One of the highlights of the Shabbos liturgy is the prayer service used to usher in the Sabbath. Commonly known as Kabbalas Shabbos, this service is characterized by the recitation of a series of special Psalms and by the joyous singing of the celebrated piyut, Lecha Dodi. Notwithstanding its widespread acceptance, the Kabbalas Shabbos service finds no explicit reference in the Shulchan Aruch.¹ This is because the initiators of this service were the mekubalei Tzefas — the mystics in 16th century Safed — whose unique and innovative practices associated with ushering in the Sabbath were only gradually incorporated into the liturgy of Jewish communities far and wide.² However, although the formal structure of Kabbalas Shabbos originated in the 16th century, its thematic
underpinnings have clear Talmudic precedent. This article will trace the Talmudic antecedents for Kabbalas Shabbos and present two interpretations of the Talmudic passages, which reflect different perspectives regarding this institution.

**Halachic and Liturgical Kabbalas Shabbos**

In order to appreciate the raison d’être of the Kabbalas Shabbos service, it is necessary to distinguish between two different contexts in which the term Kabbalas Shabbos is used — one halachic, the other liturgical. In a halachic sense, Kabbalas Shabbos represents the point in time when one becomes bound by the Shabbos restrictions pertaining to melacha — prohibit-ed labor. An example is a woman’s lighting Shabbos candles, which constitutes, under normal circumstances, the halachic acceptance of Shabbos and its attendant restrictions. In a liturgical sense, Kabbalas Shabbos refers specifically to the introductory service held on Friday evenings prior to Maariv to herald the onset of Shabbos. It must be emphasized that these two expressions of Kabbalas Shabbos do not necessarily coincide. Thus, while the Kabbalas Shabbos service begins with the recitation of “Lechu nemenah,” the halachic Kabbalas Shabbos initiated by the recitation of “Nitzmor shir leym ha’Shabbos” (Orach Hayim 261:4) or possibly, Lecha Dodi’s final stanza, “Bo’iy vishalom”.

The very expression “Kabbalas Shabbos” carries a different definition when used in a liturgical sense than it does in a halachic context. In the halachic sense, the term “kabbala” is best rendered “acceptance” or “commitment” as, for example, in the expressions “kabbala ol malchus shanayim” (accepting the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom) and “kabbala tianis” (the commitment to fast). Hence, halachic Kabbalas Shabbos represents the point in time when one “accepts” upon oneself the Sabbath restrictions. By contrast, the liturgical Kabbalas Shabbos evokes the image of “welcoming” the Sabbath as in the expression “kabbalas panim” — receiving a guest.

**Talmudic Kabbalas Shabbos**

The Talmudic basis for staging a welcoming ceremony in honor of the Sabbath stems from the practices of two Amora‘im — Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yanai — described in the Gemara Shabbos (119a):

“Rabbi Chanina would enrobe himself on the eve of the Sabbath and say, ‘Let us go out to greet the Sabbath Queen.’ Rabbi Yanai would don fine clothing and say, ‘Come O bride, come O bride.’

For the mekubalei Tzefas, this Talmudic passage served as the source for the liturgical Kabbalas Shabbos which, for them, entailed a trek to the outskirts of the city to formally greet the Sabbath Queen. The field was thought to be the optimum venue for this reception because of its natural ability to promote a contemplative mental state as well as for its mystical associations. In fact, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria — the AR”I HaKadosh — is reported as having formally invoked the image of the field by declaring at the outset, “Bo’u v’neitzei likras Shabbos malkesa lachakal tapuchin kadishin” — “Let us go out toward the Sabbath Queen to the field of holy fruit.”

Other mekubalei Tzefas viewed any outdoor area as acceptable for the welcoming ceremony, such as the synagogue courtyard.

