



## **The Ship of Righteous Deeds 2010AD / 1431AH (Variant I)**

Ahmed Moustafa

Oil and watercolour on 638gsm 100% cotton paper

Image Size: 180 x 150 cm landscape

Frame Size: 218 x 188 cm (special profile, ash timber frame, 15cm wide)

**T**his composition is a visual attempt to express the longing of those who seek nearness to God having become conscious of the ephemeral and transitory nature of this life. Metaphorically they come to regard this life as a vast ocean where their righteous deeds joyfully sail across the waters like lofty ships.

*Scriptorial palette:*

### **The General Background Space**

"Verily, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth, and the succession of night and day: and in the ships that speed through the sea with what is useful to man: and in the waters which God sends down from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless, and causing all manner of living creatures to multiply thereon: and in the change of the winds, and the clouds that run their appointed courses between sky and earth: [in all this] there are messages indeed for people who use their reason."\*

*Surah 2, verse 164*

\* This passage is one of the many in which the Qurʾān appeals to "those who use their reason" to observe the daily wonders of nature, including the evidence of man's own ingenuity ("the ships that speed through the sea"), as so many indications of a conscious, creative Power pervading the universe.

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*Scriptorial palette: (continued)*

### Ship Structure

"And His are the lofty ships that sail like [floating] mountains through the seas.\*

Which, then, of your Sustainer's powers can you disavow?" *Surah 55, verse 24-25*

\* Lit., "in the sea like mountains". The reference to ships as "belonging to God" is meant to stress the God-given nature of man's intelligence and inventiveness – a reflection of God's creative powers – which expresses itself in all that man is able to produce.

### Waves

"And He it is who has made the sea subservient [to His laws], so that you might eat fresh meat from it, and take from it gems which you may wear.

And on that [very sea] one sees ships ploughing through the waves, so that you might [be able to] go forth in quest of some of His bounty, and thus have cause to be grateful [to Him]."

*Surah 16, verse 14*

### Waves

"And among His signs are the ships that sail like [floating] mountains through the seas: if He so wills, He stills the wind, and then they lie motionless on the sea's surface – [and] herein, behold, there are messages indeed for all who are wholly patient in adversity and deeply grateful [to God]; or else He may cause them to perish because of what they have wrought; and [withal,] He pardons much."

*Surah 42, verse 32-34*