



The Hindu -Jewish Origin of the Voynich Manuscript

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Abstract

In this paper, we show that the Voynich Manuscript was likely collected by a Jewish Kabalistic Scholar based in Spain in the 15th Century. The Voynich covers the Biology and Cosmology of the Hindus. The main character is Uma, the Hindu goddess. The Voynich may be written in Tibetan.

Introduction

So, the Voynich manuscript was written after 1404-141438 from the dating of the parchment. It was written by a Sephardic Jewish Cohen who lived in Catalonia and studied the Kabbalah. The manu

script is about the Hindu goddess Uma. It is written in Tibetan. The manuscript made its way to Florence Italy where Jews lived around 1500. The manuscript is about Biology and Cosmology Figure 1.

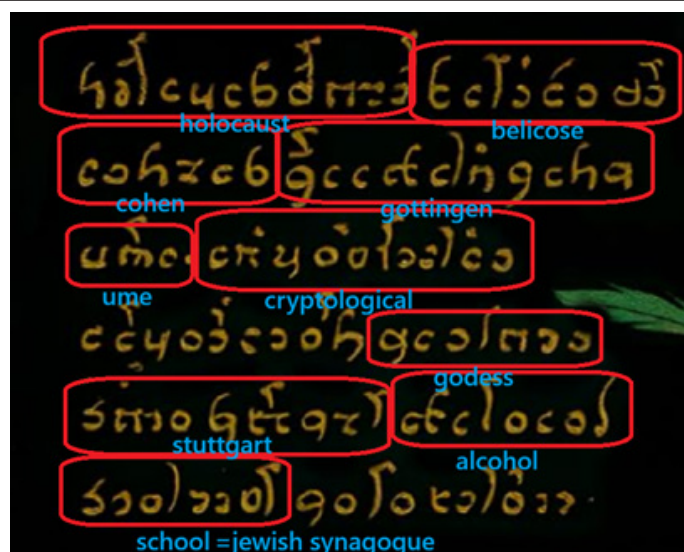


Figure 1: This is from the cover of a text book on the Voynich Manuscript.

Hindu Goddess Uma

Uma (also known as **Uma or Parvati**) is a major Hindu goddess:

- She is the **consort of Shiva**, associated with love, devotion, strength, and fertility.
- “Uma” is one of her many names reflecting her benevolent, nurturing aspect in Hindu mythology.

The closest known figure from 15th century German Jewish literary history is:

- **Moses ben Eliezer Cohen** – a Jewish writer and moralist who lived in **Germany in the second half of the 15th century**. He wrote an ethical work (often titled *Sefer Hasidim* or *Sefer haM-askil*) in 1473, contributing to Jewish cultural history.

(Voynich parchment dated to 1404-1438.) Figure 2



Figure 2: Map showing Jewish communities.

Spanish was not historically spoken in **Cagliari**, the capital of **Sardinia, Italy**. The main languages there have been:

1. **Sardinian (Sardu)** – a Romance language with several dialects, native to the island.
2. **Italian** – the official language of administration and education.
3. **Catalan** – briefly in some areas of Sardinia, particularly in **Alghero** in the northwest, due to Aragonese/Catalan influence.

Cagliari itself was under **Aragonese and Spanish rule** from

the 14th to 18th centuries, but Spanish was mostly the language of **administration and the elite**, not the general population. Locals would have primarily spoken **Sardinian or Italian dialects** Figure 3,4. Who was the Jewish Cohen who lived in Barcelonian who studied the kabbala?

The Jewish figure you’re most likely referring to — a **medieval Jewish Cohen (priest) associated with Barcelona and with the study or development of Kabbalah** — is: Figure 5



Figure 3: Note Florence was a Jewish settlement which is near where the Voynich Manuscript was found.



Figure 4: Map of Italy showing where the Voynich Manuscript was purchased by Voynich.



Figure 5: Location of Kabalistic School in Spain.

Isaac ben Jacob ha-Cohen

Who he was:

Isaac ben Jacob ha Cohen was a **Spanish born Jewish Cohen and kabbalist** active in the **13th century** during the medieval flowering of Jewish mysticism in Catalonia and broader Spain. **He and his brother Jacob traveled through Spain and Provence gathering ancient kabbalistic traditions and incorporating them into their writings.** His most notable work is the influential Treatise on the Left Emanation, which helped shape early mythological concepts in Kabbalah — including ideas about evil and demonic forces such as Samael and Lilith — and influenced later texts including the *Zohar*.

Context

In the 1200s, Catalonia (including the Jewish communities around **Barcelona** and nearby **Girona**) was a fertile environment for early Kabbalistic thought. Masters such as Azriel of Gerona, Isaac's contemporaries, helped lay the groundwork for Spanish Kabbalah, and Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides) was a pivotal figure who combined Kabbalistic insight with rabbinic scholarship.

