

Justice in Avvakum's Fifth Petition to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich

PRISCILLA HUNT

Avvakum's Fifth Petition to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich is a crucial document in his polemic with the State. That he not only sent it to the tsar but also circulated it in a *sbornik* meant for his followers indicates that he intended it for a broader audience.¹ Written in 1669, a year after Avvakum's exile to Pustozersk, it represents his last words to Aleksei Mikhailovich and his final response to the Church Council of 1666–1667, which the tsar organized to condemn the Old Belief and its adherents.

This study will show that the purpose of the petition is to discredit the judgment against the Old Believers and prove the illegitimacy of the tsar; the petition represents Avvakum's enemies as the heretics and schismatics, and the Old Believers persecuted by them as the true inheritors of the Church and its ideals of justice. Ultimately, I believe, the petition claims that Avvakum is the rightful heir to the messianic function of the tsar and has taken his place as the dispenser of justice.

The petition evaluates both Avvakum's and the tsar's exercise of justice against the religious sanctions for judgment in the Russian Christian tradition. In its first part, Avvakum establishes the "mystical body of Christ" as the archetype for ideal justice and indicates how his and the tsar's actual relationship to the Church define their respective relationships to this "body." In the second part, he recounts three visions that reveal the state of his and the tsar's own bodies at the Second Coming, in order to verify the tsar's illegitimacy and his own messianic role.²

Avvakum's tradition lacked theological or philosophical treatises on justice. The criteria for justice were implicit in Christian myth. For example, in the metaphorical language of Revelation, Christ's creation of absolute community is synonymous with the exercise of absolute justice during his Second Coming in glory. The central metaphors for community in Revelation (e.g., 19:7–8, 21:1–2) are the Transfiguration of Being, the Sacred Marriage of the Lamb and his Bride, and the New Jerusalem. The establishment of this ideal

community depends on the exercise of just judgment as enacted, for example, in the Supper of the Great God and the final battle between good and evil at Armageddon (Rev. 16:16; 19:17–21).

Revelation further describes the penitential cleansing process through which man overcomes his egoism and contributes to community and justice. The blood of the Lamb symbolizes the expiatory sacrifice of Christ the Son (Rev. 12:10–11). Revelation presents this sacrifice as necessary to Christ's emergence as Pantocrator and Father whose exercise of justice serves not the self but the whole. In Revelation 17, His sacrifice overcomes the Harlot and the Beast who have polluted the imperial city of Babylon and who epitomize the egoism and lust that destroy community.

Finally, the imagery of Revelation and its interpretation by Saint Paul indicate that the Last Judgment involves moral accountability. It brings the person face to face with the actions he performed in his life, and makes him transparent to himself as well as to others. At the Second Coming, as Paul prophesied, God will lay bare the inner councils of the heart, and man will know even as he is known (I Cor. 13:12; cf. Rev. 21:21, 22, 22:4, 12).

Avvakum's visions, placing himself and the tsar in an eschatological dimension, support the prophecies that Avvakum makes in the first part of the petition. Avvakum opens the petition by reminding the tsar and his broader audience of the traditional sanctions for judgment. He provides the criterion in terms of which his visions will later judge Aleksei Mikhailovich.

Generally speaking, Russian tradition exercised a taboo against judgment.³ It assumed that only a saint could sufficiently approximate the ideal of Christ to be a just judge. In particular, it associated the prerogative of judgment with a certain kind of sainthood deriving from the radical imitation of Christ's humiliation and sacrifice (*kenosis*). This humiliation identifies the saint with the community and makes him a source of human brotherhood. His sacred status gives him the role of teacher and judge of local political authority and entitles him to speak the "truth" to the prince or the king. Through his advice, he assures that the ruler's power serves the community and is sanctioned by it.⁴

The holy fool expresses Christ's *kenosis* in a radical form; in him humility extends to self-humiliation, including the violation of religious taboos and self-pollution. As a reward for his expiatory identification with the outer extent of human sin, he embodies the outer limits of human community and is entitled to act as the king's conscience.⁵ Avvakum identifies himself with a similar kind of kenotic sainthood in the first part of his petition, thereby justifying his teachings to and judgment on Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich.

Russian tradition made another exception to the taboo against judgment specifically for the tsar. It sanctioned his exercise of both judgment and mercy in relation to his subjects by identifying him with the archetype of Christ. The tsar was expected to reenact through personal piety the sacrifice of Christ for mankind. He was to dedicate himself to penitential actions that would demonstrate his human brotherhood with his subjects and his fear of God. His piety legitimized his institutionally defined authority. His self-sacrifice guaranteed that his acts of judgment served the higher interests of the human community. Tradition interpreted the tsar's judgments as analogous to the judgment of Christ the Pantocrator, cleansing and renewing the world. The earthly power of a pious Russian tsar mirrored the heavenly king's power that would be fully revealed at time's end.⁶

Avvakum's petition demonstrates that he in his role as kenotic saint as self-appointed confessor to the tsar has taken the tsar's place as the mythic focus of community. Avvakum believed that the priesthood and especially the tsar's confessor were the guarantees of the tsar's mythic charisma. In his petition, he associates the tsar's loss of charisma and of the capacity to serve justice with his repudiation of his penitential relationship with Avvakum. For Avvakum, the break of their penitential tie testified to the tsar's repudiation of the religious ideal of community in Christ. Avvakum believed that the tsar's "worldly" attitudes deprived him of the power to create social integrity. Detaching his office and the state itself from rituals and symbols of human brotherhood, the tsar transformed institutional "structure" into something "external" to his people.

Avvakum, in his petition, looks to himself and his spiritual family to fill the vacuum created by the tsar's apostasy from the traditional ideal of community. He presents his spiritual family as the sacred alternative to a state that he believes has become profane and secular because it rejects the transcendent *communitas* values conveyed by Christian myth. He envisions his "family" as the inheritor of the traditional function of the Muscovite state to lead its people to millennial truth and justice on earth.⁷ United not by "external" political or social structures, but by the inner ties of penitential ritual, it came close to realizing in everyday life the ideals of Christian myth.

In the first part of the petition, Avvakum exposes the tsar for failing to live up to the likeness of Christ. He thus discredits Aleksei Mikhailovich's right to judge the Russian Church and its defenders. By portraying his own kenotic humiliation, however, he sanctions his right to judge the tsar.

