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Mishpacha

A Potpourri of Encounters and Impressions

Ten Questions

PHOTO: MEIR HALTOVSKY



Need a Lift?

Don't let a staircase keep you stranded on Shabbos

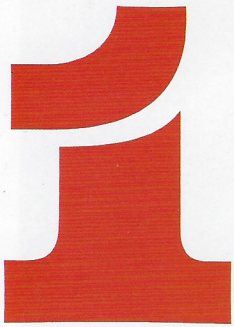
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QUESTIONS FOR

Gavriel Gozland

Gavriel Gozland is the US distributor of the ShabbosLift, a Shabbos-friendly stair lift.

PHOTO: MEIR HALTOVSKY



When is your busy season?

We're heading into it! Before the *chagim* is always busy — that's when people realize they need to make arrangements if they want Bubby

and Zeidy to be able to come for Yom Tov. Early winter less so, because many seniors flee to Florida.



How did you get involved?

I have a background in technology — I studied engineering at the Technion in Israel — and I've been involved in residential and personal technology for many years. A longtime acquaintance of mine is the chief technologist for the Zomet Institute — that's the leading lab for halachah and technology, based in Alon Shvut. He knew my background and asked if I would help someone from the States who had called them — the person was in need of a Shabbos mobility solution for her paralyzed daughter. What started as a one-time *chesed* quickly developed into much more as we discovered the extent of the need in the *frum* community in the States. We've since evolved into a full-fledged boutique provider of stair lifts, wheelchair lifts, even home elevators and accessible baths.



Did you do research before going into this?

I was very curious about how the medical equipment Shabbos *grama* systems actually worked. Basically, what made it kosher? I studied it meticulously, not just to understand if for myself but to be sure I could explain it to others in simple terms.



How does the stair lift work?

The system involves complex electronic circuitry; let me give you the short answer. We're looking to avoid closing an electrical circuit, which is the *melachah* of *boneh*. This is accomplished by creating a situation where we never directly close the circuit; an action is triggered, but only indirectly, what's known halachically as a *grama*. The user first clicks a button where there is normally no flow of electricity, so there's no *melachah* involved. Every five seconds, an electrical pulse is sent to check the status of that switch — if the status changed in that interim, a random timer is started, which activates the motion of the lift. The user then presses another button that maintains the movement of the lift, which was triggered by the random timer. Again, the user isn't closing an electrical circuit, simply maintaining an existing closure, to continue the movement of the lift. There are a few other layers of complexity to eliminate the possibility of the user pressing the buttons at the exact second when the electrical pulse is sent. This method provides a double *grama*, which satisfies the halachic requirements for medical equipment for the benefit of a *choleh* on Shabbos.

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What are the most common questions you hear from customers?

Aside from “How does it work?” people ask if it’s complicated to use — no — and whose *hashgachah* it’s under. And let’s not forget my staff — they answer questions, too.

I visit at the end of every installation to inspect, give a demo, and answer any questions. Sometimes my non-Jewish installers chime in, explaining the Shabbos mode operation to the client. It’s a funny scene to watch, a *goyishe* technician explaining the intricacies of the Shabbos mode to an elderly *rav*.

6

Do you field any interesting or detailed halachic questions?

Always. We’re happy to explain the mechanics, but we don’t give a *psak*. I once got a call from a 97-year-old woman from Boro Park who was totally together despite her advanced age. She was considering installing a ShabbosLift, but she wasn’t sure whether it was better for her to use the lift with the Shabbos mode or to have a non-Jew activate it for her. So she asked her son who’s a *rav*, and he said getting help from a goy is preferable. She then asked her other son, who’s also a *rav*, and he said asking a goy is problematic, using a *grama* system is preferable. Confused, she called me for advice. I told her to ask *her rav*! She called me back a few days later and told me her *rav* said it’s actually best if she has a goy use the *grama* Shabbos mode. We don’t *pasken* for anyone, but we’ve discussed this with other clients and I know we have a number of them who do the same.

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Whose idea was it?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ztz”l* — he had a neighbor, a young woman who was disabled, who was stuck at home all Shabbos — and it was developed under the leadership of engineer Rabbi Yisrael Rozen. Rav Yehoshua Neuwirth *ztz”l* — the *mechaber* of *Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasah* — helped guide its development. I came in at the tail end, to refine and package it for the American market. My job now is to publicize it to the community under the ShabbosLift trademark.

8

Which installation had the most daunting logistics?

We were asked to install four ShabbosLifts in a split-level home for a woman in

Philadelphia who was battling a very aggressive cancer. After having spent nearly a year in a hospital, she really wanted to come home. The family made great efforts to set up a recovery room for her, which included the need to make the full house accessible. On short notice, we worked around the clock to “Shabbosify” four stair lifts, drive them from New York to Philadelphia, and install them in a one very long day, so the house could be ready in time for her return before Shabbos. Sadly, after half a year, she passed away. But her husband told me how happy it made her to come home and be with family, and that it could not have happened without the ShabbosLifts.

