



# The Integrative Power of Puritative Words

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## Abstract

The words we wield possess the power to sculpt our realities and selves. This paper introduces a dichotomy of *Kalimaat-e-Safa* (كلمات صفا) i.e., *Puritative Words* and *Kalimaat-e-Ghubar* (كلمات غبار) i.e., *Dustitative Words*, exploring their impact on the *Self's integration* and *disintegration*. Through a lens that connects existential philosophy, cognitive psychology, and linguistic analysis, we define the transformative potential of *Puritative Words* to foster resilience, clarity, and growth amidst life's adversities. Conversely, *Dustitative Words* are examined for their capacity to cloud perception and fragment the *Self*. Beyond theoretical exploration, this paper offers pragmatic strategies for cultivating linguistic mindfulness, advocating for a deliberate choice of words as a pathway to personal and collective well-being. By redefining our linguistic choices, we not only ease the complexities of existence with greater agency but also contribute to a more integrative and coherent narrative of the *Self*.

## Introduction

Words have the ability to craft patterns that can either harmonise the disparate facets of our being or unravel the seams that hold our *self-concept* together. This realisation is often associated with mysticism or spirituality. My contention, however, is that it stands firmly on the empirical grounds of cognitive science and the pragmatic philosophy of language.

In this paper, my engagement with the science of words is an exploration of their integrative and disintegrative power. After due research, unable to find the terminology that most appropriately defined the aforementioned phenomena, I coined two terms in the Persian (Farsi) language, i.e., '*Kalimaat-e-Safa*' (كلمات صفا) and '*Kalimaat-e-Ghubar*' (كلمات



(غبار). These terms can be roughly translated to '*Puritative*' and '*Dustitative*', terminology that I have had to innovate in order to best fit the definition of its Farsi counterparts.

The linguistic choices we make are demonstrably influential, sculpting our internal dialogue and, by extension, the external manifestation of our *Self* or *Being*. It is no wonder to me that I chose Farsi as the medium to convey these ideas, as this language has often granted me with the facility to convey the abstract in its truest sense. However, to make sure that this terminology is just as accessible to the world at large, I coined its appropriate anglicised versions to make things easier for the readers of this paper.

Drawing from interdisciplinary resources, my analysis is grounded in the works of cognitive psychologists and linguistic philosophers. To simplify the concept of the *Self*, I have used its conceptualisation by Heidegger, as the analytical basis through which I dissect the nature of our linguistic constructions.<sup>[5]</sup>

The pursuit here is an examination of how *Kalimaat-e-Safa*, or *Puritative Words*, serve to clarify, purify, and integrate, strengthening the sinews of the *Self* amidst adversity without veering into denial. Conversely, *Kalimaat-e-Ghubar*, or *Dustitative Words*, often cloud judgement, precipitate confusion, and subtly coax the disintegration of the *Self*, a process observable through the prism of contemporary psychology's understanding of stress, cognitive distortion, and emotional regulation.

## The Self/Being

Martin Heidegger's seminal work, "*Being and Time*", poses the fundamental question of what it means to *be*.<sup>[5]</sup> Although I personally differ with Heidegger's exploration of *Dasein*, or '*being-there*,' I find it an



ideal basis for this paper, as this description of the Self is largely well known and makes the understanding of *being* more intuitive, thus enabling the readers to easily grasp the subject matter.

It presents the *Self* not as an isolated entity but as a *being-in-the-world*, intrinsically intertwined with its environment and others. This approach recognises the profound implication that language has as a medium through which the *Self* encounters and interprets the world.

The Heideggerian perspective posits that language is the house of *Being*, that in its dwelling, we come to understand ourselves and our existence.<sup>[5]</sup> This ontological approach brings to the fore how the articulation of experience, i.e., our choice of words shapes our being.

This linguistic construction of the *Self* shares a resonance with the theory of *symbolic interactionism*, proposed by sociologist Herbert Blumer.<sup>[2]</sup> This perspective emphasises the role of language and symbols in social interaction and the formation of the *Self*. Through language, we engage in a process of *self-identification*, mirroring the attitudes and reactions of others to form an image of ourselves.