Beginning with the opening lines, the petition addresses the tsar's relation to the community, which Avvakum sees as the historical expression of the

mystical body of Christ. Avvakum reminds the tsar of his spiritual links with the pre-Nikonian Church in which he himself was born, and with all those who, like himself, were baptized according to its sacraments. They include the tsar's forebears as well as the "true believers" he condemned as heretics at the Council of 1666–1667. By referring to the tsar's repudiation of the old ritual as a "separation from the body of the Church," Avvakum reminds the tsar that the pre-Nikonian Church embodies Christ's mystical body.

Мнагажды писахом тебе прежде и молихом тя, да примиришися богу и умилишися в разделении твоём от церковного тела . . . вниди паки в первое своё благочестие, в нём же ты порождён еси с прежде бывшими тебе благочестивыми цари, родители твоими и прародители; и с нами, богомольцы своими, во единой святой купели ты освящён еси . . .⁸

Avvakum's reference to the "body" and his insistence that the tsar "shares one baptismal font" with those he persecutes allude to Saint Paul's evocation of this mystical body (I Cor. 12:12–13):

Якоже бо тело едино есть и уды имать мнози, вси же уды единаго тела, мнози суще, едино суть тело тако и Христос. Ибо единым духом мы вси во едино тело крестихомся . . . и вси единым духом напоихомся . . .⁹

Although Avvakum does not directly refer to the greater context of this passage, it is nonetheless essential to his argument. Especially significant is Paul's idea that the seemingly lowliest and most unclean parts deserve the most honor and are most necessary to creating the body's wholeness: ". . . мнящиеся уды тела немощнейши быти, нужнейши суть, и ихже мним безчестнейших быти тела, сим честь множайшую прилагаем" (I Cor. 12:23–24). This subtext implies that when the tsar persecutes Avvakum and other true believers, treating them as lowly outcasts and outsiders, he is separating himself from those who have the most power to enhance the mystical body of Christ and create community. They, the most dishonored members of the body of the Church, should be his "intercessors," endowing his power with legitimacy.

Avvakum next confronts Aleksei Mikhailovich with his violation of the sanctions for judgment by appealing to the traditional doctrine of the tsar's dual nature.

Господин убо есть над всеми царь; раб же со всеми есть Божий. Тогда ж наипаче наречется господин, егда сам себе владеет и безместным страстем не работает, но споборника имея благочестива помысла,

непобедимаго самодержца бессловесных страстей, иже всех матеря похоти всеоружием целомудрия низлагает. Честь царева суд любить, по пророку.¹⁰

The tsar should act as both "master" and "slave" in order to imitate Christ, who, despite his divine mystical body that reigns over creation, took on a lowly human form so that mankind could fully commune with him: "... себе умалил, зрак раба приим, в подобии человечестем быв ... смирил себе ... до смерти ..." (Phil. 2:7). Avvakum stresses that the tsar's mastery over his own passions—his willingness to put away the needs arising from his private body for the sake of his subjects—entitles him to be "master" over his subjects. His self-mastery or "chastity" (целомудрие), marks him as a "slave" of God and alone identifies him with his people, entitling him to be a "master."

Avvakum concludes his traditional formulation of the criterion for the tsar's legitimacy with a phrase from Psalm 99:4, which emphasizes his concern with the tsar's exercise of judgment. The part of the passage he leaves out (shown in italics) is the key to his message: "И честь царева суд любить: ты уготовал еси правоты, *суд и правду бо якоже ты сотворил еси.*" [my italics, P.H.]

This admonition provides the tsar and Avvakum's larger audience with the reasons why Aleksei Mikhailovich has "separated" himself from the body of the Church (and, implicitly, of Christ). Avvakum suggests that the tsar's judgment against his forefathers' spiritual traditions and the present-day "true believers" serves his personal self-interest, rather than the well-being of his kingdom. With this, Avvakum indirectly accuses the tsar of moral "promiscuity" and calls into question the legitimacy of his judgment and even of his very reign.

Finally Avvakum urges the tsar to bear in mind that the Last Judgment and Second Coming represent the standard against which he should measure his own exercise of judgment. If the tsar does not strive to maximize ideal community in Christ now, he will inevitably face the consequences when the community he has violated triumphs at the end of time:

Ты, самодержче, суд подымеши о сих всех, иже таково дерзновение подавай на ны ... Вонми, государь, с коею правдою хочеши стати на страшном суде Христове пред тмы ангельскими и пред всеми племенны ...¹¹

Avvakum reproaches the tsar with his hardness of heart and his unwillingness to repent. He emphasizes that the tsar carried out his reform of the

Church to conform to Greek rite in the face of irrefutable evidence that the Russian rite is the only one that is consonant with orthodoxy: "Ведаешь ли, писано се во Истории о белом клубуце и, ведая, почто истинну в неправде содержиши?"¹² Thus the tsar's reforms are based on conscious falsehood and require him to act against his conscience.

Avvakum takes on the responsibility of confronting the tsar with the consequences of his falsehood, since the tsar himself has made a point of not doing so. The tsar's violation of the truth and lack of repentance, Avvakum suggests, mean that he will not participate in the resurrected body of Christ at the Last Judgment: "И ты не хвалися. Пал ся еси велико, а не востал искривлением Никона . . . а не исправлением . . . умер еси по души ево учением, а не воскрес . . ." The tsar and his followers, Avvakum insists, will be subject to the logic of apocalyptic justice revealed in Revelation. Christ in judgment will "double unto them double":

Там будет и тебе тошно, да тогда не пособишь себе ни мало . . . им же судом судиша нас, тако ж и сами от Христа и святых его осудятся, а в ню меру мериша нам, возмерится им от сына Божия . . .¹³

Thus, in the first part of the petition, Avvakum establishes the mystical body of Christ as the sacred criterion for the tsar's right both to represent and judge his community. He evaluates the sovereign against this criterion and finds him wanting. Avvakum then counterposes his critique of the tsar with an image of himself and his co-sufferers which fulfills to the maximum degree the sacred prerequisites for participation in Christ's mystical body. This image entitles them to judge the tsar in the name of the Church. Moreover, it depicts them as creators of community with power to define the subjective forces that heretofore had bound together the abstraction of the State.