**Understanding the Imagery of Lecha Dodi**

In this light we may begin to appreciate the background of the celebrated hymn “Lecha Dodi” authored by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz, a ranking figure among the mekubalei Tzefas. The phrase “Bo’iy chalab contained in the climactic stanza of Bo’iy vishalomi is taken from Rabbi Yana’s declaration, as recorded in the Gemara. The second stanza which begins, “Likras Shabbos lechu v’neilecha,” as well as the refrain “Lecha Dodi likras kallah...,” must certainly have been intended as literal references to what was then the common practice of gathering an entourage to “go out” and greet the Sabbath. Even the image of the field is implicitly invoked by the words “Lecha Dodi” which, in their original source in Shir Hashirim (7:12), are followed by “neitzei hasefe” (“Let us go out to the field”).

It should be noted that even after the Kabbalas Shabbos service was incorporated within a beis haknesses setting, it was not uncommon for the tzibbur to recite Bo’iy vishalom, if not the entire service, outdoors on the shul patio. Indeed, Rabbi Hayyim ben Israel Benveniste (1603-1673), author of the halachic codex K’nesses Hakdolah, reports that when he assumed the rabbinate in Tiryé and discovered that the congregation remained indoors for the entire Kabbalas Shabbos, he re-introduced the older custom of stepping outside when welcoming the Shabbos.

The Aruch Hashulchan observes that, in his time, this practice had been all but forgotten. What remains today as the only vestige of this ancient minhag is the widespread practice of turning to the rear of the shul at the recitation of Bo’iy vishalomo symbolically direct our gaze westward — the direction of the setting sun, or toward the door.
In sum, the custom initiated by the mekubalei Tefis of engaging in an outdoor ceremony of Kabbalas Shabbos consistent with their reading such an interpretation into the aforementioned practices of Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yanai.

An Alternate Perspective on “Bo’u V’neitzei”

Quite a different image emerges from the Rambam’s description of the welcoming ceremony.

“One should be seated solemnly longing for the welcoming of the Shabbos as if one would go out to greet the king. The sages of old would gather their disciples on erev Shabbos and would enrobe themselves and say ‘let us go out toward Shabbos the king’” (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2).

The Rambam includes the formal welcoming ceremony within the larger context of the mitzvah of kevod Shabbos—honoring the Sabbath prior to its onset. But instead of an excursion or physical activity, the image invoked by the Rambam is that of one solemnly cloaked in a talis while anticipating the arrival of Shabbos as if one is about to greet the king. Strikingly absent in the Rambam’s language is any reference to leaving one’s confines. Rather, the notion of greeting the king is used to characterize a mind-set as one serenely awaits the Shabbos. For the Rambam, placidity, rather than activity, is the preferred bodily state for greeting the Shabbos. Apparently, even the declaration of Rabbi Chanina of “Bo’u v’neitzei” was understood by the Rambam as a metaphor for an introspective journey rather than a call to action.

A similar position emerges from the language of the Tur and Shulchan Aruch who state: “One should rejoice in the arrival of Shabbos as one who goes out toward the king and as one who goes out toward a groom and bride” (Onach Hayim 262:3).

Apparently, the Tur and Shulchan Aruch also interpret the declarations of Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yanai as references to a state of mind rather than as calls for physical activity. In their view, the purpose of the erev Shabboswelcoming ceremony of these two sages was to arouse a meditative state of joyous anticipation which mirrors the awe and joy experienced by one who is about to greet a distinguished celebrity such as a king, or a bride and groom.

Implications of Rabbi Chanina in the Realm of Nezikin (Damages)

These two interpretations of Rabbi Chanina’s Kabbalas Shabbos protocol impact on the understanding of another Talmudic passage which addresses the implications of one who causes bodily injury or damage to another on erev Shabbos.

