

## The Semantic and Epistemological Position of Mystery From the Viewpoints of Gabriel Marcel and Muṣṭafā Malikiyān

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### Abstract

Mystery, as a word that has a slippery and vague meaning, is defined by Muṣṭafā Malikiyān and Gabriel Marcel in two different but explicit and definitive ways. These two thinkers take different approaches to mystery by presenting different definitions of it and adopting different philosophical affiliations. In this paper, which has been written in a descriptive-analytical way with references to library sources, the role and effect of belief in mystery in the epistemological system and, consequently, in the human's existential and practical ways of life is clarified. The approach that Marcel takes in the face of mystery makes him the philosopher of mystery and keeps him constantly engaged with mysterious matter, while the approach adopted by Malikiyān keeps him away from what he considers to be mystery such that he deems wisdom as avoiding mysteries. These two philosopher's viewpoints differ in semantic, epistemological, and ontological aspects as well as in the human's access to mystery.

**Keywords:** Mystery, Gabriel Marcel, Muṣṭafā Malikiyān, Existentialism, Analytical philosophy

### Introduction

Mystery is a word that is commonly used in the field of literature and mysticism. In Christian theology, of course, mystery is a term that has been conceptualized and theologically interpreted. However, philosophy is not reconciled with it, and it is a word that is alien to the nature of philosophy. Even where Kant speaks of metaphysical mysteries, he emphasizes that these matters are beyond human cognition and lead them to the world of the noumenon. In fact, since it is a mystery, it is not a place for epistemological and philosophical study. The veiled nature of mystery has no relation to the demystification of philosophy.

However, Gabriel Marcel, as an existentialist philosopher, not only speaks of the mystery and draws it into the world of philosophy to play a role, but also believes that it can be revealed and that the mystery is not completely out of the reach of human knowledge.

In this article, a comparison is made between the philosophical views of Gabriel Marcel – a French philosopher – and Muṣṭafā Malikiyān – an Iranian philosopher and intellectual who believes in mystery – and both views are compared for their semantic, ontological, and philosophical positions, their associations, and their stance to the possibility of human epistemological access to mystery. It is worth mentioning that belief in the mystery has not changed during Muṣṭafā Malikiyān's intellectual periods.

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The word mystery literally means hidden, covered, and latent, which can be considered as a near synonym for words such as secret (*sirr*) and occult (*ghaybī*). Although these words are generally used interchangeably (especially in the literature domain), in the philosophies of these thinkers mystery finds semantic clarity and is defined in such a way that it is separated from other words related to the same concept.

### **The nature of the mystery and the scope of the mysterious matter**

Under the influence of the insight gained from Jacques Maritain's book *Reflexions sur l'intelligence*, Marcel defines "mystery" through "problem" (Marcel, 1971: 80-81). In fact, he explains both terms by constructing a semantic pair of problem and mystery and through the contradiction he shows between them. Muṣṭafā Malikiyān also uses this method, and in addition to the "problem," he uses the term "puzzle" to explain the meaning of the mystery. In addition, by differentiating similar words, he sets out to specify each word's boundaries.

Malikiyān considers the "problem" as a something that we "do not know, but there is a way to know it, and if we follow that method, our ignorance will surely become known. So, the problem is ignorance that there is a way to know it, and if anyone follows that method, it will become known." He believes that the power of thinking also refers to the ability to solve problems (problem solving) and says that talking about the power of thinking refers to a person's ability to solve problems; that is, he/she can solve problems" (Malikiyān & Fariyāmanish, 2015: 39).

However, Marcel's approach to the "problem" is deeper and more detailed. This may be because the "problem" is of particular importance to him in determining and defining the mystery, and for him, the mystery is essentially known in comparison to the problem. So, the more the problem can be represented, the more the slippery and hidden nature of the mystery is grasped. Unlike Malikiyān, the mystery plays a special and prominent role for Marcel, and he is truly the philosopher of the mystery.