Avvakum asserts that "justice" has nothing to do with "worldly" (self-interested) power, but can flourish only in the context of sacrifice. The proof of one's authority to judge the Church is one's willingness to suffer for its sake as Christ did:

Вся церковная права суть разумевающим истинну и здрава обретающим разум по Христе Иисусе, а не по стихиям сего мира, за ню же мы страждем и умираем и крови своя проливаем.¹⁴

Avvakum then demonstrates how he and his co-sufferers embody in extreme form what the tsar fails to embody at all, the attributes associated with Christ's *kenosis* or "slavery": an expiatory humility extending to humiliation. He presents himself and them as the weakest and most unclean parts of Christ's mystical body and therefore the most necessary.

Avvakum prophesies their ritual pollution after death, when their bodies, denied the rite of burial, will be desecrated by birds and beasts: "А по смерти нашей грешная телеса наша — добро так, царю, ты придумал со властями своими, что псом пометати или птицам на растерзание отдать."¹⁵ Avvakum gives a positive interpretation to this pollution when he suggests that it likens them to the early martyrs whose dead bodies were thrown into "dishonorable places," in "ditches" with "excrement." He emphasizes the expiatory nature of this humiliation, explaining that by refusing to allow their bodies to be buried in the earth, the early martyrs demonstrated their great "humility":

Вемы бо, да и ты слышишь по вся дни во церкви, яко святым мучеником ни единому честнаго погребения не бысть . . . но метаху их в бесчестныя места . . . Земли же есть и добровольне себе святнии отцы погребати себе не повелеша, великаго ради смирения . . .¹⁶

Avvakum also emphasizes his radical humility by underscoring his refusal to judge his oppressor as a man and his desire to turn the other cheek in order to save him. He indicates that the more the tsar afflicts him, the more he strives to win the tsar's repentance by suffering for his sake:

И елико ты нас оскорбляеши больши и мучишь и томишь, толико мы тебя любим, царя . . . Ну, государь, да хотя меня к собакам приказал выкинуть, да еще благословляю тя благословением последним, а потом прости, уж тово чаю только.¹⁷

His willingness to defer his own judgment to the Last Judgment of Christ again underscores his humility.

Avvakum's refusal to judge Aleksei Mikhailovich demonstrates that he has put aside anger and the desire for vengeance in the hope of eliciting the tsar's repentance. He thus establishes the moral conditions that allow him to portray himself as Aleksei Mikhailovich's just and disinterested judge when he has established that the tsar is beyond both repentance and deliverance from divine wrath.

According to Avvakum, his own and his comrades' expiatory suffering identifies them with the human Christ: "с ним бо стражем и умираем." The Church's official anathema on them, depriving them of the sacraments and casting them out, paradoxically enables them to experience Christ's *kenosis* and share in its power to create community:

А еже нас не велишь, умерших, у церкви погребати, и исповеди и святых тайн лишать в животе сущих еще коих, да Христос нас не лишит благодати своея: той есть присно с нами и будет . . . и никто ж . . . отлучити нас от него возможен.¹⁸

Avvakum sees the fate of the early martyrs as the key to his own. He, like them, will participate in the resurrection despite (indeed because of) their willingness to allow their bodies to be polluted:

... да Христос их нигде на забыл. Тако ж и нас негли не забудет надежда наша и купно с первыми соберет кости наша в последний день и оживотворит мертвенная тела наша духом святым.¹⁹

Avvakum asserts that the suffering that he and his brethren have endured has made them a source not only of community in Christ, but also of His Truth and Justice. Only by listening to them can the tsar fulfill his role as the vehicle of God's justice on earth. If he does not listen now, he will be forced to confront his own violation of justice at the Last Judgment:

Аще правдою спросиши, и мы скажем ти о том ясно с очей на очи и усты ко устом возвестим ти велегласно. Аще ли же ни, то пустим до Христова суда . . .²⁰

Avvakum makes it clear in the first part of his petition that he and his brethren embody what the tsar lacks and should therefore be his teachers. They are vehicles of the piety that the tsar has repudiated and that alone guarantees justice. The next step is to show that they have abrogated to themselves the tsar's authority to judge in the name of God and that of the community of the Church and the Russian people.

Avvakum prepares for this final step by presenting himself with his co-sufferers against the tsar as dangerously polarized opposites instead of brothers. Avvakum insists that even if the tsar denies his spiritual relationship with the Old Believers now, treats them as adversaries, and exiles them to the distant corners of his kingdom, their community with each other will be realized at the Last Judgment when they will stand together before God's truth: "Ты царствуй многа лета, а я мучуся многа лета, и пойдем вместе в дома своя вечныя, еда Бог изволит . . ."²¹ If the tsar refuses to repent now when Avvakum is reaching out to him in brotherly love, he will suffer the consequences for violating this love and their interrelationship later when Avvakum participates in divine judgment. Avvakum foresees himself and his fellow sufferers at the Last Judgment personally holding the tsar responsible for the latter's acts of false judgment against them: "Здесь ты нам праведнаго суда со отступниками не дал, и ты тамо отвецати будеши сам всем нам . . ."²²

Avvakum warns the tsar that this moment of final accounting is at hand after which it will be too late to repent. He alerts Aleksei Mikhailovich that according to Christ's prophesy in Matthew 24:3-7, the Second Coming will

be preceded by an intense crisis in community: its polarization into opposites that cease to communicate with one another, the majority of sinners against the righteous few.

Avvakum's words imply that the tsar's seduction of his people away from the true Church is bringing about this prophesied division. By polluting the only Christian kingdom that remains faithful to Orthodoxy, he deprives the whole Christian world of its last hope and gives it over to corruption. He thus is dividing the fallen Christian Church from the righteous remnant who dare to stand apart from it and alone bear responsibility for the world's redemption.

Avvakum now brings forth three visions that verify the eternal nature of the opposition between the tsar and himself, which he describes in the first part of the petition.²³ The first concerns the tsar. It reveals that the condition of the mystical body at the Last Judgment is an "answer" to his relationship to the Church and the Old Believers now. It indicates that the time in which the tsar could respond to the influence of his self-appointed father confessor, Avvakum, repent and change, has already passed. In the other two visions, Avvakum sees his own deified body. They verify his earlier prophecy that he will participate in the Last Judgment and especially the divine retribution against the tsar. Taken together, these visions measure the tsar and Avvakum in terms of each other, and realize the consequences of the tsar's violation of their relationship during historical time.