Ordinarily, one who causes injury or damage, whether by design or accidentally, is held accountable in accord with the halachic principle “adam mu’ad l’olam” — A person is always liable for his actions” (Bava Kama 26a). However, the mishna Bava Kama delimits fault under certain circumstances as exceptions to the general principle (Bava Kama 31a-32a). One example discussed involves personal injury or damage incurred as the result of a collision between two individuals — a stroller and a runner. Ordinarily, the runner is solely responsible since he has breached the social protocol that obliges one to proceed in an orderly manner within the public domain. However, the runner is absolved if the episode took place at the onset of twilight on erev Shabbos “since he then has license to run.”

To justify this exoneration, the Gemara invokes the practice of Rabbi Chanina who would declare, “Let us go out to greet the Sabbath bride queen.”

A cursory reading of this Talmudic passage suggests that the Gemara understood Rabbi Chanina’s practice as involving a physical act — a call to a procession of disciples to proceed in haste to greet the Shabbos queen. Apparently, the impending approach of royalty calls for nothing less than an enthusiastic and spirited reception.

Additionally, it is also clear that this gesture was not meant to be limited to a small cadre of pious individuals but beckoned the participation of every Jew. Accordingly, Rabbi Chanina’s practice is cited by the Gemara as an illustration of a situation in which one would be exonerated from liability while hurrying to greet Shabbos in a spirited manner.

This interpretation is apparent in the commentary of Rabbi Yehonasan, cited by the Shita Mekubetzes who explains the Gemara’s analysis in the following manner:

The Gemara begins by questioning: “What is the sanction for running during the Friday twilight?” This question, according to Rabbi Yehonasan, is predicated on the premise that Jews are generally zealous in completing their Shabbos preparations long before twilight. Thus, there is no justification for haste at this late hour. The Gemara responds that this refers to the special case of an individual, garbed in talis, who rushes to greet the Shabbos queen, exclaiming, “Bo’i chalab, bo’i chalab” — “come O bride, come O bride.”

But what of the view of the Rambam and the Tur/ Shulchan Aruch which implies that Rabbi Chanina never advocated a formal excursion to greet the Shabbos but simply wished to invoke a mental state of quietude and heightened anticipation — how are they to interpret the above Talmudic passage in Bava Kama?

The answer emerges from an examination of Rambam’s comments with
reference to the laws of damages:

“Two individuals — one strolling and the other running — who were traversing the public domain — and one was inadvertently injured by the other [as a result of a collision] ... the runner is liable because he deviated [from the social norm]. However, if this occurred on Friday during bethin hashemashos, he is exempt since he runs with justification in order [to insure] that Shabbos not arrive while he is unavailable [preoccupied with the completion of unfinished chores] (Hilchos Chavel U’Mazik 6:9).

In citing the exemption from liability of the “Shabbos runner,” the Rambam appends the words “in order [to insure] that Shabbos not arrive while he is unavailable” to the words of the Gemara “since he then has the license to run.” He thus casts the Talmudic passage in a novel light consistent with his view that Shabbos should be welcomed in a contemplative state. In effect, according to the Rambam, the Gemara licenses this zero hour haste to enable even the experience a moment of quiet reflection — as one who is unavailable — to the words of the Gemara “since he then has the license to run.” He thus casts the Talmudic passage in a novel light consistent with his view that Shabbos should be welcomed in a contemplative state. In effect, according to the Rambam, the Gemara licenses this zero hour haste to enable even the experience a moment of quiet reflection prior to the onset of Shabbos. Thus, the Gemara’s intent in citing Rabbi Chana’ina’s erev Shabbos protocol is not, as it might appear, to license haste in greeting Shabbos. Rather, the Gemara invokes Rabbi Chana’ina’s practice of welcoming Shabbos through mental anticipation to explain why last minute chores might well need to be performed hastily so as to afford time for quiet contemplation — as one who is about to greet royalty. 22

The “Erev Shabbos Yid”

We have delineated two models for the notion of Kabbalas Shabbos recorded in the Gemara. The practice of the mekubalei Tzefas that has served to shape the contemporary Kabbalas Shabbos service reflects one perspective. A close reading of the language of the Rambam and the Tur /Shulchan Aruch reflects another. According to the mekubalei Tzefas, Kabbalas Shabbos requires one to engage in a physical gesture of welcome, as one might greet royalty.

