Additionally, while the author does examine the role of international factors on the bilateral relationship between Delhi and Jerusalem, he treats them as too minor a factor. As one of the first countries to escape the yoke of colonialism, India sought to burnish its “anti-imperialist” credentials. In the period following the Suez crisis, when Israel worked together with former colonial powers Britain and France, New Delhi was compelled to adopt an anti-Israeli stance so it could be seen as a leader of the anti-imperialist forces. The study would have benefited from an expansion on this international context and how the external environment constrained New Delhi’s foreign policy in its bilateral ties with Israel.

Despite this minor critique, the book remains the definitive account of bilateral relations between India and Israel and serves as the authoritative study on the subject.

Hussein Solomon
University of the Free State, South Africa


Most books on Lebanon crafted with sympathy and discernment are exercises in exploring the spirit of this singular country and its people. Salameh, a language professor at Boston College, demonstrates a unique approach to understanding that singularity. The essence of his thesis is that language—one rooted in the distant past and leavened with a multiplicity of more contemporary influences—continues to leave its imprint both on how the Lebanese communicate in the popular domain but also on what makes Lebanon the extraordinary human venture it is.

Salameh attempts to solve this puzzle by contending that there is no “single homogenous Arab cultural mass” but a diversity of ethnicities, languages, and peoples across the Middle East. In fact, Arabic, the supposed glue that holds together this disparate mass of humanity, “is a dead language.” No Arab really speaks Arabic: Different peoples in their respective countries speak Egyptian, Tunisian, Moroccan, or Lebanese. There is no cohesive Arab nation, no collective Arab memory, and thus no living “pure” Arabic language.

The case of Lebanon’s language and its authenticity was elevated to a sacred mission by Sād Akl, poet, linguist, and philosopher, who assumes a central role in Salameh’s narrative. He paints a vivid human portrait of the great man (born in 1912 and still living) who, among other things, proposed a Lebanese alphabet to replace the Arabic, thus liberating the spoken language from its Arabic moorings, much like the decision by Atatürk to write Turkish in Latin characters. For Akl, that alphabet is nothing more than a Phoenician creation, so that introducing Latinized characters into Lebanon would actually be an act of cultural recovery. For most Muslims and Arabs, however, it would be a separatist rebellion and viewed as a declaration of war against the Arab world.

The sub-text of the language controversy then is the struggle of a Christian community in Lebanon to survive and flourish in the Muslim world.
Middle East that is experiencing a sweeping Islamist tidal wave. Also, the debate as to whether the Lebanese are really Arabs has yet to be resolved. Akl and other intellectuals—for instance, Charles Corm and Michel Chiha—hammered away at the notion that the Lebanese are not Arabs at all. For them, and now for Salameh, the neighborhood norms of Islam and Arabic have no authority to overwhelm or suppress the specific features of Lebanon.

Salameh’s meticulous research makes for a most worthy book that makes a significant contribution to the literature. His study elucidates a core aspect of national identity with repercussions for all the Arabic-speaking countries. The author questions a conventional and sanctified concept of an Arab world which, battered and bruised by internecine political rivalries and animosities, is as desiccated as a Middle Eastern desert in the heat of summer.

Mordechai Nisan
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With an artful interweaving of the Netherlands’ past thirty years, plus her own experiences as a resident there, and personalized accounts of interactions with prominent Dutch leaders in politics, art, and academia, Esman offers a clear and powerfully evocative account of the process whereby Islamist political agitators, violent Muslim criminals, and Muslim terrorist ideologues are, step by step, bringing about the demise of a Western democracy.

Her book charts the descent of both Dutch society and government into a self-intensifying spiral of increasing submission to Muslim intolerance. Honor killings, genital mutilation, child and forced marriages, violence against homosexuals, the silencing of criticism through intimidation and murder, and a meteoric rise in high-profile incidents of anti-Semitism all combine to transform what was once one of the most stable and tolerant nations in Europe into a dark and inhospitable home for non-Muslim Dutch.

Perhaps as threatening as the events themselves are the responses, or lack thereof, from Dutch leaders. Esman skillfully examines the government’s inept and counterproductive legislation and the refusal of many in positions of leadership in media, academia, and education to deal with these Muslim-inspired, socio-religious dynamics. Muslim threats to Dutch civil liberties and democracy are unquestionably a dire menace, but the way in which Dutch officials dismiss these threats is itself of even greater concern.

She concludes that tolerance of intolerance is not tolerance but appeasement, and appeasement emboldens the aggressor. Thus Holland’s decades-long forbearance with intolerant Islamists has resulted in the growth of a young, radicalized, Muslim population that is pushing the Netherlands into a form of national and cultural suicide.

Esmann’s message concerns not just the Neth-