On the most obvious level of interpretation, Avvakum's vision of the tsar addresses the sovereign's relationship to the Church. The tsar's angelic body is corrupted because God has doubled unto him double for his corruption of the Church's mystical body:

... и видех тя пред собою или ангела твоего умиленна стояща ... И увидех на брюхе твоём язву зело велику, исполнена гноя многа, ... и начах язву на брюхе твоём, слезами моими покроя, руками сводити, и бысть брюхо твое цело и здраво ... И паки поворотих тя вверх спиною твою, видех спину твою сгнившу паче брюха, и язва больша первая явихся. Мне ж так же плакавшуся, руками сводящу язву твою спинную, и мало мало пососхлася и не вся исцеле.²⁴

The concrete symbolism and logic of this vision derive from Revelation's metaphors for the Last Judgment. The sores on his stomach and back are signs of God's wrath. "... И иде первый ангел и излия фиал свой [яро-сти Божия] ... и бысть гной зол и лют на человецех имущих начертание зверино ..." (Rev. 16:1-2).

The fact that the tsar bears the mark of the Beast has broad implications.

In Revelation, the Beast and his symbolic wife, the Harlot, are responsible for the corruption of the universal empire and its transformation into the moral equivalent of Babylon. The Beast is the incarnation of the appetites, gluttony, and aggression, whereas the Harlot embodies promiscuous sexuality. They are symbols for the "passions," "lusts," and pride of self-aggrandizement that destroy community.

The sores also symbolize punishment for altering the revealed Word: "Совидетелствую бо всякому слушающему словеса пророчества книги сея: аще кто приложит к сим, наложит Бог на него язв написанных в книзе сей . . ." (Rev. 22:18–19). The tsar's sores signify that his likeness to the Beast is what caused him to allow the Nikonians to add "from themselves" to the Church books, corrupt the truth, and bring judgment on himself. The symbolism of the sores also concerns the tsar's relationship to his people. They are on his stomach because they are "doubling unto him double" for his appetites and passions: he "worships his belly"; he "drinks the blood" of his people and judges them falsely in order to consume them and aggrandize himself.²⁵ The sores testify to the tsar's lack of chastity, or his moral promiscuity.

The sores that Avvakum sees on the tsar's back double unto Aleksei Mikhailovich double for his actions against Avvakum. In his First Petition to the tsar (1664), Avvakum refers to the "sores of injustice" inflicted on his back by the tsar's representative in Dahuria, Afanasii Pashkov.²⁶ The sores that the tsar bears are divine justice for the afflictions he directly and indirectly visited on Avvakum in retaliation for the latter's defense of "justice" against corrupt authority.

The conclusion Avvakum draws from his vision of the tsar is that this sovereign and his kingdom are beyond healing; no matter what the extent of his suffering and tears for the tsar's sake, they will be of no avail. The tsar will not renew himself by identifying with his community and his self-assumed spiritual father, Avvakum:

И очютихся от видения того, не исцелих тя всего здрава до конца.
Нет, государь, большо покинуть мне плакать о тебе, вижу, не исцелеть. Ну, прости ж, Господа ради, дондеж увидимся с тобою.²⁷

The irredeemable nature of the tsar's corruption has cosmic implications. His final pollution of the only Christian kingdom fulfills the scriptural prophecy about the polarization of the world at the onset of the end of time. It makes imminent the ultimate battle between the Antichrist (the Harlot and the Beast) and Christ and the saints. Avvakum's vision of the tsar, associat-

ing Aleksei Mikhailovich with the Beast, implies the latter's fate during this ultimate battle on Judgment Day. The next two visions that Avvakum reports reveal his own participation in the winning side of the cosmic conflict when justice will prevail.

Avvakum first recounts an ecstatic experience of his mystical body during the Lenten fast of 1669 when he was incarcerated at Pustozersk. He then describes a second experience of bodily ecstasy that occurred earlier, in 1666, when he was in prison at the Nikolo-Ugreshkii monastery after he had been subjected to anathema. The vision of 1669 delivers the main force of his message:

Нынешня 177 году, в великий пост на первой неделе по обычаю моему хлеба не ядох . . . прииде на мя озноба зело люта, и на печи зубы мои розбило с дрожи . . . и толико изнемог, яко отчаявшу ми ся и жизни сея, уже всех дней не ядшу ми дней с десять и больши. И лежашу ми на одре моем и зазирающу себе, яко в таковыя великия дни правила не имею . . . Божиим благоволением в нощи вторыя недели, против пятка, распространился язык мой и бысть велик зело, потом и зубы быша велики, а се и руки быша и ноги велики, потом и весь широк и пространен под небесем по всей земли распространился, а потом Бог вмести в меня небо, и землю, и всю тварь.

Avvakum interprets this vision for the tsar immediately afterwards in a series of statements that place the two men in opposition to one another:

Видишь ли, самодержавне? Ты владеешь на свободе одною русскою землею, а мне сын Божий покорил за темничное сидение и небо и землю; ты, от здешняго своего царства в вечный свой дом пошедше, только возьмешь гроб и саван, аз же, присуждением вашим, не сподоблюся савана и гроба, но наги кости мои псами и птицами небесными растерзаны будут и по земле влачimy так добро и любезно мне на земле лежати и светом одеяну и небом прикрыту быти; небо мое, земля моя, свет мой и вся тварь—Бог мне дал, якоже выше того рекох.²⁸

Avvakum presents this vision as evidence that he has taken the tsar's place and is an inversion of Aleksei Mikhailovich. It verifies that the tsar represents a profane and false king, whereas Avvakum is a true and sacred one. Avvakum argues that his vision shows that he rules both heaven and earth, whereas the tsar merely rules the Russian land. Avvakum controls the greater community of life, of which the tsar's kingdom is a mere particle. Although the tsar is free to persecute him and rule by force, Avvakum in chains has a much greater authority that does not rely on external means, but is derived from his inner identification, through suffering, with the Russian land.

