# Shaykh Arif Abdulhussain – Al-Mahdi Institute

Shaykh Arif founded the Al-Mahdi Institute in 1993, and currently serves as its Director and Senior Lecturer in uṣūl al-fiqh and Muslim Philosophy. He has been at the forefront of developing and delivering Advanced Islamic studies for over twenty years and is committed to sharing the Human face of Islam at all levels of society through a combination of public lectures and intra and inter faith dialogue. Shaykh Arif was educated at the Madrassah Syed Al- Khoei, London and graduated with Honours in 1988 where he also taught Grammar, Logic, Islamic Law and Usul al-Fiqh. He then travelled to Iran to further his studies and received his training at Hawza Ilmiyyah of Qum. He also attended private training and research studies with leading scholars of Qum. Alongside these studies he was also teaching in Qum across a wide spectrum of the traditional Muslim scholarly disciplines.

**ABSTRACT: "*Ijtihad* and *Taqlid* within an existential framework"**

*Taklif* as the imposition of religious duties and responsibilities on individuals and communities in all areas of human life is contingent on capacities and abilities[1]. On the other hand, since capacities and abilities are existentially based they are relativistic and in a constant state of change due to the individuality of existent entities and a continual state of flux and change in existence generally. The implication of this is that *taklif* is also in a state of flux and change both on the vertical and the horizontal axis in line with the nature of existence.

Ijtihad as a means of ascertaining taklif in a relativistic and an evolutionary existential framework of necessity has to be to fluid and dynamic in line with the nature of taklif. Therefore, *ijtihad* as means of appreciating *taklif* similarly will undergo a constant state of change since the only requirement from ijtihad by Sharia standards is accuracy in appreciation of *taklif*. Consequently, ijtihad as a means of appreciating *taklif* would require newer models that are constantly integrating different disciplines and bringing together different expertise in any given area of human life

Finally, *taqlid,* as means of ascertaining *takif* through reliance on the *ijtihad* of another is based on levels of incompetency in understanding *taklif* directly in differing individual and collective contexts. This incompetency is naturally reduced with the growth of human learning and experience in areas that have already been responded to through ijtihad and hence there remains no further need of taqlid in those matters. However the growth of the human community will raise newer levels of incompetency with the result that taqlid as reliance on on others is constantly being reduced in areas of competency and increased in newer areas with human growth and sophistication.

In conclusion since *taklif* is existentially based it creates dynamism in the nature of ijtihad and the level of reliance on *ijtihad* at every level of human existence.