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A PENITENTIAL JOURNEY: THE LIFE OF THE ARCHPRIEST AVVAKUM AND THE KENOTIC TRADITION

The fervent, righteous and rebellious Archpriest Avvakum would seem the last person to call a kenotic saint. Yet, he consciously embodied kenotic spirituality in his autobiographical Life. This article will examine his seemingly paradoxical appeal to the ideals of obedience, faith, humility and redemptive suffering in the context of his "militant" confrontation with his ideological enemies.

Kenoticism has been described by G. Fedotov in *The Russian Religious Mind*.[1] Fedotov views it as a uniquely Russian type of spirituality, centered on the humanity of Christ, which contributed strongly to the Christian national identity of newly converted Rus.' It is exemplified in the eleventh-century narratives about the first three Russian national saints, the martyred princes and passion-sufferers Boris and Gleb, and Theodosius, Abbot of the Caves Monastery. Avvakum called on this deeply national tradition to articulate his own role as the defender and voice of the national identity at the end of Old Russian culture. Responding to the westernizing elite's adoption of a new secularizing religious ideology, he created a sacred narrative in which he personally embodied the by now traditional, popular kenotic ideal. He found in kenoticism a language to justify his opposition to the elite and symbolize his identification with the people.

Avvakum made use of the same scriptural themes which articulated the kenotic spirituality of the first three national saints. Fedotov notes the direct "shock of the gospel" and especially of the life of Christ on newly converted Russian culture. The earliest hagiographical depiction of Boris and Gleb centered on their imitation of Christ's agony on the cross as portrayed in the Gospels.[2]

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1. G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* 1 (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1975), 94-134.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-102.

St. Theodosius, as described by Nestor and speaking for himself in his own homilies, revealed the strong influence of the writings of St. Paul on his "imitation" of Christ. The Pauline tradition was also central to Avvakum's.[3]

St. Theodosius appealed to Paul's understanding of Christ's kenosis in one of his sermons:

> . . . Being in the form of God . . . [Christ] made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men . . . humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. (Philippians 2: 6-8)[4]

This passage from St. Paul clarifies how the ideal of Christ's kenosis could serve to articulate a notion of identity. Paul presents Christ's taking on the human condition in the language of status categories pertaining to the "world." Christ's kenosis, his making himself "of no reputation" and taking on the form of a "servant," represented a deliberate debasement or loss of status, challenging the worldly notion of hierarchy. It made Christ present in what was excluded from this hierarchy, in what was base, poor, outcast, degraded, i.e., what epitomized the vulnerability of the human condition without the protection of culture or artifice.

The kenotic Christ ultimately embodied the human community beyond the differences created by rank and status. In this way, his kenosis manifested the transcendent unity of God the Father, which encompassed both high and low, and overcame their opposition. Russian tradition used this ideal of mutual identification conveyed by Christ's kenosis to articulate a collec-

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3. On Avvakum's "imitation of Christ," see P. Khant [Hunt], "Samooprayvdanie protopopa Avvakuma," *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 32 (1977): 70-84; P. Hunt, "The Autobiography of the Archpriest Avvakum: Structure and Function," *Ricerche Slavistiche* 27-28 (1975-6): 155-76; and J. Børtnes, "Dissimilar Similarities: The Imitation of Christ in the Life of the Archpriest Avvakum," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 13 (1979): 224-29. After submitting the present article, I received an article of M. B. Pliukhanova, "Traditsionnost' i unikal'nost' sochinenii Protopopa Avvakuma v svete traditsii Tret'ego Rima," forthcoming in B. Gasparov and R. Hughes, eds., "Christianity and its Role in the Culture of the Eastern Slavs," *California Slavic Studies* (Berkeley). It further documents Avvakum's immediate identification with St. Paul in a discussion of his *Book of Commentaries*.

4. Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind*, 1, 127. For a discussion of Nestor's use of scriptural tradition to elucidate Theodosius' imitation of Christ, and validate Rus' spiritual mission as the fulfillment of prophecy, see G. Kossova, "Per una lettura analitica del Zhitie Prepodobnago Feodosiia Pecherskago di Nestore," *Ricerche Slavistiche* 27-28 (1980-81): 65-99.

tive identity and sanction social and political institutions as ve hicles of community.