Gabriel Marcel sees the "problem" as something that is facing us and blocks our way; the thing is completely against the "I" (Marcel, 1968, vol. 1: 124). In fact, in the face of the problem, human being is not involved and the subject is irrelevant. The problem is as an object and outside the cognitive subject, and there is a complete separation between the object and the subject; hence, the subject's psychic characteristics are not involved in problematization and problem solving. This causes the problem to be depersonalized, and therefore, if subject A changes to subject B, the result and solution will not change (Copleston, 1975, vol. 9: 332). This feature makes the solution of problems to be a public asset. Theoretically, at least, the rediscovery of them by anyone would be possible (Marcel, 1970, vol. 1: 262). Marcel interprets this characteristic as "democratization of knowledge" in problematization (Marcel, 1968, vol. 1: 157).

He considers the scope of the problematic the same as the scope of the natural (Marcel, 1963: 89-90), which is the situation and position of science. As a result, with the help of technique, each problem finds a researchable solution (Marcel, 1968, vol. 1: 128). This means that the subject, by distancing itself from its psychic qualities and bringing up an objective problem, can provide an answer that everyone can achieve if they use the same method, which makes it possible to make progress in this arena (Keen, 1996: 43-44).

However, the mystery in the thought of both thinkers is deemed exactly in contrast to the problem. Marcel considers the mystery as something in which "I" is involved. The mystery is an expanse in which the distinction between *in me* (*en moi*) and *in front of me* (*devant moi*) has no meaning (Marcel, 1968, vol. 1: 146). In addition, Marcel asserts, "The essence of the mystery is that it is not completely *in front of me*" (Marcel, 1968, vol. 1: 124). That is, it is not possible to examine the mystery associations from an external perspective. The reason is that in

their scope one can never be a mere external observer; because it is interested (Boelen, 1971: 41). According to Marcel, even if one does so and tries to examine and analyze them as an outside observer, he/she has reduced the mystery to the level of the problem (‘Ulyā, 2000: 37).

This characteristic of the subject’s involvement makes the scope of the mystery completely personal and dependent on the human person, in contrast to the “problem” in which personality is removed. In the realm of mystery, the whole existence of the subject or the recognizer is involved in the matter in question, and sometimes they are even the same, similar the question of “I.” As a result, cognition in the mystery does not have the capacity to be placed in specific and predetermined ways, and the answers are multiple. Therefore, the mysterious, unlike the problematic, cannot be solved by technical approaches (Boelen, 1971: 217) because it never fully grasped, and is not caught up in an objective attitude. Marcel sees the mystery in close connection with “wonderment”<sup>1</sup> and believes that the mind will never overcome the mysterious and cannot reach its end, because the mystery is inexhaustible (Marcel, 1971, vol. 1: 11). Therefore, contrary to the problem, progress in it has no meaning and is not possible (‘Ulyā, 2000: 40).

Malikiyān makes the Persian word “rāz” synonymous with mystery and distinguishes it from another Persian word “sirr,” which is synonymous with the English word *secret*. He believes that secret is something that one or two people know and intend to hide from others, and it can only be revealed through their own ignorance; That is, there is no way to discover it unless one or both of them, out of ignorance, reveal it. In this method, except for the ignorance of those who know the secret, there is no way to reveal it. This ignorance can be practical or theoretical. Nevertheless, he considers the mystery to be something fundamentally unknowable, an unknown that will not become known in any way. According to him, a philosopher believes that a number of mysteries in the universe mean that philosopher believes that there is the same number of unknowns in the universe and the human cannot make them known (Malikiyān & Fariyāmanish, 2015: 39-40). While he emphasizes his belief in mystery, he introduces ‘belief in mystery’ with the meaning of not limiting the creatures of the world to the human understandings; neither the actual understandings nor the potential understandings of the human that can be actualized in the future. In fact, he considers mystery as something that the human intellect cannot talk about (Malikiyān, 2010a: 188).

