце. Так просто, но так глубоко! Спасибо.

@elenazhulan8977

Beautiful!!! Very beautiful!! Hermoso!!!

Красиво!!! Very beautiful!!

Hermoso!!! 🙌🙌🙌

@silvanazukerman3678

How wonderful! Thank you for your lovely songs. For the first time I have heard so many songs in Russian, and I am delighted. Likes on all the songs, and I have subscribed.

Как здорово! Спасибо за Ваши чудесные песни - впервые услышала так много песен на русском языке - в восторге!!! Лайки на все песни и подписка .....

@ТаняЯнеледи

I found you when I was feeling low. Thank you.

Я нашла тебя ,когда мне было плохо,Спасибо

@АнастасияТумилевич

Thank you for a few minutes of happiness.

Спасибо за несколько минут счастья.

@ТатьянаЧе-я46