According to the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch, the welcome is expressed through a contemplative state of inner quietude characterized by a joyous, imaginative journey of staging such a greeting. The common practice of turning at Bo’iy v’shalom and recite Psalms 92 (Mizmor Shalosh) and quickly returned home to assist with domestic chores. Before long, the humblest home radiated with the Shabbos spirit as the table was decked with the family’s best tableware and young and old were attired in Shabbos finery. One would enter the shul well before sundown and find Jews of every stripe enraptured in the recitation of Shir Hashirim. Such were the likes of erev Shabbos Yidden. Sadly, the Rav bemoaned the disappearance of this breed of Jew, noting that although contemporary Orthodox Jewry might be meticulous in its Shabbos observance, it has lost this special spark. 27

However, the paradigm of the erev Shabbos Yid is far more than the Rav’s nostalgic lament. It is an integral part of the halachah and is interwoven within the fabric of the Kabbalas Shabbos liturgy which invites us to surrender our frenetic pace to the tranquil and joyous welcome of a lovely bride—Lecha Dodi Likras Kalah, Bo’iy Chalab Bo’iy Chalab. 28

The “Kabbalas Shabbos of the Gri”z

Consistent with the Rambam’s formulation, it is interesting to note what was reportedly the common practice of the Brisker Rav —Rabbi Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Soloveitchik— just before the onset of Shabbos. 29

After showering, he would don a kapata and sit on his balcony solemnly awaiting the approach of Shabbos. At sunset, he would enter the house, check the clock to ascertain the precise moment of sheki’ah turn to face west and enthusiastically exclaim, “Bo’iy v’shalom ateres ba’alah ... bo’iy chalab, leiy chalab, bo’iy chalab, Shabbos malkesa, Lecha Dodi...” He would then be seated and recite Psalms 92 (Mizmor Shalosh) and 93 (Hashem malach). 30

often, especially on the short Fridays during the winter months, it is easy to “stumble” into Shabbos without affording it a proper welcome. It behooves us to reclaim the precious moments prior to Shabbos and to use them to the utmost. 26 Rav Soloveitchik — the Rav, zt”l— often spoke of a phenomenon that he felt was lacking in American Orthodoxy — that of the “erev Shabbos Yid.” The erev Shabbos Yid experiences the sanctity of Shabbos so deeply that he infuses his preparation with a unique aura of anticipation. The Rav related how such Jews abounded in every Eastern European shetl hamlet. The ranks of erev Shabbos Yiden included many a humble tailor, water carrier and smith whose simple piety paralleled that of the most erudite scholars. By midday, tools of the trade were set aside, shops were closed and one could palpably sense the approach of Shabbos. In Chassidic enclaves, the men set out to immerse themselves in the mikveh and quickly returned home to assist with domestic chores. Before long, the humblest home radiated with the Shabbos spirit as the table was decked with the family’s best tableware and young and old were attired in Shabbos finery. One would enter the shul well before sundown and find Jews of every stripe enraptured in the recitation of Shir Hashirim. Such were the likes of erev Shabbos Yidden. Sadly, the Rav bemoaned the disappearance of this breed of Jew, noting that although contemporary Orthodox Jewry might be meticulous in its Shabbos observance, it has lost this special spark. 27

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Notes

1. The one formal liturgical addition before Maawir that is cited in Onch Hayim #270 is Baneh Madlikin, which, according to the Sephardic view, is said prior to Baruch. From the words of the Mechaber in 261:4, it would appear that MizrornishirlyomhaShabbos was also regularly recited. This is based on his comments in Beis Yosef Onch Hayim 261. From the glosses of Darkeri Moshe it is clear that even the recitation of Mizrornishirwnas not widely known in Ashkenazic circles.

