

Reflections on Allah's Divine Wisdom in Diverse Creations: As Observed in Professor Perry Schmidt- Leukel's Fractal Theory

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I write these reflections with humility and awareness of my limitations. This is not religious advice. What follows are personal reflections as I engage with Professor Perry Schmidt-Leukel's fractal theory through my own Islamic lens. These thoughts are not intended to redefine doctrine, equate religions, or make definitive claims about divine intent. They are simply attempts to reflect on patterns within creation and Allah knows best (Allāhu a'lam).

There is a verse in Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt that has lingered with me since encountering the fractal theory of religious diversity:

“O humankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-conscious” (Qur'an 49:13).

This verse does not describe diversity as a mistake. Rather, it presents diversity as part of Allah's divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) “so that you may know one another” (*li-ta'ārafū*). Diversity is not accidental. It is created. It is purposeful. It is relational.

As I reflected on this verse alongside the fractal concept, I began to notice that this pattern appears in more forms than I had first imagined. It manifests in subtle and surprising ways, yet it becomes visible only through observation and deep reflection. The Qur'an repeatedly calls us to think and reflect: “Will you not then reflect?” (*afalā tatafakkarūn*).

One of my strongest takeaways from the fractal concept is a renewed appreciation that only Allah is Absolute (*al-Muṭlaq*). He is One (*al-Aḥad*). Everything else is created, dependent, and layered in complexity. Creation exists in diversity because it is not absolute. Only Allah is singular, perfect, and without division.

Fractals Existing Across Different Scales

Fractals can be described as patterns that exist in paradoxical harmony. A spectrum of compatible opposites held together in balance. The same structure repeats itself at larger and smaller scales.

Professor Schmidt-Leukel illustrated this with something simple: broccoli or a fern. Each tiny branch mirrors the whole. What you see at the base appears again in the stem, and again in the smaller branches stretching outward into its crown. Each part reflects the structure of the whole, creating a design that recurs across levels.

When viewed through this lens, we begin to notice how similar patterns unfold across different areas of life. In simple terms, what we observe at one level often reappears at

another level. Not identical in form, but similar in structure. The expressions differ, yet the underlying tensions and questions feel familiar.

Religious diversity is one example where this repeating design becomes visible.

This pattern can be observed at three levels.

At the **macro-level**, we see diversity between religions — Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and others. The differences in theology, rituals, and doctrine are real and significant. Yet beneath these differences, we may notice recurring human questions: How do we relate to the Divine? How do we balance worldly life and spiritual life? How do we seek salvation or ultimate meaning? The answers differ, but the concerns echo.

At the **meso-level**, the same pattern appears within religions. Even inside one tradition, diversity exists. In Islam, for example, there are schools of jurisprudence (*madhāhib*), theological traditions, and spiritual paths. We see legal scholarship alongside mystical devotion, intellectual inquiry alongside heartfelt remembrance. The tensions we observe between religions such as law and spirituality, reason and devotion also appear within a single faith.

At the **micro-level**, the pattern becomes personal. Within a single believer, different spiritual states emerge over time. A person may experience moments of certainty and moments of doubt, seasons of intense devotion and periods of distraction. The broader tensions we see globally are reflected within the human heart.

What becomes clear is this: each spectrum is genuinely different, yet similar tensions and questions repeat in new forms. The pattern is not sameness, but structured diversity. When seen this way, the fractal idea becomes less abstract. It simply suggests that complexity is not random or chaotic. Across different levels of life, patterns of difference and resemblance repeat themselves, often as tensions that balance rather than cancel one another. from global traditions, to communities, to the inner life of a single person. Religious diversity is not the only place where this occurs, but it is one powerful example.

In my own lived experience, I notice a recurring tension between renouncing the world (*zuhd*) and engaging responsibly with worldly life (*dunyā*). This polarity appears across traditions.

In Buddhism, there is monastic withdrawal and engaged compassion. In Christianity, there is asceticism and social activism. In Islam, we see both contemplative retreat and active service to society. The question beneath these expressions is universal: What is the right relationship between spirit and matter?

Another recurring pattern is mediation. In Singapore, some Muslims revere righteous figures (*awliyā' Allāh*) as exemplars of closeness to Allah. Across traditions, similar archetypes appear: saints, bodhisattvas, holy figures.

Islam affirms direct access to Allah. A prayer (*du‘ā*) requires no intermediary yet it also recognises that Allah may grant intercession (*shafā‘ah*) by His permission. The human longing for connection appears across traditions, even though theological interpretations differ.