If you meant a more **well known rabbinic figure connected with**

Barcelona's Jewish life, another key person is:

Nachmanides

Also known as Moses ben Nachman or Ramban, he was a leading medieval Jewish scholar, physician, **Talmudic commentator, and kabbalist, born in Girona (Catalonia)** and deeply involved in Jewish religious life that encompassed Barcelona. He famously defended Judaism in the **Disputation of Barcelona** in 1263 before King James I of Aragon. While he is primarily remembered as a biblical commentator and halachic authority, **his writings and thought included significant mystical (Kabbalistic) elements.**

Nahmanides, also known as **Ramban** (an acronym for *Rabbi Moses ben Nahman*), was one of the most influential Jewish scholars of the medieval period. Here's a detailed overview:

Basic Facts

- **Full Name:** Moses ben Nahman
- **Dates:** 1194–1270 CE
- **Place:** Born in Girona, Catalonia, Spain
- **Occupation:** Rabbi, physician, Kabbalist, Torah commentator, and leader

Contributions

Biblical Commentary:

- Nahmanides is best known for his commentary on the Torah, which blends **peshat** (plain meaning) with **aggadic** and mystical interpretations.
- He often engages with earlier scholars like **Rashi** and provides alternative interpretations.

Kabbalah:

- He was one of the early Jewish scholars to integrate **mystical ideas** into his works.
- His writings reflect the **Catalonian Kabbalistic tradition** that preceded the later Safed school.

Jewish Law:

- Nahmanides wrote responsa addressing halakhic (Jewish legal) questions, reflecting his role as a community leader.

1. Defense of Judaism:

- Famously, in 1263, he participated in the **Disputation of Barcelona**, defending Judaism against **Pope's court-appointed Christian theologians**.
- His defense was articulate and intellectually rigorous, though it led to persecution of Jews afterward.

2. Other Works:

- **He also wrote on medicine and ethics.**
- Many of his commentaries include mystical and philosophical insights, showing a bridge between **rationalist and mystical traditions**.

Historical Significance

Nahmanides is remembered as:

- A key medieval Jewish thinker who bridged Talmudic, philosophical, and mystical thought.
- A spiritual leader who influenced both Spanish Jewry and later Kabbalistic traditions in the 16th century.
- A defender of Judaism under Christian scrutiny, showing the intellectual depth and resilience of Jewish scholarship in medieval Spain.

If you want, I can also explain **how Nahmanides' Kabbalistic ideas compare to the Catalonian school of Kabbalah and even Hindu mysticism**, which is a fascinating connection.

Do you want me to go into that?

yes

Great! Let's explore **Nahmanides' Kabbalah** and how it relates to the **Catalonian school of Kabbalah**, and even find parallels with **Hindu mystical thought**.

Nahmanides and Kabbalah

- Nahmanides (Ramban) is considered one of the first mainstream Jewish scholars to openly integrate mystical ideas into his commentaries.
- In his Torah commentary, he occasionally interprets verses not just literally but as expressions of divine emanations, which is central to Kabbalistic thought.
- He emphasized the Sefirot (the ten divine attributes/emanations) implicitly, though he did not systematize them like later Kabbalists in Safed (16th century).
- His Kabbalah is **practical and ethical**: he connects mystical concepts to **prayer, mitzvot, and moral behavior**.

In the 16th century, **Safed (Tzfat)** in the Galilee became the spiritual and mystical center of Jewish life, particularly for Kabbalah, largely due to the influx of scholars who fled Spain after the 1492 expulsion. The most prominent Kabbalists in Safed included:

- **Isaac Luria (1534–1572)** – Known as the **Ari or Ari haKadosh**, he revolutionized Kabbalah with the **Lurianic system**, introducing concepts like *Tzimtzum* (divine contraction), *Shevirat haKelim* (shattering of the vessels), and **Tikkun** (cosmic repair). His teachings profoundly influenced Jewish mysticism.
- **Moses Cordovero (1522–1570)** – Also called the **Ramak**, he systematized earlier Kabbalistic teachings and created a more rational, structured approach before Luria's mystical innovations.
- **Shlomo Alkabetz (1500–1580)** – Best known for composing **Lecha Dodi**, the famous Kabbalistic hymn welcoming the Sabbath. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of both Cordovero and Luria.
- **Joseph Karo (1488–1575)** – While primarily a legal scholar (author of the *Shulchan Aruch*), he lived in Safed and engaged with Kabbalistic circles, integrating mysticism into his halachic writings.
- **Eliyahu de Vidas (1518–1592)** – A Safed Kabbalist and ethical writer, known for *Reshit Chochmah*, which blends Kabbalah with practical ethics.
- **Hayyim Vital (1543–1620)** – The main disciple of Isaac Luria, he recorded and systematized Luria's teachings, becoming the primary transmitter of Lurianic Kabbalah.