2. For example, Rabbi Joseph Yuspa Hahn in Yosef Onetz (collection of mishneiAham from the 1600s) refers to sefer KahalalShabbos as a “recent innovation” (“chadashimnikaruvba’i”) and praises the custom (#588).


4. This distinction is noted by Rabbi Yissachar Jacobson in Netive Bina Vol. 2, p. 29.

5. See Mishna Berura #31 citing Derech Chachmathab’y’Yochadconstitutes halachic KahalalShabbos.See also Halar ChevKanosof Rabbi Yaakov Hakig 1:52 for a similar ruling. Interestingly enough, the Mishna Berura elsewhere (342:1) implies that the recitation of Lecha DodiDatseltself may constitute halachic KahalalShabbos. This view is shared by AruchHaShulchan261:16. An interesting, yet contradictory, phenomenon was the practice prevalent in 17th century Prague of conducting the full KahalalShabbos service including MiznorishirlyomhaShabbos with musical accompaniment. At the adjournment, the congregation would leave the shul and return at a later time to formally accept Shabbos through the recitation of Baruch. For more on this practice and the controversy that it engendered in subsequent years, see ElehDvreHaBerit (republished 1969) by Gregg International Publishers Limited, England as well as Yechiel Goldhaber’s essay in Kovetz Beis Aharon v’Yisroel Shanun 13 Gilyon 119-134.

6. In fact, the concept of extending a welcome is more accurately rendered “hakhalal” which suggests a link or meeting between two entities—i.e. “makbiloShabbasinshelcalachas”—“the loops shall correspond to one another” (Shemos 26:5). Thus, the obligation to visit one’s Rebbe on Yom Tov is formulated as “Chayatadamyebikimekrovba’i” (Rosh Hashana 16b). Nonetheless, the Rambam, similarly, employs the term “hakhalalShabbos” in reference to welcoming the Shabbos (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2). Consistent with the distinction between hakhalal and hakhalah, Yemenite sidurim vocalize the refrain of Lecha Dodi “pi’eni Shabbos nakkhala rather than “pi’eni Shabbos nekhalal”. Apparently, the term “kabala” has evolved to encompass the dual concepts of “acceptance” and “welcome.”

7. See, for example, Rabbi Chaim Vital’s Sha’ar HaKavanos, Iyun KahalalShabbos, Dereb1, Shutchan Aruch HaHatir (Jerusalem 1984) p. 103, Hululei HaRim al HaTo’orah (Jerusalem 5746) p. 306. On the field’s ability to invoke a prophetic state, see Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz’s commentary to ShirHaShirim, entitled AyeslAhavon on the verse, “Lecha Dodi nitzavi ha’sade‘ (#7:12), cited by Goldhaber in Kovetz Beis Aharon V’Yisroel shana 11 giyon, p. 133 n. 30.

8. Sh’arHaKavanos op. cit. The term “chakal tapuchin kadsheihin” refers to a mystical union associated with the Shechinah and the souls of the righteous and is beyond the scope of this article. For a more precise definition of the term “tapuchin b’i” in a biblical context, see Yehuda Felix’s AzreiPeriLinneiheim (Jerusalem 1994) pp. 139-142.

9. See, for example, Seder Hayom (p. 95) of Rabbi Moshe ben Yehuda Machir who emphasizes the importance of performing the welcoming ceremony outdoors and concludes that determining the appropriate venue varies according to person and place. For a contrasting view, see the opinion attributed to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, in SiddurHaShelahShulHaraShamayim, which strongly advocates conducting the KahalalShabbosceremony indoors. See further, in this regard, the view of the Rambam and Tur/Shulchan Aruch.

10. Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (1505-1575?) was a contemporary of the Rambam who, in fact, makes this distinction.

