



KADIMI

KADIMI, a Zoroastrian sect (Ar. *qadim* “old, ancient”); variant spellings are Kadmi, Qadmi, or Qadimi. The movement emerged in 18th-century India over the disagreement among priests whether to adjust the one-month discrepancy between the calendars of the Indian Zoroastrian (Parsi) and the Iranian Zoroastrian (Irani) communities. The Kadimis consider the Irani calendar the ancient one, that is, *kadimi*. Most Parsis, however, did not change their calendar, and they are known as Shenshahis.

In the early 18th century the Parsi communities in Bombay and Surat had prospered and grown in numbers. There was not an accepted spiritual authority in Bombay (see [BHAGARIAS](#)), and the community in Surat was in disagreement about funerary practices (Boyce, p. 189). Moreover, the letters exchanged between India and Iran had long since alerted Parsi and Irani priests to the different calendars used in their respective communities (Panaino, pp. 660-63; see also [KABISA](#)). In early 1721, wealthy Zoroastrians in Surat invited a priest from Kerman, Dastur Jamasp Vilayati, to advise them on these matters. The Irani priest worked with Darab Kumana of Surat, Jamasp Jāmāsp-Asa of Navsari, and Kamdinji of Bharuch (Broach), who were leading high priests (see [DASTUR](#)) of their communities, and left Surat in October 1721 to return via Bombay to Iran. Subsequently some Zoroastrians in Surat adopted the Irani calendar, a decision that created tensions in the community (Patell, I, pp. 32-33).

In 1736 a layman by the name Jamšid, well-versed in astronomy, came to Surat, where he stayed for three years. He befriended Dastur Kaus Fardunji



Monajjem, and taught him astronomy, thereby convincing him of the need to adjust the Parsi calendar (Patell, I, pp. 23-24). The high priest obtained the agreement of his community, which became the first group of Parsis in Surat to follow the Irani calendar, when in 1745 they dropped a month by reckoning the 8th month *Ābān* as the 9th month *Ādar*. Monajjem became the first Kadimi dastur (Mirza, pp. 443-44).

In 1767, Seth Dhanjishah Manchershah in Bombay sent Ervad Kaus ben Rustam Jalāl (d. 1802), a learned priest from Bharuch who was well versed in Persian (for his deception by the apocryphal *Dasātir*, see Corbin, p. 187) and Arabic, to Iran, where he stayed 12 years and studied intercalation (Ar. *kabisa*). After his return to India in 1780, Dadibhai Noshervanji Dadysset invited Mulla Kaus to consecrate and install an *Ātaš Bahrām* in Bombay, and Mulla Kaus became the first Kadimi dastur of the *Dadyseth Ātaš Bahrām*. Between 1782 and 1783, fierce disputes between Shenshahis and Kadimis lead to several deaths and imprisonments. Subsequently some priests in Bharuch and Surat became Kadimis, and both cities emerged as Kadimi strongholds and remained so until recent times. Mulla Feroze (d. 1830), the son of Mulla Kaus, succeeded his father as the dastur of the *Dadyseth Ātaš Bahrām*, and in 1826 Mulla Feroze played a leading role in resolving a quarrel between Shenshahis and Kadimis. In Bombay the Kadimis were influential, as is documented by their foundation of the first and the third of the four *Ātaš Bahrāms*. Members of Kadimi families, such as *Dadyseth*, *Banaji Cama*, and *Vatcha*, included famous traders and great philanthropists, such as the Zoroastrian scholar and community leader *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama* (1831-1909).

At the beginning of the 20th century, most Zoroastrians in Iran and about 15 percent of the Parsi community in India followed the Irani calendar (Bajan, p. 218). By the early 1970s, only 7 percent of the Parsis were still Kadimis (Kulke).

Shenshahis and Kadimis are in agreement with regard to Zoroastrian theology and doctrines, and there are not any social or religious restrictions between the two sects. However, there are a few minor differences in their rituals, apart from the different calendars and the subsequent discrepancies between their festivals. In the *Kōrda Avesta* (see *AVESTA*) Shenshahis and Kadimis use different opening and closing phrases for most prayers. In the short Gathic prayers *Ašəm Vohu* and *Ahunwar*, Shenshahis disagree about the pronunciation of the second word: the Shenshahis say “vohu” and “ahu” whereas the Kadimis say “vahi” and “ahi.” There are minor differences in



outer rituals, such as *āfrinagān*, *yasna*, and *boy*. Life cycle rituals such as the *naojat* and the marriage and death rituals are executed according to slightly different customs. The priesthood initiation (*nāvar*) among the Kadimis requires one more purification rite (*barašnom*) of nine days. The priests follow slightly different traditions whenever they mention the name of married women: the Shenshahis mention the wife together with her husband whereas the Kadimis continue to mention her with her father.

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