Boris and Gleb sacrificed their lives for "brother love" ir hopes that it could be present in the political organization o Kievan Rus'. St. Theodosius confronted violent princes and un just judges in order that they would exhibit this same brotherly love in their status as "public officials."[5] In the seventeenth century, Avvakum wrote his Life to self-consciously associate this ideal of human community with himself and the "believing Russian people" and expose the official political and religious hierarchy for betraying it.

St. Paul revealed Christ's kenosis to be a way of speaking to and changing the "world." This is clearest in his notion of foolishness in Christ:

> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of . . man's judgment; yea I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will *make manifest the councils of the hearts* . . . that no one of you be puffed up one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from one another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? . . . *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us . . . We are fools for Christ's sake,* but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised . . . being reviled we bless; being persecuted we suffer it. . . . We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day . . . *as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ; yet have ye not many fathers: for in*

5. N. Ingham in "The Martyred Prince and the Question of Slavic Cultural Continuity in the Early Middle Ages," in H. Birnbaum and M. Flier, eds., *Medieval Russian Culture* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), pp. 47-48, and "Genre Characteristics of the Kievan Lives of Princes in Slavic and East European Perspective," in P. Debreczeny, ed., *American Contributions to the Ninth International Congress of Slavists (Kiev, September, 1983)* 2 (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1983): 41-50 notes the centrality of the ideal of "brotherlove" in the depictions of Boris and Gleb and the uniqueness to Russian tradition of this kenotic understanding of their martyrdom. He also notes that Boris and Gleb's sainthood serves a national goal, marking the "Christian rebirth" of Rus' and legitimizing the ruling dynasty. See "The Martyred Prince," pp. 230-34.

Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (ICor. 4:3-15) [My italics, P.H.]

Paul observes that the worldly notions of strength, honor, wealth, learning and power place men in a hierarchical relation to one another, making them "judges of one another." He looks at these secular values from the perspective of God at the Last Judgment. When God is judge, He will look through and beyond the pretensions of status and expose in men their inner moral essence. He will lay bare their intentions, the "inner council of their hearts." He will reveal all men as brothers in sin, and discredit the worldly standards which create differences between men and make them judges of one another.

Paul is arguing that the recognition of this brotherhood, the acknowledgement of human weakness and vulnerability, the identification with others in their "debased" humanity, is the path to community and the unity of God the father. He sees this path revealed by the sufferings of the human Christ in the Gospel. This way of repentance and humility makes one a "beloved son" of God to be "spiritually begotten" or redeemed through Christ. On the other hand, the path of false-righteousness, or pride of knowledge ("edification") does not call forth the redeemer, and thus excludes one from salvation.

He makes an implicit contrast between the short-sighted eyes of the world, and the eyes of God. The former takes things on appearances, at face value, and therefore sees debasement and suffering as unnecessary "foolishness." The latter sees the inner as well as the outer reality, and understands that the "foolish" are indeed wise in their self-understanding and commitment to expiation of sin, and spiritual rebirth through shared suffering. Paul himself in his presentation of this opposition takes on the perspective of God at the end of time and stands forth as a prophet. His own ironic rhetoric places "foolishness" in the context of this higher viewpoint from the end and reveals its paradoxical function as a "judgment," a self-conscious repudiation of the world's judgment, presaging God's judgment on the world at the end of time.[6]

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6. Revelations 12:10-11 speaks of the defeat of the Devil through Christ's humiliation and suffering as the Lamb in militant terms: "for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind* 1, 129, notes the paradoxical combination of "humility and "perfect disobedience" to the

Avvakum self-consciously manifested foolishness in all its implications to motivate his claim to sainthood in his autobiographical Life. More explicitly than Paul, he looks at himself and his contemporaries from the point of view of God at the end of time, and celebrates an ironic inversion of values. He demonstrates his own "foolishness" in order to reveal it a source of spiritual power, exposing and repudiating his enemies.[7] This foolishness begins with his use of the autobiographical form to "make manifest the councils of his heart" in expectation of the Last Judgment. He dramatizes his own false pretensions of status in order to reveal how he sheds them. He portrays himself "begotten" by the gospels" through experiencing Christ's burden of suffering and humiliation, and his rebirth as a prophet, judge and redeemer in his capacity as a "spiritual father."

Avvakum uses the conventions of the hagiographical "life" as well as the marturion to demonstrate his spiritual charisma and his persecution for his faith. However, his exposure of his inner life as a gesture of kenotic humiliation gives rise to a new type within the confines of traditional hagiography: the penitential or spiritual journey.[8]

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world in St. Theodosius. G. Kossova, "Per una lettura analitica," p. 76, notes Nestor's use of scriptural clues to place Theodosius' "endurance" of suffering in eschatological perspective. On Avvakum's use of Pauline spirituality to voice his eschatological expectations, see P. Hunt, "Eschatological Myth and the Writings of the Archpriest Avvakum," in "Christianity and its Role."