These figures collectively established Safed as the heart of Jewish mysticism, blending mystical insight, ethical thought, and liturgical innovation. The Safed Kabbalists also influenced Jewish com-

munities worldwide, especially through their writings on the **Tree of Life, divine sefirot, and mystical cosmology.**

Interestingly, some conceptual parallels exist between **Nahmanides' mystical ideas and Hindu** thought Table 1:

Parallels with Hindu Mysticism

Table 1:

Concept	Nahmanides / Kabbalah	Hinduism / Vedanta
Divine Emanations	Sefirot, channels of God's influence	Devas, manifestations of Brahman
Inner Meditation	Pnimiyut HaTorah (inner Torah, meditation on text)	Darshan, meditation on divine forms
Unity & Multiplicity	Ein Sof (Infinite God) expressed in multiplicity	Brahman manifests in many forms
Ethical Action	Mitzvot as aligning with divine flow	Dharma as aligning with cosmic order

- Both traditions see **the world as a reflection of the divine**, and ethical/spiritual action as a way to harmonize with higher reality.
- Nahmanides' mystical readings sometimes hint at **seeing the divine in creation**, which resembles **darshan**, the Hindu practice of perceiving divinity in people, nature, or images of God.

Summary

- **Nahmanides** → bridge between **rational Torah study and mystical insight.**
- **Catalonian Kabbalah** → builds on his mystical, meditative approach.
- **Hindu mysticism parallel** → shared themes of divine emanations, meditation, ethical action, and perceiving God in creation.

Catalonian School of Kabbalah (Girona / Gerona Circle)

The **Catalonian school of Kabbalah** refers mainly to a **13th-century mystical movement centered in Girona (Gerona) and Barcelona** in northeastern Spain. It is one of the **earliest and most influential schools of Kabbalah** in medieval Europe.

Creation from "Nothing"

- God is beyond comprehension—described as **"nothingness" (Ein Sof)**
- Creation emerges from this infinite source
- This idea helped reconcile **faith with philosophical problems of creation**

Harmony, Evil, and the Cosmos

- The universe is a **balanced system of divine forces**
- **Evil = disruption of harmony**, not independent power
- Human actions (especially observing Torah) help **maintain cosmic balance**

Mysticism over Pure Philosophy

- Catalonian Kabbalists reacted against **Aristotelian rationalism**
- They emphasized:
 - Symbolism
 - Hidden meanings of scripture
 - Spiritual experience

what connection ids there between the Kabbala and the Hindu goddess Ume?

I see what you're asking—you're looking for any conceptual or symbolic links between **Kabbalah**, the Jewish mystical tradition, and **the Hindu goddess Uma** (another name for **Parvati**, the consort of Shiva). While these come from very different religious and cultural frameworks, there are some interesting thematic parallels. Let's break it down carefully:

Kabbalah: Core Concepts

- Kabbalah deals with the mystical structure of the divine and the universe.
- Central ideas include:
 - **Ein Sof:** the infinite, unknowable God.
 - **Sefirot:** ten emanations through which God manifests and interacts with creation.
 - **Shekhinah:** the feminine aspect of God, often associated with divine immanence and nurturing.

Uma / Parvati: Core Concepts

- Uma is a goddess of fertility, love, devotion, and power (Shakti).
- Key aspects:
 - **Divine feminine energy** (Shakti), active and dynamic, which complements Shiva's transcendence.

- Roles as mother, protector, and mediator.
- Symbolizes balance, transformation, and the interplay of cosmic forces.

Hindu Goddess's Uma

Uma (Parvati): the Hindu Goddess

Uma (also known as **Parvati**) is one of the most important goddesses in Hinduism. She represents **love, fertility, devotion, and divine strength** Figure 6.



Figure 6: The Uma, - a Hindu goddess.

Who is Uma?

- **Consort of Shiva:** Uma is the wife of the god **Shiva**, forming one of Hinduism's central divine pairs.
- **Mother figure:** She is the mother of **Ganesha** (elephant-headed god) and **Kartikeya** (war god).
- **Embodiment of Shakti:** Uma represents **Shakti**, the feminine cosmic energy that powers the universe.

Names and Forms

Uma appears in many forms, depending on her mood or role:

- **Parvati** – gentle, loving aspect
- **Durga** – warrior goddess who defeats evil

- **Kali** – fierce, destructive power of time and transformation
- **Annapurna** – giver of food and nourishment

Meaning of "Uma"

The name Uma is ancient (found in the Upanishads). One story says her mother called out "*u mā*" ("don't!") when she was doing severe penance—hence the name.

Symbolism

- **Marriage & devotion:** Ideal of a devoted partner
- **Power & balance:** Complements Shiva (who is pure consciousness)
- **Nature & fertility:** Often associated with mountains and the earth

Uma and Shiva Together

When depicted with Shiva, they are called **Uma–Maheshwara**, symbolizing:

- Unity of **male and female principles**
- Balance of **creation and destruction**
- Harmony between **energy (Shakti)** and **awareness (Shiva)**

Key Points About Safed Kabbalism

- Safed became a hub after the **Spanish expulsion (1492)**, as Sephardic Jews brought mystical texts and traditions.

Conclusion

The Voynich manuscript was collected by Jewish Kabbalistic Scholars in Spain. It is about the Hindu goddess UMA, Biology, and Cosmology from the Indus Valley. It is dated from the 14th -15th Century.