In order to better explain and understand the meaning and concept of the mystery in his mindset, Malikiyān uses Kant’s term “antinomy” and states that any controversial issue in which two parties have the same weight and neither is superior to another is considered a mystery, and it leaves the realm of mystery in relation to which the balance of the parties is disturbed and one prefers the other. He classifies the controversies of the parties (antinomies) that are completely equal in terms of epistemology as “beyond reason.” Of course, these *beyond reason* issues are the ones in which one side has no preference over the other. However, the rationalist and the anti-rationalist ones, against whom the human intellect knows and perceives its position, cannot be a mystery (Malikiyān, 2010a: 189). In addition to describing the mysterious, this explanation implies that mystery is personal, because it is related to personal judgment and the power of individual rationality. From this point of view, the stances of Malikiyān and Marcel can be considered as equal or aligned in two respects: considering the mystery as related to the individual and depersonalizing the problem, and taking the expanse of the natural and empirical matter to be the same as the scope of problematization rather than that of the mysterious matter. Of course, Muṣṭafā Malikiyān’s belief that the creatures of the world cannot be limited to the understanding of human intellect may be a kind of indication that there is no boundary between the natural and the mysterious, and at least in theory, these two areas can overlap, though the human intellect is not able to understand and overcome that. In any case, in practice, what human is able to face in nature and perceive by his senses and

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1. Marcel uses the Greek word *thaumazein*, which is something between wonder and astonishment.

perceptions prepares the context for the appearance of problems. In the view of Muṣṭafā Malikiyān, what belongs to the mystery is never understood or encountered by the human senses. Hence, anything that is exposed to the human senses and perception – whether tangible or abstract, or a question or the unknown – cannot be a mystery; it is either a problem or a false problem. Malikiyān considers the false problem to be the same as the Persian/Arabic word *mu‘ammā* and the equivalent of the word *puzzle* in English. In Malikiyān’s view, the word *mu‘ammā*, which is the object pronoun from the infinitive of *ta‘miya*, meaning *covered* and *blinded*, is a false problem, and deceives us with minds or words, or both. The puzzle is not the problem, but it deceives us to think we are facing a “problem.” For this reason, in the literature, it is called a puzzle or in Persian *mu‘ammā*; which means blinded. We are blind, and if we were discerning, we would know that it is not a problem (Malikiyān & Faryamanesh, 2015: 39).

Emphasizing the unknowable nature of the mystery for Malikiyān, it can be pointed out that the more a person knows about it, his ignorance about it increases, and he is therefore wondered (Malikiyān, n.d.: 38). According to him, the mystery is something unknown that the human – as long as he/she is human – is not able to discover and understand (Malikiyān, 2010b: 13-14). In fact, in Malikiyān’s view, mysteries are beyond human intellect. Hence, dividing things into known knowable, unknown knowable, and unknowable, he introduces the mystery as the same as the last category (Malikiyān, 2010a: 174-175).

Another point that seems to distinguish these two thinkers about the nature and essence of mystery is that for Marcel, mystery is an existential thing and is related to the existential affairs of the human. However, it is for Malikiyān an epistemological matter and is related to cognition, perception, and human intellect. Marcel knows the mystery in the relation it establishes with the involvement of human existence, while Malikiyān knows the mystery in the relation it establishes with the understanding of the human.

However, both agree that the mystery is wonderment. That is, both Malikiyān and Marcel believe that the contemplation on the mysterious wonders human.

### **The possibility of the human’s epistemological access to the mystery**

Based on the foregoing discussion, it seems clear that Marcel and Malikiyān have major differences in this regard. Although Marcel makes a fundamental difference between problem and mystery, and he even points out that progress can occur in the scope of problems – but not mystery – and mystery can never be understood, he does not consider the mystery beyond the reach of human cognition and still leaves the way open for human understanding. By introducing and describing the mystery, he does not try to block the path of human thought in some matters, and he does not think that human thought is not in any way capable of understanding in this arena. Rather, he considers cognition of the mystery as possible. With this difference and attention, that understanding of the mystery, from the path of conventional thinking which is the result of detachment of subject and object and Marcel calls it primary thinking (reflexion premiere), (Marcel, 1970, vol. 1: 102) does not pass. Unlike Malikiyān, he even emphasizes that the mystery should not be equated with the unknowable, and by sticking the sign “no thoroughfare,” it should not be imagined that thought has no way to it (Marcel, 1964: 84). In addition, he points out that it should not be confused with insoluble (Marcel, 1971: 81-82). In fact, what he is looking for is to seek different ways of acquiring knowledge, not to limit the scope of knowledge (Collins, 1968: 151).