Like his vision of the tsar, Avvakum's vision of himself expresses the logic of divine judgment. Avvakum, however, is subject not to the logic of doubling associated with punishment, but to the logic of reversal and inversion, which is associated with the justice of reward. In order to understand the symbolic language of this vision, it is useful to examine briefly the archetypal expression of this logic in the metaphors of Revelation.²⁹

Revelation models a process of transformation associated with expiation and the cleansing of sin and with marriage of the self to the community. It metaphorically traces the path from Adam to the glorified Christ and lays bare the underlying dynamism of sacred history.³⁰ It presents expiatory suffering as the key to this transformational process and understands it as the median stage in a dialectic of moral opposites leading to their inversion.

Revelation embodies the initial stage of sinfulness in the images of the Beast and the Harlot. They symbolize unrestrained appetite, both sexual and aggressive. The process of transforming their drives to serve the community gives rise to a median stage associated with expiation. A reversal of the initial stage, it is embodied in the images of the sacrificial Lamb, the Brethren, and the Mother of the Manchild (Rev. 12:10-11), which symbolize that the instinctual drives are sacrificed for the community: concretely, this sacrifice includes sexual abstinence and fasting, as well as allowing oneself to be eaten (Rev. 17:6). The end of this process and the reward for penitential suffering is the transformation of the instincts into spiritual force. This occurs through a reversal of the median stage of self-mortification, which is also an inversion of the initial state of destructive egoism. Revelation manifests this stage in images of resurrection, transfiguration, and justice.

The archetypal Supper of the Great God represents a reversal of the Fast-ing of the Brethren and an inversion of the rapacity of the Beast, for in it the angel with the sword proceeding out of his mouth and the fowl of the air devour the kings and captains and mighty men of Babylon. Their "devouring," however, is cleansed or spiritualized; it creates rather than destroys community. It is associated in Revelation with the divine act of judgment that doubles unto the sinner double and devours the devourers (Rev. 19:17-21).

The archetypal Marriage of the Lamb and his Bride and the pregnancy of the Mother of the Manchild represent a reversal of the abstinence of the Mother of the Manchild and an inversion of the destructive sexual lust of the Harlot. They symbolize sexuality transfigured and dedicated to community. Revelation associates Sacred Marriage with the unity of heaven and earth and the coming of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 12:1-2; 19:7-8; 21:1-2).

Avvakum's visions of 1669 and 1666 embody the dynamism of the apoca-

lyptic transformational process. They testify that he has inverted the initial state of man, overcome his nature in Adam, and communed with the transfigured Christ.³¹ In relation to the rest of the petition, his visions also represent him as an inversion of the unrepentant tsar who bears the marks of the apocalyptic Beast. Their metaphorical language reveals his participation in the Sacred Feast and Sacred Marriage, thereby suggesting that because of his personal piety, he, not the tsar, embodies the community and is the source of justice.

When Avvakum interprets his visions to the tsar in the petition, he demonstrates that they are the reward for his expiatory suffering, according to the apocalyptic logic of justice. Referring to his vision of 1669, he stresses the process of reversal that has taken place, characteristic of the final stage of the penitential process: his being cast out of the official Church leads to the merging of the self with the community; and his being deprived of official status and authority leads to his empowerment. He alludes to the humiliation of his body as described earlier in the petition, in order to suggest that it is a prerequisite for the reconstitution of his mystical body and its merging with the cosmos revealed in the vision. When Avvakum insists that "God gave" him heaven and earth, he is referring to the fact that his own communion with the Lamb of God has identified him with the cosmos.

Avvakum notes that this vision occurred during his severe penitential exercises during the second week of Lent. At this time the Christian dedicated himself to overcoming his sin in Adam by communing with the suffering human Christ. The vision signifies his arrival at the end of this process. The image of his body exploding with life incarnates the dynamism that liturgical texts associate with Easter Day, the Resurrection of Christ, and the world's ultimate resurrection.

Avvakum's second vision confirms his participation in the resurrected Christ. The sacred time in which this vision occurred, the day of the Lord's Ascension, is crucial to its meaning; in it Christ repeats his words to the apostles immediately after his resurrection from the grave: "Не бойся, аз есмь с тобою." The words of the scriptural subtext which Avvakum fails to report, as is usual with him, contain the crux of his message. In Matthew's account (28:20) Christ asserts: "и се аз с вами есмь бо вся дни до скончания века" (my italics). Christ's unspoken words to Avvakum are the promise that Avvakum will be present with Him at His Second Coming.

When interpreting his vision of 1669, Avvakum suggests that it reveals the power of sacrifice by alluding to scripture. His explanation that the expansion of his cosmic body means that the "son of God subjugated" (no-

корил), heaven and earth to him recalls Saint Paul's epistle to the Philippians in which Paul describes Christ's power to deify the body of man and reward him for accepting the way of the cross: "по действию еже возмощати ему и покорити себе всяческая" (3:21). Avvakum's vision of his own body "subjugating" heaven and earth affirms that he has perfected this way of the cross and has achieved "разум по Христе Исусе."

Avvakum's expiatory suffering distinguishes him from the false Christian who, as Paul writes, is an enemy of his cross, fails to expiate his sin, and is therefore doomed: "имже Бог чрево, и слава в студе их иже земная мудрствуют" (Phil. 3:19). Avvakum's allusion to Philippians 3:21 in the context of setting up a series of contrasts between the tsar and himself suggests that the tsar himself is the sort of false Christian that Paul had in mind. Avvakum's earlier vision of Aleksei Mikhailovich's corrupted body confirms this suggestion. Avvakum thus emphasizes that his vision of himself results from the process of expiation that sets him apart from the tsar.

Avvakum's vision of 1669 not only manifests his movement from the median to the final stage of the transformational process symbolized by Revelation, but also signifies his inverted relation to the tsar who remains untransformed in the initial stage of this process. Avvakum's first vision symbolizes the consequences of the tsar's refusal to expiate his sin: his embodiment of the absolute, polarized evil manifested by the Beast's (and implicitly the Harlot's) lustful, devouring nature. Avvakum's vision of his cosmic body contains the message that his nature is polarized at the other end of the dialectic of transformations: his sexual lust and aggressive drive have been transfigured into spiritual force.