Drawing upon the pragmatic linguistics of J.L. Austin and the later John Searle, who dissected the functions of language into '*constatives*' and '*performatives*,' we learn that words can go beyond mere descriptions of reality. Instead, they act, they do, and they perform.<sup>[1][8]</sup> This performative aspect of language is pivotal in shaping the *Self*, for it is through words that we commit acts that define our *being*, from making promises to expressing emotions.

The neuroscientific perspective provides empirical weight to the claim that language is deeply enmeshed with our identity. The work of Antonio Damasio and his hypothesis of the '*somatic marker*' suggests that our emotional experiences, often communicated through language, are



integral to the decision-making processes that sculpt our personal narrative.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Kalimaat-e-Safa (Puritative Words)

*Kalimaat-e-Safa* are not just lexemes arranged to convey clear communication, but rather the elements through which the *Self* is *cleansed, refined, and integrated*. If you parse through the etymology of 'puritative,' you shall find its roots in 'purity' and 'purification,'. But this *purity* is beyond just the moral sense. In order to underline this, it is important that we define what we mean by *cleansed, refined* and *integrated* in this context.

1. *Cleansed*: The process by which Puritative Words help to remove negative mental and emotional residues that cloud judgement, hinder growth, and contribute to a distorted perception of the self and reality. Similar to the way physical cleansing removes impurities from an object, linguistic cleansing through Puritative Words helps eliminate detrimental self-narratives, facilitating a clearer, more positive self-view.
2. *Refined*: The process of enhancing and elevating the individual's self-concept and emotional state. This refinement process involves honing and improving one's thoughts and feelings through a selective focus on words that promote positive self-reflection and constructive attitudes. Similar to purifying metals, where the end product is stronger and more valuable; the *Self* becomes more resilient and more aligned with its aspirational qualities.
3. *Integrated*: The process of harmonising various aspects of the *Self* that might have been disjointed or in conflict. Through the use of Puritative Words, individuals can reconcile conflicting internal



narratives, align their thoughts with their actions, and foster a sense of wholeness and congruence. Integration here implies the achievement of a balanced and cohesive identity, where different facets of the *Self* work together seamlessly, leading to a more stable and coherent sense of identity.

In the section, “*Working Examples*”, we can see these principles in action along with the impact they have with regards to the integration or disintegration of the *Self*.

Cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in “*Metaphors We Live By*” argue for the *conceptual metaphor* as a framework for understanding.<sup>[6]</sup> I find that puritative words do more than describe, they encapsulate a worldview.

Psychologist Carol Dweck’s work on mindsets resonates here. Puritative words encourage what she terms a ‘*growth mindset*’ which is a belief in the potential for fundamental development.<sup>[4]</sup> Puritative words grounded in the pragmatic reality of human psychology.

They reflect the findings of positive psychology, as advanced by Martin Seligman, which emphasises the real-world benefits of focusing on strengths and virtues. The impact of such words is measurable, with research indicating that positive word usage can lead to increased mental well-being and life satisfaction.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Kalimaat-e-Ghubar (Dustitative Words)

*Kalimaat-e-Ghubar* or *Dustitative Words* are the utterances that shroud perception in the particulate matter of *confusion* and *despair*, obscuring the clear pane through which the *Self* might view the world. They are not



merely descriptors of an event but are creators of a reality steeped in helplessness.

The linguist Deborah Tannen elucidates this power of negative framing in conversations and its potential to entrench conflict and misunderstanding in her work, “*You Just Don’t Understand*”. Just as puritative words have the power to elevate, Dustitative words possess a gravity that pulls the *Self* towards *disintegration*. They are not just expressions but impressions. The following are the properties of Dustitative Words.

1. *Confusion*: Contributing to a state of confusion by muddling clear thought and decision-making processes. This confusion manifests when language lacks precision or carries negative connotations, leading to uncertainty and indecision. The cluttered mental landscape created by Dustitative Words impedes one's ability to see situations clearly.
2. *Despair*: Cultivating a deep sense of hopelessness and defeat that can arise from the pervasive use of Dustitative Words. These words, often embodying negativity and pessimism, can erode an individual's belief in their ability to overcome challenges or achieve desired outcomes. The resultant feeling of despair is a profound emotional low, where the individual feels trapped in their circumstances with no visible means of escape or improvement.
3. *Obscurity*: The lack of clarity and visibility into one's own thoughts, feelings, and the realities of their situation. Dustitative Words cloud understanding and perception, creating a fog around the *Self*'s narrative. This linguistic obscurity prevents individuals from seeing their strengths, potential pathways forward, and the positive aspects of their lives, leading to a distorted perception that emphasises limitations and barriers.