Marcel argues that the dualistic pattern of perception as divided between subject and object is not universal, and that areas of thought that belong to the mystery do not follow this dualistic pattern. Marcel’s approach to knowing the mystery is to leave the status of the human observer “homo spectans” and to live as a participating human “homo particeps” (‘Ulyā, 2000:

58). Such knowledge does not rely solely on reason with the help of thinking – something Marcel calls *secondary thinking*; rather, it relies on the whole human being, including feelings and emotions. Marcel considers emotion as a state of participation (Marcel, 1970, vol. 1: xi) which, as mentioned above, requires the knowledge of the mystery. In Marcel’s epistemological approach to mystery, emotion also acquires epistemological significance. He states, “The starting point of my thinking is, first of all, emotion,” (Marcel, 1971: 83), and considers human cognition as a synthesis of intuitive and rational factors, both of which are “intuitively involved in the immediate proof of the existence with which metaphysics begins” (Collins, 1968: 224). Unlike primary thinking – which is based on abstraction and is impersonal – secondary thinking (*reflexion secondaire*) is concrete, individual, personal, and recuperative<sup>1</sup> (Marcel, 2001, vol. 1: 82-83).

However, Malikiyān not only considers the mystery to be fundamentally unknowable and believes that human cannot achieve knowledge in the mystery as long as he is human, but he even strongly advises that as soon as the mysteries are discovered, man should be careful in dealing with them. The reason is that in his point of view, the result of spending time on such-like matters is wasting the life that can be dealt with identifiable matters increasing the human suffering. He considers these two results sufficient for the loss and damage afflicted onto the human through dealing with the mysteries. In this regard, he refers to a saying of ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib (a) who introduces the essence of God, death, and predestination as mysterious and forbids man from engaging in them and the phrase “It is a deep sea, do not enter it” (*Nahj al-balāgha*, 2000: saying 287) has been used for these matters. The meaning of the phrase, as Malikiyān himself stated, is, “It is a deep sea. Do not fall into this deep sea from which you will not survive” (Malikiyān, 2010a: 191-192). Here, Malikiyān stands in stark contrast to Marcel, and not only he does not introduce a way to obtain knowledge of the mystery, but he also considers the human intellect incapable of comprehending that. Although Malikiyān – similar to Marcel – uses the word “problem” to define the mystery, his grasp of the term is wider, and is taken to mean “being beyond reason.” If Marcel says that mystery is everything that is not a “problem” and is exactly the opposite of it, Malikiyān says that it is everything that reason has no way to it; it is not irrational, but it escapes the power and realm of reason. Therefore, everything that falls into the hands of reason is not a mystery; rather, it is what the intellect is unable to grasp. For this reason, he considers trying to comprehend it to be contrary to wisdom. Unlike Marcel who does not block the entrance to this arena, Malikiyān believes that it seeks to create or identify new ways in its own right.

Of course, it may be assumed that Malikiyān, like Marcel, only believes that the way to unravel the mystery is not through reason, but that there is another way to open and understand it. As he stated in the interpretation of a verse from Ḥāfiẓ, “Basically, the criterion for the incomprehensibility of a thing is reason, and the meaning is incomprehensible by reason; therefore, Ḥāfiẓ, as a person who believes in the mystery, introduces the intoxication and drunkenness<sup>2</sup> as a way to comprehend mystery in this hemistich of one of his famous verses “Come so that, in pure wine, time’s mystery, we may show” (Malikiyān & Fariyāmanish, 2015: 42). Based on this, it is possible to imagine that Malikiyān thinks the mystery can be understood through intuitive, existential, and spiritual ways. The reason is that he considers belief in the mystery as a characteristic of the spiritual human (Malikiyān, 2010b: 13-14). Moreover, he does not see intuition in understanding the world as contrary to the analytical approach that he is committed to, and sees only the persuasion and demand of opinion from others as the need to provide evidence (Kājī, 2001: 368). Nevertheless, this is not true, because he considers the

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1. The recuperative is something that compensates and reconstructs the unity of an experience that is destroyed by primary thinking.  
 2. Of course, this phrase is a metaphor for the state of mystical unconsciousness and loss of awareness of the world of reason.

proposed cognitive inability to understand the mystery as a characteristic of the human, and forbids trying to discover the mysteries because it has no end and no result. Even if the human had imagined a way other than reason for understanding it, this undertaking would not have been deserved. Therefore, it can be said that in the description of that verse, Malikiyān stresses Ḥāfīz's opinion and tries to express Ḥāfīz's point of view rather than that of himself.