9

Have you made any tweaks in response to customer request?

Several shuls installed the ShabbosLift to make the shul accessible for older congregants. We developed a system for the lift to be “called back” so multiple users can benefit from it. Next up: a universal Shabbos adaptation system for wheelchairs, which will be compatible with most motorized wheelchairs on the market.

10

Any memorable feedback?

One of our first installations was for a woman living alone in Long Island who suffered from a number of ailments that severely limited her mobility. She had a stair lift for during the week, and on Shabbos, she slept downstairs. One week, she overslept her Friday afternoon nap, and when she woke up, it was already well into Shabbos. She spent all Shabbos stuck in her bedroom—no food, no Kiddush, no medications! She frantically asked around about a solution to prevent this from occurring again and found us. Since we retrofitted her lift with our system, she’s referred us to several of her friends, and we’re still in touch—we speak every Erev Chag to wish each other *chag samei’ach*. She doesn’t miss an opportunity to tell us how it changed her life.



MOBILITY-CHALLENGED REDISCOVER THE JOY OF SHABBOS

It all started when HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, became aware of a young woman in his Jerusalem neighborhood of Shaare Chesed who was paralyzed from the waist down and who spent her Shabbosim isolated and in despair because she could not use her motorized wheelchair. HaRav Auerbach ardently believed that Shabbos should be a time of joy for everyone, and that a *halachic* solution must be found to ensure that those with physical challenges be included in the great *mitzva* of *oneg Shabbos*.

HaRav Auerbach summoned a team of leading observant engineers led by Rav Yisrael Rozen of the Zomet Institute and tasked them with a mission. After nearly one year of research and experimentation, the first Shabbos wheelchair was born. More recently, under the guidance of HaRav Yehoshua Neuwirth, zt"l, author of the famed *Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa*, Shabbos technology was expanded to include stairlifts and wheelchair lifts. New York-based ShabbosLift Solutions now offers the ShabbosLift, the stairlift with the Shabbos mode.

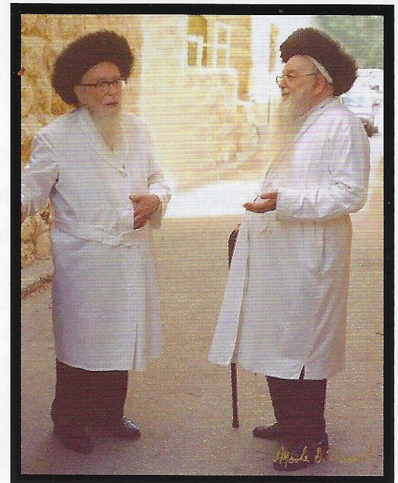
The ShabbosLift was inspired by a phone call to Gavriel Gozland of Riverdale, New York. A woman from Long Island sought out his help after her elderly mother, who was alone for Shabbos, was forced to remain in bed for 25 hours without food because she could not walk down the stairs without assistance. She had a stairlift which she would use during the week, but on Shabbos, she made arrangements to sleep downstairs. She would always take a short nap Friday afternoon after having prepared Shabbos, and one Friday afternoon, she overslept. When she woke up, it was

already well into Shabbos. She spent all of Shabbos stuck in her bedroom with no food, no Kiddush, and not even her medications! It was her worst Shabbos.

Her daughter frantically asked around if there was some sort of halachic solution to prevent this situation from ever occurring again, and then found Gavriel Gozland. They retrofitted her lift with a Shabbos system. "She doesn't miss an opportunity to tell us how it changed her life and her mother's life," says Gozland. "In fact, she has referred three friends to us, and we speak every *erev chag* to wish each other *chag sameach* ever since.

"The ShabbosLift gives people the peace of mind to know that they or their loved one can stay in their own home or with their children and grandchildren, in comfort and safety. It enables individuals with limited mobility to reclaim their dignity, and it helps families come together for Shabbos and Yom Tov," says Gozland.

What started as a one-time *chesed* quickly developed into much more as they discovered the extent of the need. ShabbosLift Solutions has since evolved into a full fledged boutique provider of stairlifts, wheelchair lifts, and even home elevators



with a mobility-friendly Shabbos mode. Their focus and passion remains helping people with mobility challenges, young and older, to regain their independence and dignity, and to partake in the joy of the Shabbos.

Recently, ShabbosLift Solutions has expanded its service to Baltimore and now offer their service to our community. They can be reached at 1-855-SHAB-LIFT or 646-543-8811. ■

STRUGGLING WITH STAIRS?

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