4. *Disintegration*: The process by which the cohesive sense of *Self* begins to unravel under the influence of Dustitative Words. These words can fragment the individual's identity and sense of purpose by emphasising conflict, failure, and inadequacy. As the narrative of the *Self* becomes dominated by negativity, it loses its unity and strength, leading to a fragmented existence where thoughts, emotions, and actions no longer align, undermining personal integrity and coherence.

The impact of these words transcends the ephemeral moment of their utterance, lingering like a persistent haze that clouds judgement and perception. Cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, whose research on the malleability of memory reveals the capacity of words to distort our recollections and, consequently, our sense of *Self*.<sup>[11]</sup> Dustitative words, can alter the narrative arc of memory, bending it towards the dark.

The language of Dustitative words is characterised by a lack of agency and a surrender to external forces perceived as malicious or unjust. This linguistic resignation was highlighted by social psychologist Shelley Taylor in her work on illusion and well-being, illustrating how a loss of agency can negatively impact mental health.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Working Examples

### Example 1:

*Context*: A team project at work missed a crucial deadline, leading to negative feedback from the client.

*Dustitative Statement*: "Our team completely *botched* this project. We're always *behind schedule* and *can't seem to do anything right*. This failure is just another sign of our *incompetence*."



*Puritative Statement:* "This project presented us with *significant challenges*, and missing the deadline has offered *valuable insights*. We will *reassess* our strategies and *improve* our coordination for future projects."

*Explanation:* The Dustitative Statement is laden with words and phrases such as "*botched*," "*always behind schedule*," "*can't seem to do anything right*," and "*incompetence*". While there is no inherent negative connotation in all the terms collectively, when taken into the context of the situation, these terms become disintegrative. This contributes to a sense of despair, inadequacy, and permanent failure. These words not only demoralise the team but also cement a negative self-image that obstructs growth and improvement.

The refined Puritative Statement, however, employs words like "*significant challenges*," "*valuable insights*," "*reassess*," and "*improve*," which acknowledges the setback without disparaging the team's capabilities. This statement represents the situation in its truest form, i.e., a temporary setback. It doesn't deny the reality nor does it distort it, thus bringing a constructive clarity that cleanses, refines, and integrates the *Self*.

## Example 2:

*Context:* An individual receives constructive criticism on a creative project they're deeply invested in.

*Dustitative Statement:* "The feedback was *harsh* and just proves that I'm *not cut out* for this. I guess I'm just *not talented enough* to succeed in this field."



*Puritative Statement:* "The feedback provided a *new perspective* on my project, highlighting areas for *development*. It's an *opportunity* for me to *refine* my skills and *deepen my understanding* of the craft."

*Explanation:* In the Dustitative Statement, words like "*harsh*," "*not cut out for this*," and "*not talented enough*" distort reality, confuse the final analysis of the outcome, and introduce negative ambiguity towards the future. Such language reinforces self-doubt and hampers the motivation to continue improving.

Conversely, the Puritative Statement uses phrases such as "*new perspective*," "*development*," "*opportunity*," "*refine*," and "*deepen my understanding*". This statement represents reality in its truest form and encourages a perspective of resilience, open-mindedness, and a commitment to personal and professional development.

### Example 3:

*Context:* An employee is overlooked for a promotion they were highly qualified for, in favour of someone with less experience.

*Dustitative Statement:* "It's *blatantly unfair* how they *overlooked* me for the promotion. It's clear that hard work and merit *mean nothing* here. I'm just *wasting my time*."

*Puritative Statement:* "Being passed over for the promotion was *disappointing*, but it's prompted me to *reflect* on my career path and explore *new opportunities for growth*, both within and potentially outside this company."