7. On Avvakum's advocacy of foolishness, its role in the Old Believer movement, and on the uniquely Russian tradition of foolishness, see A. M. Panchenko, "Smekh kak zrelishche," in D. S. Likhachev and A. M. Panchenko, *"Smekhovoi mir" drevnei Rusi* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), pp. 91-182. Panchenko, pp. 137 and 153 speaks of the fool's taking on Christ's "way of the cross," and his repudiation of "plotskaia mudrost'." Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind* 2 (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1975), 316-44 discusses foolishness in Christ as a "radical manifestation of Christian kenoticism." Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind* 1, 126 notes St. Theodosius' embodiment of the "foolishness of humility."

8. A. N. Robinson in *Zhizneopisaniia Avvakuma i Epifaniia* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1963), pp. 43-47, 64-82, discusses Avvakum's debt to the saint's life in his self-portrait. Avvakum's intention to imitate specifically the martyrdom of Christ is evident in the introduction to his Life where he suggests that his subjection to anathema in 1667 was accompanied by the same celestial signs as Christ's crucifixion. The earliest edition most explicitly reveals his association of his persecution for the sake of the Church with the crucifixion of Christ in the narrative. When he is called before the Council of 1666-67, his Nikonian judges cry out: "'voz'mi, voz'mi, raspni ego,—vsekh nas obeschestil!' Da tolkat' i bit' menia stali." See N. K. Gudzii, ed., *Zhitie Protopopa Avvakuma im samim napisannoe i drugie ego sochineniia* (Moscow: GIKhL, 1960), p. 335 (referred to hereafter as GIKhL).

Centered on the mystery of Christ's human nature, Avvakum's Life dramatizes the potential of the human condition in the actual historical world to be a moral force for renewal. He lays bare his inner self in the context of an actual "journey" or confrontation with life over time. This journey calls forth the play of his free will; it forces him to confront his own nature in Adam and brings him to repentance and expiation of sin. His actual journey into the wilderness and back is a catalyst for his penitential journey.[9]

His narrative strategy incarnates the mystery of Christ's human nature expressing the divine. First of all, the real-life historical context is in the foreground of his sacred narrative, because it is the arena where he is put to the test and reveals his human potential. However, he marks the existential stages of his moral self-revelation by revealing their higher spiritual significance as an expression of sacred history.

He does this through allusions to scriptural passages whose message he is dramatizing by his actions. Avvakum's debt to the Pauline tradition of interpreting the gospels is evident in these scriptural subtexts. They also include other scriptural, liturgical and patristic moments which deepen the sacred implications of Avvakum's imitation of Christ's "foolishness." In this way, Avvakum conveys his message through the mutual interaction of "material" and spiritual reality. Life and the "Word" have equal validity; each is dependent on the other. Avvakum's interplay of text and subtext embodies the union of Being and Spirit accomplished through the kenosis of Christ.[10]

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9. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clark & Co., 1957), p. 38 notes the anti-intellectual, experiential orientation of Orthodox tradition (which Paul articulated in his notion of being "begotten by the gospels" as opposed to receiving "edification").

10. Avvakum provides a key to his own poetics in his discussion of how spiritual reality can be conveyed by material reality in the introduction to his exegesis of Genesis. See V. I. Malyshev et al., *Pustozerskii sbornik* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1975), pp. 92-94. Christ's "condescension" into manhood (while remaining one with the transcendent father) must be conveyed "obrazno," that is metaphorically, whereby concrete material reality in its particular context also conveys a higher spiritual meaning. Avvakum cites scriptural passages describing the transcendent God in "human terms" in order to display his metaphorical technique of interpretation. His poetics are in direct contrast to the Nikonians'. M. B. Pliukhanova, "O nekotorykh chertakh lichnostnogo soznaniia v Rossii XVII v.," in *Khudozhestvennyi iazyk srednevekov'ia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), pp. 184-201, writes of the Nikonians' preference for the allegorical approach to scripture and their critique of the Old Believers and former Zealots for being too literal (*sushchestvenne vs. analogicheski ili*

In the introduction, a passage from the Pseudo-Dionysios' Treatise on the Divine Names reveals the parameters of Avvakum's dialog with the elite of Church and State.[11] This passage implicitly distinguishes between the true Christian witnessing to the transcendent Father through redemptive suffering, and the false Christian, who equates God with learning and power.[12]

> The true Christian, who has truly understood Christ . . . has transcended himself . . . not only suffering misfortune unto death for the sake of truth, but coming to an end in unknowing and living in understanding, he witnesses to Christ.