In an epistle to his spiritual children, Avvakum interprets his vision of 1669 as proof of his cleansed sexuality or spiritual "pregnancy."³² He stresses that the image of his body's union with heaven and earth symbolizes his power to create a spiritual community that overcomes the vast physical separation between himself and them. He imagines himself with a mystical womb that contains this community, and he suggests that this womb is implicit in his vision of his mystical body which he reports to the tsar.

Да хоть мы в дальнем разстоянии, да слово Божие живо и действенно, проходит до членов же и мозгов и до самых души . . . кровию своею помазую душа ваша и слезами помываю. Никто же от еретик восхитит вас . . . от руки моея . . . хошу неповинных представить вас в день просвещенный праведному Судии. Да и бывало таково время: Христос, бдящу ми, и вселел вас всех во утробу мою. И царю Алексею говорено о том.³³

Avvakum derives his notion of his mystical "womb" from the Pseudo-Chrysostom, who describes the contents of the confessor's "heart":

... аще бо бы лзе срдце раздравше, ти покаяния показати вам, то видели ся бысте все вънутрь седяше в мене и с женами и с детьми, тако бо сила есть любовная нбсь ширию творить. Душу и утробу вместитеся в ны, рече апостол . . . не стужити си в нас бо весь град коринфскыи имяше в срдци своем, ти рече че стужите си, раширитесь и вы но азъ того не могу реши.³⁴

Avvakum's description of his mystical body in the vision of the Fifth Petition echoes the Pseudo-Chrysostom's words. The evocation of his own "broadness" (when he describes himself as *широк* and *пространен*) and of God "placing" in him heaven and earth (*вместил в меня*) recall the Pseudo-Chrysostom's description of love's power to create a "broadness" (*ширию*) and "place" (*вместитесь*) in man's soul and mystical womb.

The actual vision alludes directly to the source that inspired the Pseudo-Chrysostom's words, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (6:11-13). Avvakum's expanding mouth mirrors Paul's "open lips" and fulfills Paul's promise to his addressees that they will "broaden" like himself: "Уста наша утверзошася к вам, коринфиане, сердце наше распространися . . . Тоже же возмездие, якоже чадом глаголю, распространитися и вы." Moreover, implicit in the image of Avvakum's expanding mouth is his "enlarged heart," which he, in the spirit of the Pseudo-Chrysostom, envisions as a mystical "womb" pregnant with his spiritual children.

Avvakum's vision of 1666 complements the later vision's allusion to his mystical pregnancy. In it, the resurrected Christ is accompanied by the Queen Mother of God and the heavenly powers. This collective image of Christ's power is related to the apocalyptic archetype of the Marriage of the Lamb and his Bride, which symbolizes the resurrection and the coming together of heaven and earth in the New Jerusalem. Their presence fulfills the implications of Avvakum's own mystical resurrection.

Avvakum does not include these archetypes in the original version of this vision contained in a 1666 letter to his family.³⁵ By adding them to the later version of 1669, Avvakum deepens its apocalyptic significance and places it on a level with his other visions in the petition. The presence of these archetypes also provides a concrete measure of his differences from the tsar.

The Queen Mother of God and the heavenly powers commune with him in his vision because he has purified his sexuality and transformed it into spiritual power. Their presence underscores the success of his expiatory suffering, the redemptive force of his piety. The archetypes of this vision

indicate his successful "inversion" of his primal nature in Adam. They mark his opposition to the tsar who, because of his destructive aggression and lust, bears the marks of the Beast in Avvakum's first vision.³⁶ Avvakum means this portrayal of himself and the tsar as inverted versions of each other to justify his claim to Aleksei Mikhailovich's traditional role as the charismatic focus of the Russian people.

Avvakum's vision of 1669 also serves to justify his notion that he, rather than the tsar, is the earthly vehicle of divine justice, entitled to judge the tsar himself. The image of Avvakum's expanding tongue and teeth symbolizes the act of just judgment as it is archetypically expressed in Revelation by the image of the sacred Feast, the Supper of the Great God.

The fact that this image stands for cosmic eating or devouring can be inferred from the logic of Avvakum's self-presentation. He describes how, immediately before he has the vision, he shakes so violently from the stress and hunger brought on by his Lenten Fast that his teeth shatter against the stove. His mystical vision reverses this situation: his teeth are made whole and, implicitly, instead of refraining from eating, he mystically devours the world.

Whom Avvakum mystically devours can also be inferred from the logic of reversal. This vision of his resurrected body after death represents a reversal of the state of his body in death. Avvakum imagines that it will be desecrated by birds and beasts according to the will of the tsar: "аз же присуждением вашим, не сподоблюся савана и гроба, но наги кости мои псами и птицами небесными растерзаны будут . . ." ³⁷ Implicitly, Avvakum's mystically reconstituted body in its turn desecrates the tsar through Avvakum's own act of judgment. His mystical mouth, along with the birds and beasts of heaven, devours the tsar's dead body.

The implicit association of the image of his cosmic tongue and teeth with birds and beasts feasting on carrion, as well as with judgment, links it archetypally to the apocalyptic Supper of the Great God. In another writing, when Avvakum imagines his own role in this great Feast of vengeance upon his enemies, he brings to the surface the image implicit in his vision: "телеса их птицы небесныя и звери земныя есть станут . . . потерпим, братия, не поскучим, господа ради." ³⁸ Avvakum's implicit participation in spiritual "devouring" again reveals him to be an inversion of the tsar, whom Avvakum exposes in his first vision as a devourer in a carnal sense.

As an inverted version of the profane tsar, Avvakum represents himself as a sacred king in Christ.³⁹ His revelations of his own spiritualized body indicate that he and his followers have assimilated to themselves the tsar's

traditional charisma and his mythical association with Christ in Judgment. They give him the right to repudiate the reigning tsar. Although his visions symbolize apocalyptic reality, Avvakum believes that they reveal eternal truth, and therefore condone his present relation to the tsar and his followers (the addressees of his petition).⁴⁰ The image of his cosmic tongue and teeth, on the one hand, symbolizes his "open mouth" and reciprocity with his disciples, and thus justifies Avvakum's teaching to his spiritual children. On the other, it symbolizes judgment on the tsar at the Supper of the Great God and condones Avvakum's verbal acts of judgment against the tsar and the Nikonians, beginning with the petition itself.