*Explanation:* The Dustitative Statement, with words like "*blatantly unfair*," "*overlooked*," and "*wasting my time*," overcompensate to the unfairness of the situation, thus venturing into catastrophizing.



Catastrophizing is a cognitive distortion where an individual expects or exaggerates the worst possible outcome in a situation, far beyond its actual scope. This emphasises feelings of resentment and hopelessness, potentially leading to stagnation. It projects a sense of victimhood and powerlessness, focusing on external validation, thus disintegrating the *Self*.

In contrast, the Puritative Statement acknowledges the disappointment ("*disappointing*") but uses it as a catalyst for self-reflection and proactive behaviour ("*reflect,*" "*explore new opportunities for growth*"). This response encourages resilience, self-efficacy, and openness to change, transforming an unjust situation into an impetus for personal and professional development. This is a good example of how an unfair situation can be turned into a moment for the integration of the *being*, simply by the alteration of the language.

#### Example 4:

*Context:* A freelancer loses a major client due to circumstances beyond their control, significantly impacting their income.

*Dustitative Statement:* "Losing that client was a *disaster*. It's just my *bad luck*, and now *I'm doomed* to fail. I don't know if I can recover from this."

*Puritative Statement:* "The loss of a major client was *unexpected* and *challenging*. It's an *opportunity* to diversify my client base and *strengthen* my *resilience* in facing business uncertainties."

*Explanation:* This is a good example of unforeseen situations that introduce unexpected and potentially damaging consequences. The Dustitative Statement in this case, advocates for fatalism i.e., "*disaster,*" "*bad luck,*" and "*doomed to fail*", which can immobilise the individual, hindering their ability to seek solutions and move forward.



The Puritative Statement, however, frames the situation as *"unexpected and challenging,"* yet transformative, viewing it as a chance to *"strengthen my resilience."* This statement brings acceptance to the unexpected *'hit'* of the situation while fostering a growth mindset, encouraging adaptability and optimism to ascertain the integration of the *Self*.

### Example 5:

*Context:* After months of preparation, a significant public event is cancelled due to an unforeseen natural disaster.

*Dustitative Statement:* "All that effort *for nothing*. It's just *my luck* that something *completely out of my control* would *ruin everything*. *Why do I even bother?*"

*Puritative Statement:* "The cancellation of the event due to the natural disaster is *deeply unfortunate*. It's a reminder to *focus on what I can control* and to *adapt creatively* to unforeseen challenges."

*Explanation:* This example highlights the *'man against nature'* factor. The Dustitative representation focusses on an external locus of control ("*for nothing,*" "*just my luck,*" "*ruin everything*"). This is disintegrative for the being as it suggests futility.

The Puritative Statement acknowledges the situation's severity, i.e., "*deeply unfortunate*", while shifting focus to resilience and personal agency i.e., "*focus on what I can control*". It transforms an adverse event into a learning opportunity, encouraging a proactive and resilient approach to life's unpredictabilities, making sure that the disintegrating effects of unforeseen events do not disintegrate the *being*.



## Distinguishing Kalimaat-e-Safa from Toxic Positivity

Kalimaat-e-Safa encourage growth, learning, and acceptance whilst experiencing the adversity that strengthens rather than disintegrating the *Self*. However, it is important to note that this is fundamentally different from what is often criticised in modern discourse as *toxic positivity* which is the use of *excessive* and *ineffective insistence* on maintaining a positive mindset, irrespective of emotional pain or challenging realities.

Kalimaat-e-Safa does not advocate for a blanket denial of pain, suffering, or adverse circumstances. Unlike toxic positivity, which might superficially urge individuals to "*just be happy*" or "*look on the bright side,*" often invalidating genuine emotional experiences, Kalimaat-e-Safa encourage a deep acceptance of reality. This means embracing all facets of one's experiences, including those that are painful or difficult and *integrating* them into the one's *being*.

In contrast, toxic positivity often leads to the suppression of uncomfortable emotions, a practice that can fragment the *self* and hinder true resilience.

## Distinguishing Kalimaat-e-Safa from Denial

To employ puritative words is not the same as propagating *falsehood* or *self-deception*. Denial, in its psychological sense, is a defence mechanism, a refusal to acknowledge the events or circumstances that are too threatening to face.