Muṣṭafā Malikiyān's stance on the need to identify the mysteries of the universe but not to deal with them<sup>1</sup> might be found in a poem by Suhrāb Sipihrī, "Now that it is not our business to fathom the mystery of the rose, we must float in the magic of the rose." This interpretation of the type of human encounter with the mystery, of course, is a reminder of Marcel's type of encounter. It stresses the need to abandon primitive thinking, which requires identification through the separation of subject and object, and instead, deal with the mysterious through existential thinking and wondering. In fact, instead of objectively examining the mystery, he suggests living with the mystery and experiencing it. However, following Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arrī and Khayyām, he advises to cherish life and pursuit pleasure. He goes on to say, "In other words, it is expedient for me that all the friends abandon work, pursuit pleasure, and enjoy" (Gide, 2016: 293). This statement is in fact a return to their basic position on the mystery. It means leaving the mystery, not dealing with it, and pursuing anything that has a result in human life and cherishing the opportunity, even if it means pleasure-seeking.

An important issue in this regard and one of the reasons for this difference is the view of these two thinkers on the essence of mystery. While Marcel considers the mystery to be something in which the psychic qualities of the subject - I - are involved and cannot be observed from outside, Malikiyān considers the mystery to be anything that is "beyond reason" rather than the impossibility of the separation of subject and object. Accordingly, this intellectual obstruction created by Malikiyān, but not by Marcel, is quite understandable and conceivable.

### Mystery's associations

According to Marcel's view, some of the mysteries are:

1. Existence (Naṣīrī, 2013: 53)
2. Family or family connection (Ibid: 45)
3. Evil (Ibid: 44)
4. Hope (Ibid: 65)
5. Incarnation<sup>2</sup> (union of soul and body)
6. Love (Keen, 1996: 72)
7. Preparation
8. Fidelity and faith (Ibid: 78)

What is common and agreed-upon in all the above cases is the involvement of human existence in the issue under study such that a detachment is not possible between the subject and object of identification. That is, the subject can never distance himself from the objects to examine them in an objective expanse without involving his psychic characteristics. Human is surrounded by them rather than surrounding them. For this reason, from Marcel's point of view, they belong to the realm of mystery. As stated earlier, Marcel considers something to be a mystery that cannot be completely separated from oneself and cannot be examined as an object. Man himself is a participant involved in the process, and therefore the subject and the object are not separate, but rather completely intertwined.

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1. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (a) also forbade human from dealing with matters that are latent and incomprehensible for him, and he even considered this a worthy feature of their admiration. In fact, he has stated this as a feature of those who are strong in knowledge. He interprets the "covered matters" as "ghayb" (*Nahj al-balāgha*, 2000: 157, sermon 91).

2. This incarnation means the union of the human soul and body and is different from Christian incarnation.

Malikiyān, while emphasizing that the number and associations of the mystery are disputed by philosophers (Malikiyān & Fariyāmanish, 2015: 40), introduces the number of mysteries from his point of view as seven, which are as follows:

- 1) God (both His existence and His quiddity)
- 2) Consciousness (Kant interpreted it as *self*)
- 3) Determinism and free will<sup>1</sup> (Shūshtarī, 2019: 49)
- 4) Life before birth of human beings
- 5) Life after death of human beings
- 6) Characteristics of deep human psychology<sup>2</sup>
- 7) If human had another perceptual system, how would he see the Being?<sup>3</sup> (Malikiyān, 2010a: 190-191)

Of these, the first three are also a mystery from Kant's point of view. According to Malikiyān, the early Wittgenstein also believed in mystery<sup>4</sup> and, like him, believed that we should not enter the realm of mysteries because we could not talk about them (Malikiyān, 2010a: 188-189).