11. See, for example, in his formulation of the Rambam’s view that determining the appropriate venue varies according to person and place. For a contrasting view, see the opinion attributed to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, in SiddurHaShelahShulHaraShamayim, which strongly advocates conducting the KahalalShabbosceremony indoors. See further, in this regard, the view of the Rambam and Tur/Shulchan Aruch.

12. Rabbi Yosef Karo’s own works in his introduction to Shulchan Aruch, that the Rambam was “the loops shall correspond to one another” (Shemos 26:5). Thus, the obligation to visit one’s Rebbe on Yom Tov is formulated as “Chayatadamyebikimekrovba’i” (Rosh Hashana 16b). Nonetheless, the Rambam, similarly, employs the term “hakhalalShabbos” in reference to welcoming the Shabbos (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2). Consistent with the distinction between hakhalal and hakhalah, Yemenite sidurim vocalize the refrain of Lecha Dodi “pi’eni Shabbos nakkhala rather than “pi’eni Shabbos nekhalal”. Apparently, the term “kabala” has evolved to encompass the dual concepts of “acceptance” and “welcome.”

13. In several accounts of the AR’s KahalalShabbos it is reported that he would close his eyes and face the direction of the setting sun. Additionally, the choice of facing west is linked to the Talmudic dictum (BavaBa’ra 25b) that the Shechinah rests in the west. (See Goldhaber in Kovetz Beis Aharon V’Yisroel shana 11 giyon, pp. 100-102). Alternatively, turning around at Bet’yishalom may be viewed as an expression of the desire to exit outdoors and greet the Shabbos. Where a conflict exists between these two motifs, latter day poskim disagree as to which to favor. See, for example, Igros Moshe OC Vol. 3 #45 and Az Nid’om Vol 2 #6 cited by Goldhaber.

14. Though Rabbi Chanin’s expression of “boyi’ishalam” (“let us go and greet the Sabbath queen”) would certainly convey such an impression, the language used to describe Rabbi Yonah’s posture, “lavish manevekai” (would don fine clothing and stand), as well as his declaration of “Come O bride,” suggests that Rabbi Yonah was more passive than his counterpart, Rabbi Chanina. See Maharsha in Hululei Aggadaverho, in fact, makes this distinction. See, however, the version of RabbeinuChamne quoted by NimiikeYosefand other rishonim which implies that even Rabbi Yonah was engaged in a dance of sorts as he recited bo’i’ishalam.

15. The source for the Rambam’s description of one’s being seated in anticipating the onset of Shabbos may be based on the Talmudic description of the practice of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilaiy (Shabbos 25b). Thus, the Rambam may have sought to reconcile the image of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilaiy with that of Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yonah by interpreting Rabbi Chanina’s imagery of going out to greet a king as suggesting an inner mental state rather than a physical act.

16. It is noteworthy that the Rambam (HilchosTefillah 4:16) prescribes that tefillabecan be preceded by a meditative mindset, based on Berachos 30b. Interestingly, the motif of inner serenity is also present for Talmud Torah implied by the Talmudic statement, “Hilchesab’iyatzla’as” (Erwin 65a). Apparently, the common denominator linking Shabbos, tefillah and Talmud Torah is the notion of kabbalap’eniShechinadecountering the Divine Presence.

17. It is noteworthy that Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch, who was a member of the Safed community at the time of the AR’s study mysticism under his tutelage for a period of time, ruled in accord with the Rambam and the Tur in his formulation of KahalalShabbos. We, however, know through Rabbi Yosef Karo’s own works in his introduction to Shulchan Aruch that the Rambam was one of the three pillars upon which he based the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch. Thus, normative halachah prevailed over more esoteric practice.