In this petition, Avvakum emerges as a kind of "pretender" to sacred kingship, taking over the mythic potential of Aleksei Mikhailovich to renew his people and define their social and political space as a "community" through the exercise of justice.⁴¹ His visions implicitly make the claim that his own penitential community has taken over the eschatological sanction of the official Muscovite state and is the only vehicle of the truth and justice that will reign at the end of time.⁴²

Avvakum's Fifth Petition presents his solution to the breakdown of the theocratic State.⁴³ It expresses Avvakum's perception that the tsar has refused to let his spiritual life be guided by his confessor and his conscience by the ideal of the Last Judgment. The Fifth Petition reveals that the Nikonian reforms are symptomatic of a deeper crisis in the relationship of the tsar to his people, their traditions, and their Christian symbols of community. It offers Avvakum and his penitential family as the solution to this crisis and thus plays a central role in Avvakum's polemic with the Nikonian state.

Notes

1. For Avvakum's Fifth Petition to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, see *ZhPA*, pp. 195–202. The original text which Avvakum sent to the tsar has been found. Avvakum included the Fifth Petition in the Druzhinin *Pustozerskii sbornik*, and also in the Prianishnikov *sbornik*. Avvakum's followers also appreciated the importance of the Fifth Petition and its relation to Avvakum's *Life*. This is evident from a special manuscript cycle including both texts that Demkova believes originated in the Old Believer center in Mezen during Avvakum's lifetime. See N. S. Demkova, *Zhitie Protopopa Avvakuma (tvorcheskaiia istoriia proizvedeniia)* (Leningrad, 1974), especially pp. 22–24, 107. My article, "The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum and the Kenotic Tradition" [*Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 25, nos. 1–4 (1991): 205–229], addresses the interrelationship of the *Life* and Avvakum's Fifth Petition.

2. This study does not accept Ponyrko's thesis in "D'iakon Fedor—so-avtor Protopopa Avvakuma," *TODRL* 31 (1976): 362–365 that Avvakum's co-exile at

Pustozersk, Fedor, wrote the first half of the Fifth Petition. I hope to demonstrate that the two parts are organically connected.

3. "The evangelical precept of non-judging, through all the age of Russian Christianity, remained, if not the prevalent, the most characteristic feature of the national mind." G. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (Belmont, Mass., 1975), 2:59; cf. 2:58, 84.

4. Fedotov, 2: 59 notes the tension in Russian tradition between the taboo against judgment and the obligation to teach. An example of a teacher and judge of secular power is the kenotic saint Theodosius of the Caves Monastery whose humility invested him with the authority to intercede for those being wronged by the courts and to accuse the local prince of murder in the name of God's justice. See Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, 1:94-132, especially 124-126.

5. See Fedotov, 2:316-344.

6. See M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People* (New Haven, 1961); I. Ševčenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology," in *The Structure of Russian History*, ed. M. Cherniavsky (New York, 1970), pp. 80-108. See also A. M. Panchenko and B. A. Uspenskii, "Ivan Groznyi i Petr Velikii: kontseptsii pervogo monarkha," *TODRL* 37 (1983): 54-78, where the authors discuss the ideology of the tsar's "justice" during the reign of Ivan IV and point out Ivan's association with apocalyptic archetypes such as the Archangel Michael and the Pantocrator.

7. I am indebted to Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago, 1969) for my understanding of Avvakum's response to the secularization of the ideology of the state and king. My terms "structure" and *communitas* refer to Turner's definition of the dialectically interacting elements that create social and political cohesion.

8. *ZhPA*, p. 195.

9. All biblical citations are from *Biblia sirech Knigi sviashchennago pisaniia vikhago i novago zavieti* (St. Petersburg, 1891).

10. Avvakum's formulation echoes closely that of the sixteenth-century eulogy to Ivan III on the occasion of the birth of Ivan IV: "Such must be moreover the soul of the tsar which has so many cares which, like a mirror, is ever cleansed and continually shines with divine rays so that it learns the judgment of things . . . Verily are you called a tsar for you reign over the passions . . . you are crowned with the diadem of chastity and arrayed in the purple robe of justice." Cited in M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, p. 46.

11. *ZhPA*, p. 196.

12. See S. A. Zen'kovskii, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo* (Munich, 1970), pp. 25-40, for a discussion of the Tale of the White Cowl and its ideological importance for the Zealots of Piety and the Old Believers.

13. *ZhPA*, p. 196.

14. See Rev. 18:6 where John describes the retribution against the Harlot: "i usugubite ei sugubo po delom eia: chashei, eiuzhe cherpa (vam) cherplite ei sugubo."

15. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 197.

21. Ibid., p. 199.

22. Ibid., p. 197.

23. Avvakum believes that these visions are from God rather than himself. He prefaces his vision of the tsar and then again his two visions of himself by attestations that he was already "dead" to the world and the self when he received them: "Prosti, Mikhailovich-svet, libo potom umru, da zhe by tebe vedomo bylo, da nikak ne lgu, nizh pritvoriasia govoriu: v temnitse mne, iako v grobu, sidiashchu, chto nadobna? Razve smert' Ei, tako." (*ZhPA*, p. 198).

24. *ZhPA*, p. 199.

25. See A. N. Robinson, *Bor'ba idei v russkoi literature XVII veka* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 279–287 (Ch. 5, "Literaturnaia polemika ob ideal'nom 'obrazе' cheloveka i izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo") and A. S. Eleonskaia, *Russkaia publiistsika vtoroi poloviny XVII veka* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 90–96 for discussions of Avvakum's and the Old Believers' characterizations of the tsar and Nikonians in metaphorical terms focusing on their appetites and especially their "stomachs." For Avvakum's relation to the tsar, see also A. N. Robinson, *Zhizneopisanii Avvakuma i Epifanii* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 27–38; and, *Bor'ba idei*, pp. 246–278 where Robinson shows that Avvakum's interpretation of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man has direct implications for the tsar.

26. *ZhPA*, p. 187.