### Principles and roots of the dispute

As has been said so far, Gabriel Marcel and Muṣṭafā Malikiyān, while believing in mystery, have taken a very different theoretical view and practical approach to mystery. This difference shows itself in the definition and description of the mystery, the human relationship with it, access to the mystery, and the associations of the mystery. However, the root of these differences can be traced to a fundamental difference: the philosophical affiliation of these two thinkers. Although he himself is dissatisfied with this label (Marcel, 1973: 237-238), Malikiyān affiliates to analytic philosophy and is even a critic of continental philosophy. According to him, the proper use of linguistics is something that does not happen in continental philosophies (Malikiyān, 2010a: 8), while analytic philosophy emphasizes the logical and linguistic analysis of the components of philosophical issues. He even points out that analytic philosophy makes everything mathematical and measures them by mathematical thinking. However, Marcel sees this precisely as the weakness of conventional thinking in the processing of philosophical issues and the cause of misguidance. He states that primitive thinking is limited to the field of science, while all philosophical issues are concrete, and therefore mathematical and logical thinking is ineffective in it and reduces the originality of experience. This point, of course, is acknowledged by Malikiyān himself. In an interview, while describing the differences between continental and analytic philosophers, he referred to Thomas Ni-

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1. The determinism/freewill duality is a mystery. That is, we do not know and will not know where the line is between "I" and other than "I." In this sense, it is not possible to know that when I am doing something, whether "I" other than "I" is really doing it. This meaning of the determinism/freewill duality is mystery (Shūshtarī, 2019: 49).
  2. The fact that human loves truth, goodness, peace, and happiness. Deep psychologists can talk about these profound characteristics of human, but no one knows why man enjoys truth, goodness, and beauty in the depths of his being. We do not know why we are like this and why we are made like this. This is the secret (Malikiyān, 2010a, p. 190).
  3. If we had another perceptual system, how would we see, find, and perceive the world? What kind of science and knowledge would we find in the world? If our mind were another mind, would we see the world causal? It is as if we now see the world causal ... In other words, we humans do not know how we see existence if we fly from this existential structure and find ourselves in another existential structure. In that existential structure, we do not know this. This is a mystery and no one can understand it (Malikiyān, 2010a, pp. 190-191).
  4. The last of the theorems of his "Tractatus logico-philosophicus" is this, and he concludes his book with the statement, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." This is the beginning of a mystical view of early Wittgenstein's philosophy. In late Wittgenstein's viewpoint, what is beyond linguistic games is a mystery (Malikiyān, 2010a, p. 188).

gel, and said that the approach of analytical philosophers does not allow them to delve into important issues such as anxiety, hope, apprehension, and the meaning of life, commitment, death and love (Kājī, 2001: 364-365). The reason is that the analytical philosopher first seeks to clarify the meaning and semantic explanation of words, but this is impossible due to the evasiveness of existential concepts. Secondly, there must be a reason for it, and in existential issues, what is needed is companionship, which is a separate path from reasoning (Kājī, 2001: 365). It seems that the point of difference between Marcel and Malikiyān is at this point. Malikiyān himself is aware that with the approach of analytic philosophy, or in the words of Marcel, primary thinking, one cannot deal with concrete issues. Malikiyān's emphasis on accompaniment and coexistence in existential issues, in fact, is associated with the same non-separation of object and subject and the existential conflict of the subject in the matter in question that Marcel pointed out. However, Malikiyān does not know any other way of thinking for philosophical exploration that would be precise, efficient, and untangling, though he does not believe that any insight can be obtained without analytical thinking.