18. For a fuller treatment of the ramifications of property damages and personal injury inflicted as a result of haste in preparation of Shabbos or other mitzvab performances, see ChoshenMishpat pp. 95 n.65 who cites evidence of out-

19. There are variant readings cited in the Gemara with respect to the title which Rabbi
Chanina conferred upon the Sabbath — e.g. Shabbos hamalkah, kalah malkesa, Shabbos kalah malkesa. In addition, Rashi in Bava Kama substitutes melech for malkah as does the Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2). Interestingly, the Shulchan Aruch (OC 262:5) speaks of both chavas and kalah. These variations are undoubtedly of kabbalistic significance. Elaboration goes beyond the scope of this article.

20. The significance of running might also be understood in light of the Talmudic dictum (Berachos 9b) which encourages the practice of running to greet a monarch. The physical act of running expresses inner enthusiasm and a heightened state of excitement. Interestingly enough, the Gemara (Shabbos 33b) records the episode of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son who, upon emerging from the cave, observed an elderly man “running” with two hadasim at the twilight of Shabbos. The running in that instance may indeed coincide with the practice of Rabbi Chanina. In addition, the carrying of the myrtle to greet the “Sabbath bride” is consistent with its use at the occasion of weddings (see, for example, Kesuvos 17a).

21. A similar perspective emerges from the comments of Nimukei Yosef who explains that the case of running to greet the Shabbos queen is a concrete illustration of pre-Shabbos haste which would exonerate one from liability. He emphasizes, however, that the same exemption would apply for one who runs to attend to Shabbos needs of any kind throughout the day on erev Shabbos. However, he notes that haste at an earlier hour in the day is not exempt unless it can be positively verified that the motives were Shabbos related (See Choshen Mishpat 378:5).

22. In fact, it is conceivable that, for the Rambam, these last minute activities need not necessarily be Shabbos-related but may refer to belated mundane activity which, once laid to rest, allow the individual the mental space to contemplate the onset of Shabbos. See Semah (Choshen Mishpat 878:11) who infers this from the language of the Rambam but notes that the wording of Rama suggests otherwise.

23. Cited by Goldhaber in Kovetz Beis Aharon v’Yisroelshana gilyon 6 p. 92 note #50. As is generally known, the Brisker tradition was partial to the rulings of the Rambam and endeavored, wherever possible, to incorporate Maimonidean formulations of halachah into practice.

24. It is noteworthy that the Ginz himself, in his commentary on the Torah to parshas Yisro, draws a parallel between the imperative of mental preparation in anticipation of Shabbos and the mitzvah of “heyu nechonim” issued to bnei Yisrael prior to matan Torah, which, according to the Ginz, represented a special obligation to contemplate the impending encounter with the Shechinah. Consistent with this interpretation, his personal practice was also characterized by mental contemplation. However, in the course of his analysis, the Ginz goes on to parallel the Jews’ physical approach to the foot of the mountain, implied by “Vayozar Moshe es ha’ameh liknas ha’elokim min ha’machaneh,” to the practice of Rabbi Chanina who declared “Bo’u v’nietzei…” Curiously enough, the Ginz’s own erev Shabbos practice was purely contemplative and not action oriented.

25. Alternatively, it might also reflect a compromise between the view of Rabbi Chanina and that of Rabbi Yanai. See Maharsha, Chidushei Agados to Bava Kama 32b.

26. For elaboration on the spiritual significance of anticipating the Shabbos, see Nesivos Shalom Vol. 2, by Rabbi Shalom Noach Brozowsky zt”l, the late Slonimer Rebbe, Jerusalem 1989 pp. 42-43.

27. See, for example, Al HaTeshuva p. 58 in footnote. Such a sentiment was also reportedly expressed by Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky zt”l.

28. In conclusion, one more observation is in order. A welcoming ceremony is normally timed to coincide with a guest’s arrival, not long after the guest has comfortably settled in. The Kabbalas Shabbos service, which is, after all, a welcoming ceremony, should consequently take place prior to sundown. However, with the exception of the “early Shabbos” of the summer months, introduced largely as a measure of personal convenience by many congregations, the practice of reciting Kabbalas Shabbos prior to sheki’a has fallen into disrepute in the vast majority of synagogues today.