While denial *rejects* the existence or significance of distressing aspects of reality, puritative words *acknowledge* the full spectrum of experience.



This distinction is important. This acceptance of the full spectrum of experience is what Martin Seligman and other psychologists might categorise as *realistic optimism*, a concept that recognizes life's adversities while maintaining a constructive perspective on the future.<sup>[9]</sup>

The philosopher Nietzsche famously posited that we have art to save ourselves from the truth.<sup>[7]</sup> Puritative words take a contrarian approach to this line of thinking. *Integrating Kalimaat-e-Safa into our language is the art of saving ourselves with the truth instead of saving ourselves from the truth.*

The language of integration speaks to the *authentic Self*, one that comprehends its place in the arc of its existence. Denial, on the other hand, often leads to a *fragmentation of the Self*.

## Implementation

The theoretical foundations laid by this discourse of Kalimaat-e-Safa and Kalimaat-e-Ghubar find their true value only when translated into practical application. Herein, I propose a pragmatic approach to employing puritative language. While not exhaustive, these pointers may help the readers get started with the process of integrating the *Self* using language.

### Paying Attention

By cultivating an attentive presence to the words we choose while speaking, we can engage in a form of linguistic analysis, guarding against the inadvertent and/or habitual usage of dustitative words. This attention can be enhanced through techniques such as pausing before responding, allowing for a space in which the choice of words can be



more deliberate and aligned with our intended message and emotional state.

## Writing Before Speaking

The act of writing, particularly when addressing emotionally charged or judgmental content, serves as a buffer, a space to reflect, refine, and perhaps even reframe our initial impulses into more constructive expressions. This practice not only aids in tempering immediate emotional reactions but also in clarifying thought, ensuring that our words, whether spoken or written, emanate from a place of considered intention rather than reactive instinct.

## Precision in Ambiguity

During moments of ambiguity and confusion, the temptation to fill the void with speculation or ramble into tangential narratives is strong. However, the discipline of precision, i.e., articulating only what is known, admitting uncertainty where it exists, preserves the integrity of our discourse. Phrases such as *"I don't know"* or *"I need more time to understand"* are not admissions of defeat but acknowledgments of our current limits of understanding, inviting patience and reflection over precipitate conclusions.

## Choosing Silence

Perhaps the most potent, yet underappreciated, response to dustitative tendencies is silence. Silence is not a void but a space full of potential for introspection and the regeneration of our inner narrative. It offers a pause where puritative words can be integrated with intention and care in our dialogue.



## Conclusion

This discourse on *Kalimaat-e-Safa* (Puritative Words) and *Kalimaat-e-Ghubar* (Dustitative Words) has bridged an understanding between how language shapes our *being*, our *self-perception*, and our *interaction* with the world. Puritative Words serve as tools for growth and clarity, *integrating the Self*. Conversely, Dustitative Words cause *disintegration* and *obscurity*, capable of ensnaring the *Self* in a mire of confusion and stagnation.

The critical analysis of these linguistic forces underscored the quintessential human capacity for choice i.e., our inherent ability to select our words with intentionality and awareness. This selection is not merely a matter of linguistic preference but an ethical and existential act that shapes our reality, our relationships, and our innermost selves.

Kalimaat-e-Safa have an integrating impact on the *Self*, which is contrary to the impact of *Denial* and *Toxic Positivity*, both of which lead to disintegration.

In conclusion, it becomes evident that the words we choose are the architects of our *Self*. The invitation extended by this discourse is to engage in the conscious practice of *linguistic selection*, to favour Kalimaat-e-Safa over Kalimat-e-Ghubar.

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[Mir H. S. Quadri](#) is the founder of [Arkinfo](#), an innovative platform at the forefront of artificial intelligence research and development. With a background in computer science and a passion for linguistics, Mir's work intersects the technical with the theoretical, exploring how advancements in AI can inform and be informed by the nuances of human language and interaction. He has written for reputed scientific publications with over 100,000 readers globally.

In addition to his technological pursuits, Mir's academic interests include the study of the impact of language on cognitive processes and the development of intelligent systems that mimic human learning patterns. His multidisciplinary approach reflects a commitment to bridging gaps between technology, linguistics, and cognitive science.

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