27. Ibid., p. 199.

28. Ibid., p. 200.

29. The length of this study does not allow me to elucidate this logic at great length. My interpretation of it derives from an examination of the way the metaphorical language of Revelation expresses the universal language of myth and the sacred. I understand the metaphors of this Book to be "ritual symbols" in the sense defined by V. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 52: "Such symbols then unite the organic with the socio-moral order, proclaiming their ultimate religious unity over and above conflicts between and within these orders . . . powerful drives and emotions associated . . . especially with the physiology of reproduction . . . are divested in the ritual process of their antisocial quality . . ." This occurs through a dialectical process. On the dialectic of opposites which leads to inversion, see E. and P. Maranda, *Structural Models in Folklore and Transformational Essays* (The Hague, 1971).

30. See A. M. Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images* (Middlesex, 1949) for an analysis of the way the metaphors of Revelation recapitulate those of Genesis and the Prophets.

31. Avvakum's image of Adam and of basic human nature is functionally equivalent to the archetypes of the Beast and the Harlot in Revelation, which are subject to transformation through the dialectic described above. In his exegesis of Genesis, Avvakum explains that Adam fell because of his "lack of restraint" over his appetites. Avvakum portrays Adam as a "drunkard," covered with his own diarrhea and vomit after "overeating" the forbidden fruit. See *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, vol. 39 (Leningrad, 1927), col. 667 (hereafter referred to as *RIB*). In an exegesis of Psalm 113, Avvakum characterizes himself and all mankind as sons of Adam and all-

devourers: "... ne khoshchem bo obshche stiazhaniia imet', no vsia khoshchu mne sobrat', iako nesytyi vseiadets. Ashche by mi vozmozhno, vsia by veshchi morskii i zemskii vo utrobu svoiu vmestil." See "Poslanie Simeonu, Ksenii Ivanovne i Aleksandre Grigor'evne," in *ZhPA*, p. 273. Avvakum's interpretation of the cause of the fall and Adam's resulting indigestion draws on an apocryphal account of the fall, "O ispovedanii Evghine i o v'spros vnuchat eia, i o bolezni Adama" in N. Tikhonravov, *Pamiatniki otrechennoi russkoi literatury* (Moscow, 1863), vol. 1, reprinted in *Slavistic Printings and Reprintings* (The Hague, 1970), pp. 298-304.

32. Besides the interpretation of his vision which Avvakum gives to his spiritual children, he informs the addressees of the Fifth Petition that his miraculous bodily "all-encompassingness" has a precedent in the apocryphal "otkrovenie Avraama" found in the Palei, when "the angel Altez . . . lifted Abraham up" and "showed him all of creation since the beginning of time." See *ZhPA*, p. 201. Avvakum's evocation of his similarity to Abraham is meant to suggest that his mystical charisma is a sign that he is finishing God's work of redemption, just as Abraham's vision was a sign that he was beginning the same. This is discussed in my unpublished paper "The Ideology in Avvakum's Life."

33. See N. Subbotin, *Materialy dlia istorii raskola za pervoe vremia ego sushchestvovaniia* (Moscow, 1874-1890), vol. 8, p. 97. Avvakum's characterization of himself as a confessor is traditional. S. Smirnov in his study, *Drevne-russkii dukhovnik* (Moscow, 1914; rpt. 1970), notes that the father confessor takes his spiritual children's sins on his neck (like a sacrificial lamb) in order to expiate them before the Last Judgment: "... na moei vyi sogresheniia tvoia, chado, i da ne istiazhet tebe o sich Khristos Bog, egda priidet vo slave svoei na sud strashnii" (p. 42). The confessor was expected to direct his spiritual child to the Jerusalem on high: "... sluzhit' vozhdem ei [sem'e] v vyshnii Ierusalim', otkryt' Bozhie tsarstvo, privesti ee k prestolu Bozhiiu i skazat': se az i deti, iazhe mi esi dal" (p. 42). Smirnov discusses the mystical notion of the father confessor and Avvakum's appeal to it (p. 49).

34. See S. Smirnov, pp. 202-205. Avvakum's apocryphal source is "Slovo Ioana Zlatoustia. Pouchenie ko vsem krestianom" in a fourteenth-century redaction of *Zlatoustia Tsep'*. I have modernized the script.

35. See *ZhPA*, p. 218.

36. The Beast's sexual lust is implicit in his association with the Harlot who "rides" him. See Rev. 17:7.

37. *ZhPA*, p. 200.

38. See *RIB*, pp. 783-784. In another writing, Avvakum alludes to his personal participation in the judgment against the tsar and the Nikonians. This passage expresses his idea that he personally will exact judgment on the tsar even more concretely than his remarks in the first part of his Fifth Petition: "Daite tolko srok, sobaki, ne uidete u menia: nadeiusia na Khrista, iako budete u menia v rukakh! vydavliu ia iz vas sok-ot!?" (*RIB*, pp. 488-489).

39. On the sacredness of the king (tsar) in Russian culture, see M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, pp. 44-71; and V. M. Zhivov, B. A. Uspenskii, "Tsar' i Bog: Semioticheskie aspekty sakralizatsii monarkha v Rossii," in *Iazyki kul'tury i problemy perevodimosti* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 47-149. See also J. Hubbs, *Mother Russia* (Bloomington, 1988).

40. In another writing Avvakum indicates that he considers his future moral reality applicable to the present as well. He speaks of his and his followers' "resurrection" as an eternal fact which has already taken place: "... v nashemu polku i mertvykh net. Voskresokhom be so Khristom, k tomu uzhe ne umrem" See N. S. Demkova, "Neizvestnye i neizdannye teksty iz sochinenii protopopa Avvakuma," *TODRL* 21 (1965): 238.

41. See B. Uspenskii, "Tsar' i samozvanets: samozvanchestvo v Rossii kak kul'turno-istoricheskii fenomen," in *Khudozhestvennyi iazyk srednevekov'ia* (Moscow, 1982), pp. 201-235; and A. M. Panchenko, "Buntashnyi vek," in *Russkaia kul'tura v kanun Petrovskikh reform* (Leningrad, 1984), pp. 3-36. For a discussion of the phenomenon of the pretender in Western tradition see Norman Cohen, *Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1957).

42. M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, p. 71 speaks of the eschatological *raison d'être* of the Muscovite state.

43. S. Zenkovsky, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo* (Munich, 1970) describes the Old Believers' "theocratic, utopian hopes in Russia's messianic mission."