

## Tel Aviv's Mama Teresa

By Roni Hadar

Teresa Roszkovska remembers them all. One by one, the housemother of the Tel Aviv homeless shelters names "her children" who died on the street and those who are in danger of dying. Igor, who drank and drank and drowned himself in the sea, and "Gulliver," who despite his liver disease, drank and was found dead on a lawn across from the Tel Aviv Hilton. And Robert, "who was as handsome as an Italian prince" and who despite cerebral palsy and an ulcer, is still drinking: She sees him at night on her street patrols and knows he won't last more than another two or three months. And "Yevegeny Maradona" - a 40-year-old alcoholic who got into a fight and was hurled to his death from a third-floor window; she identified him at the police station

"And there was one called Andrei who was truly extraordinary," she says. "With a soul like a Stradivarius violin, a true artist, who was about 32. He left the shelter seemingly clean of drugs and alcohol, and had been granted 100 percent disability and an allowance, and we envisioned him doing better, but he died from an overdose of alcohol and a heart attack in the middle of the busiest street in Israel, at night like a dog, on the sidewalk next to city hall on Ibn Gvirol Street. Wrapped in a blanket and totally blue, frozen, with a smiling face under the flashing lights of the automatic teller machine. Not one of the people who came to take out money reached out to him during his final hours, because no one here cares anymore. In the past few years, what's been happening with the homeless is a real cheapening of human life. You Israelis, in Tel Aviv especially, are an evil society that tramples on human beings, that's what I say.

"And don't forget for a second," adds Roszkovska, concluding this macabre list, "to use a metaphor - I'm a very special kind of rag that Israeli society uses to wipe its unquiet conscience. I can reassure you. You can sleep peacefully in your warm beds at night knowing that there are a few elves out there doing your dirty work in the streets of this tough city. It's a lot easier to die on the street here than it is to die on the sidewalks of New York."

### Redeemer of souls

Roszkovska, 57, who speaks a rich Hebrew with a Polish accent, as well as Russian, came to Israel from Poland in 1988, in pursuit of her Zionist dream to live as a Jew among Jews. Before making aliya, she divorced her husband, and she left behind a son who is a lecturer in history at the University of Warsaw. A pharmacist by training, she opted not to work in her profession, and instead worked at first at various odd jobs, eventually specializing in caring for the elderly in their homes and for terminal cancer patients.

"I was the one who sat with them day and night in little apartments or in hospital rooms and tended to them until their final breath," she says. "I prepared them for death - in these moments, just before a person dies, what's needed is a lot of compassion and not mercy necessarily. The work with terminal patients prepared me for the kind of work I'm doing here, being sort of a redeemer of souls, you could call it.

Lasova now operates two shelters for the homeless. Shelter 1, which has been open for 18 years, is for drug and alcohol addicts, and is located in a small building with a well-tended garden in northern Jaffa, where there is a permanent odor from the nearby municipal sewage plants. Shelter 2, which Roszkovska inaugurated when she began working there, is for homeless people who are not on drugs or alcohol and is in the Florentin neighborhood. Among those who come to the shelters are former prisoners who have nowhere to live in the days after their release, and former psychiatric patients from hospitals in the Gush Dan area who have no other place to go and are referred by

hospital social workers to stay at the shelter until a place in a hostel can be arranged for them. Each night, Roszkovska is responsible for about 70 to 100 people in the two shelters, where she helps them take their first step on the long road to rehabilitation.

Housemother- בית אם	Especially- במיוחד
Homeless- חסרי בית	Evil- רשע
Shelters- מקלטים, מחסות	Society- חברה
Drowned- הטביע (גם טבע)	Tramples- רומסת, דשה, דורכת
Liver- כבד	Human beings- בני אדם
Disease- מחלה	Concluding- מסכמת
Lawn- מדשאה	Macabre- מקברית (קשורה בנושאים מחרידים)
Handsome- נאה	Metaphor- מטאפורה, דימוי
cerebral palsy- שיתוק מוחי	Rag- מרבד
Ulcer- אולצר, כיב	Wipe- לנגב
Alcoholic- אלכוהוליסט	Unquiet- לא שקט (תחילית UN מצביעה על שלילה)
Hurled- השליך, הטיל	Conscience- מצפון
Identified- זיהתה	Reassure- להרגיע
Extraordinary- יוצא מן הכלל	Peacefully- בשלום, בשקט
Soul- נשמה	Elves- גמדים
Stradivarius violin- כינור "סטראדיווריוס" (לידע כללי – זהו כינור נדיר ויקר מאוד)	Redeemer- מושיעה
Seemingly- לכאורה	Accent- מבטא
Granted- הוענקו	In pursuit- במרדף אחרי...
Disability- נכות	Zionist- ציוני
Allowance- קצבה (גם דמי כיס)	Divorced- התגרשה
Envisioned- צפו, חזו	Lecturer- מרצה
Overdose- מנת יתר	Pharmacist- רוקחת
Sidewalk- מדרכה	Opted- העדיפה, ביכרה
Hall- אולם, היכל (גם הול- חדר מבוא לבית)	Profession- מקצוע
Wrapped- עטוף	Various- מגוון, מבוחר
Blanket- שמיכה	Odd- מוזר
Frozen- קפוא	Eventually- לבסוף
Flashing- מבזיקים	Specializing- מתמחה
Automatic teller machine- A.T.M - כספומט	Caring- לטפל
Cheapening- הוזלה	Elderly- קשישים
Human life- חיי אדם	Terminal- סופני

Cancer- סרטן	Municipal- עירוני
Patients- מטופלים, חולים	Sewage- ביוב
Apartments- דירות	Plants- מפעלים (גם שתילים, צמחים)
Tended- טעדה, טיפלה	Inaugurated- חנכה
Compassion- רגש והשתתפות	Neighborhood- שכונה
Mercy- רחמים, חמלה	Former- לשעבר
Necessarily- בהכרח	Prisoners- אסירים
Operates- מתפעלת (גם פועלת)	Release- שחרור
Addicts- מכורים	Psychiatric- פסיכיאטרים
Located- ממוקם	Referred- מופנים
Northern- צפוני	Responsible- אחראית
Permanent- קבוע	Rehabilitation- שיקום
Odor- ריח	
Nearby- סמוך	