Recognising this changes the way I approach others. Engagement becomes less about defending boundaries and more about understanding shared human struggles. How do we balance *zuhd* and engagement? When do we turn directly to Allah? How do we live faithfully in a plural world?

This is what makes the fractal lens compelling. It does not claim that everything is the same. It does not erase real theological differences. Rather, it suggests that beneath diversity, certain human tensions and questions reappear and that these tensions may contribute to balance within existence. It helps us see that diversity may be patterned rather than chaotic. Complexity can still carry coherence.

Yet ultimately, it is Allah alone who is (*al-‘Alīm*) the All-Knowing. As the Qur’an reminds us:

“And above every possessor of knowledge is One more knowing” (Qur’an 12:76).

The theory may help us notice patterns. But Allah’s knowledge encompasses what we cannot.

Turning the Lens Inward

Perhaps the most sobering part of this reflection is looking inwards and recognising the tensions within myself.

Am I a living fractal? Do I contain both renouncing and affirming impulses?

For me, the answer is yes.

This compatible tension appears in daily life. I strive to do my best. To prepare, to work hard, to pursue excellence (*ihsān*). Yet I also recognise that the best outcome ultimately comes from Allah. Effort and reliance (*tawakkul*) must coexist. If I abandon effort, I fall into passivity. If I abandon reliance, I fall into arrogance. Holding both together creates balance.

Here again, we see the same structure: difference held in harmony. In my own life, effort and reliance exist together. In a religious community, law and spirituality must coexist. Across religions, engagement with the world and detachment from it appear in different forms. The scale changes, but the pattern remains. What happens within one heart can resemble what happens within a community. What unfolds within a community can

resemble what unfolds globally. The personal mirrors the communal, and the communal mirrors the global. The inner life reflects the outer world.

A Sign of the Infinite

Perhaps the deepest lesson of the fractal pattern is this: repetition across scales hints at an Infinite Designer whose wisdom permeates every level of existence.

Creation exists in layered complexity because only Allah is absolute. Diversity, then, is not merely tolerated. It is contemplated as an (*āyah*) a sign.

The Qur'an invites us to observe patterns in creation:

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those of understanding" (Qur'an 3:190).

When I look at diversity through this lens, I no longer see fragmentation alone. I see structured plurality. I see recurring tensions. I see echoes of deeper design. And I am reminded how vast Allah's universe is and how limited my understanding remains.

Allāhu a'lam.

About The Author

Ennurishahada is a Programme Coordinator at Harmony Centre, where she supports national interfaith training in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and contributes to the Asatizah capability-building initiatives. With over a decade of experience in education and curriculum operations, she previously served as Head of Academic Operations at SimplyIslam, overseeing the Weekend Madrasah. She continues to serve as an asatizah committed to strengthening the development and empowerment of the Asatizah community in Singapore. Ennurishahada holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies from Islamic Religious Council of Singapore and a Bachelor's in Arabic Language & Communications from Islamic Science University of Malaysia. Thoughtful and deeply empathetic by nature, she is increasingly drawn to social cohesion and peacebuilding through meaningful dialogue and building connections.

About Harmony Centre Singapore

The Harmony Centre was officially opened by Singapore's then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 7 October 2006. The Centre is an initiative by The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) to promote better understanding of Muslim life and culture as a response to the post-September 11 era. It addresses queries and misconceptions about Islam and the Singaporean Muslim community.

In partnership with Singapore's Ministry of Education, the Centre has become a learning hub under the national education scheme, welcoming over 76,000 visitors to date. It serves as a meeting point for various faith communities, fostering dialogue and understanding through diverse educational programmes. Notable initiatives include Faith in the Heartlands (F.A.I.T.H), the Building Bridges Series, as well as the Abdul Aleem Siddiqui Memorial Lectures. The Centre also facilitates discussions between youth and faith leaders on religious and contemporary issues, nurturing cross-community friendships and cultivating appreciation for diverse beliefs and practices.

The Centre's efforts are particularly significant in Singapore's multi-religious context, where it plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony. By providing a platform for open dialogue and education, this approach aligns with Singapore's commitment to religious harmony, making the Harmony Centre a vital institution in the nation's ongoing efforts to maintain social cohesion in an increasingly complex global environment. It has also been consulted globally on its interfaith model and shares its experiences regularly to international visitors. The Centre's philosophy is rooted in the belief that there is a positive role of religion in societies, and that faith can contribute to human flourishing.