Nevertheless, since he knows only analytical philosophy to be morally permissible, he does not consider the achievements that are achieved through concrete thinking to be available to seek acceptance and belief, because there is no reason in favoring it. As a result, he says, it is morally impossible to bring up (Kājī, 2001: 365-366). However, it is very important to note that, as mentioned earlier, Malikiyān does not consider the ways of knowing the world to be limited to reason and analytical thinking, and even believes that analytic philosophy does not limit the ways of knowing the world to the reason. Moreover, it is not forbidden to know intuition, for example, as a way of knowing the world (Kājī, 2001: 368). Nonetheless, when sharing the knowledge we have gained from the world and connecting others with our insight and knowledge of the world, the only possible way is to give a reason. This is the focal point where continental philosophy is weak. It can be said that despite the difference between Marcel and Malikiyān in the definition and associations they consider for mystery, they are on the same boat in dealing with the universe. Malikiyān and Marcel both believe that in concrete issues and in issues in which the whole of human existence is involved, primitive thinking (according to Marcel) and analytical thinking (according to Malikiyān) cannot comprehend and explore the intended matter precisely and deeply. However, Marcel, with his philosophical affiliations and his phenomenological approach, enters philosophy and brings wonderment to the realm of thought. He presents his achievements and considers the philosophy as the realm of these matters. In this regard, he has always stressed "the need to restore its ontological weight to human experience" (Marcel, 1949: 103). Nonetheless, although Malikiyān has existential concerns and even thinks about them, because he considers the only morally admissible philosophy to be an analytical approach, if he accepts thinking about concrete and existential issues with negligence and considers only the demand for belief from others immoral, as he approaches the realm of mystery, he takes them completely out of the realm of thought and cognition, and even warns against searching for them. Of course, it is noteworthy that these two thinkers offer deeply different definitions of mystery, and the associations that they take for mystery show the same difference expressed in the definitions, too. In fact, it can be said that what Marcel defines and considers as a mystery, in Malikiyān's view, are things that in the analytical approach, as the only moral approach admissible for philosophy, cannot be very effective in exploring its depth. The reason is that the elusiveness and slipperiness of these concepts deprive them of conceptual clarity and refinement in meaning.

## Conclusion

Although both Muṣṭafā Malikiyān and Gabriel Marcel believe in mystery, they have fundamental and significant differences in their attitudes toward it, and the nature and quiddity of



mystery is defined differently by these two thinkers. Marcel (an existentialist with a phenomenological approach) defines mystery as an existential matter and extends it to anything regarding which human, as a knower, cannot make a distinction between himself and the recognizable matter (i.e., between subject and object). On the contrary, Malikiyān sees the mystery as an epistemological matter and makes the definition of the mystery not in relation to existential matters but in relation to the power of human perception, reason, and cognition. Hence, he limits the scope of the mystery to anything that is unknowable to man as a human being. This brings about the second important difference between these two thinkers in the field of mystery. Although Marcel does not consider the mystery to be epistemologically accessible through primary and conventional thinking, which is the product of the distinction between the subject and the object as well as the identification of the human as an external observer, he does not block the path of knowledge to it. By advancing the secondary thinking, which is the result of the conflict of human existential integrity and not only his reason and especially with emphasis on the role of emotion, he believes that the mystery is understandable, although this understanding is highly personal, multiple, relative, and never completely grasped. However, since Malikiyān defines mystery from the beginning based on the relation he makes with human understanding (considering it unknowable or, in other words, unrecognizable to human), it is very clear that he considers the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the mysteries impossible for human, and so he warns the human against dealing with the mystery. Of course, this different approach, which is also the result of different definitions of mystery, is not unrelated to the philosophical affiliations of the two philosophers. Marcel's phenomenological approach allows him to approach these existential issues and to philosophize in this field, as he does not follow the logic of conventional cognition. Nonetheless, Malikiyān's tendency to analytic philosophy and his analytical approach - though he also has existential concerns - does not allow him to philosophize and think in a field where the logic of cognition cannot be followed, especially since he defines the mystery not as existential but as unknowable and beyond intellectual matters.

However, in a few cases they are in same direction, as follows:

1. The concept of *covered* is more limited as the human – in the first step – does not have the ability to recognize and discover it.
2. The human reason does not have the capacity and ability to perceive the secret alone.
3. The mysterious is based on the wonderment.
4. The mystery is a personal matter (for Malikiyān, the determination of the mystery associations is personal and individual, and for Marcel, the understanding that can be obtained from the mystery is so).
5. At no time human can achieve a (complete!)<sup>1</sup> understanding of the mystery.

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1. Malikiyān believes that human is fundamentally incapable of understanding the mystery, and Marcel believes that it is not possible to fully comprehend it because of psychic features and the subject's involvement in the identification process.

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