The Areopagite is commenting on Acts 26:14-18, 23 where St. Paul affirms the power of foolishness or madness in Christ. There

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upodobitel'ne). The opposition between the native Russian Orthodox tradition of scriptural exegesis and that influenced by the Jesuit counterreformation and Catholic scholastic tradition gives birth to two traditions of spiritual journey, the allegorical one represented by Protestant journeys such as Comenius' or Bunyan's and the mythic represented by Avvakum's. This will be explored in a future paper. On the narrative techniques of Orthodox Slavdom, see R. Picchio, "The Impact of Ecclesiastical Culture on Old Russian Literary Techniques," in *Medieval Russian Culture*, 277; G. Florovskii, *Vostochnye otsy IV veka* (Paris: Pravoslavnyi bogoslovskii institut, 1931), pp. 217-22.

11. Our analysis of Avvakum's Life is based on the redaction published in Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 139-78. The translations are my own. The passage cited above can be found on pp. 139-40.

12. Avvakum in the introduction is explicitly contrasting the true believer, who incarnates God's spirit, with the Nikonians who have "fallen away" from it and indulge in what he calls "external whoredom." By this he means that their egoistic passions or lusts cause them to give themselves over to "rationalistic" values creating differences between men, making them external to each other, and destroying the possibility of inner change and rebirth. He refers to their "rationalism" by inveighing (in the words of the Areopagite) against their practice of astrology. The significance of this is more fully illuminated in his exegesis of Genesis where he compares the Nikonian astrologers to the builders of the Tower of Babel. He elaborates on how their rationalism places them out of touch with natural processes (containing the divine mystery of rebirth). He exclaims. "I srat' poidet, a v knishku pogliadit: zdorovo li vyseretsia. . . . A vy, razumnye svin'i, litse neby i zemli izmeriaete, a vremeni svoego ne iskushaete, kako umeret'." Avvakum's exegesis of Genesis circulated together with the Life in the Pustozerskii sbornik, and was undoubtedly meant to supplement it. See *Pustozerskii sbornik*, p. 110. The Tower of Babel functions as a metaphor for the secular orientation on a hierarchy of differences as articulated by St. Paul. This notion of difference and lack of mutual communication is embodied in God's punishment for man's hubris in building the tower—the differentiation of languages. Avvakum is reacting to the Nikonians' "new" secular language, symbolized by their Church reforms, which alienates them from the people. He does this by speaking in the sacred language of national tradition.

Paul presented a model for the conversion of a learned, self-righteous and status oriented man (a Jewish pharisee, himself) to a follower of the kenotic Christ.

A vision informs Paul of God's intention to save him from death to be "a minister and a witness," to preach the "madness" that "Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people." Christ calls him to "open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light . . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance . . . [from the Father]."

The passage from the Pseudo-Areopagite and its subtext from St. Paul announce the thematic dominant of Avvakum's Life, the portrayal of his own conversion. They also intimate that the story of his conversion will justify his ability, first, to distinguish between the true and false Christian, and, second, to convert others through his example and his words. Moreover, his conversion will dramatize the movement from a limited worldly perspective on himself and life to the transcendent viewpoint of God, which inverts the values of the world and reveals the wisdom of "foolishness." At the heart of his narrative's metaphorical system will be his own "turning from darkness to light." This occurs in the context of his own miraculous survival of constant persecution and hardship, and reveals him one of God's elect, begotten by the Gospel according to St. Paul.[13]

An early scene presents Avvakum with the challenges involved in becoming a healer or redeemer of his community, a spiritual father.[14] It refers to the process of inner change which will be necessary for him to embody the kenotic ideal, and prefigures the dramatization of this process Later in the narrative. It exemplifies the beginning of his awareness of his own sinfulness. It indicates the distance he needs to travel in order to come to terms with his own human nature, and realize his community with other men.

During a spiritual daughter's confession of lust, he, the doctor, himself takes sick. He is humiliated by his own subjection to the flesh rather than humbled by it. It disappoints an implicit model he has of the righteousness attaching to his status as priest and

13. In his exegesis of Genesis, Avvakum is careful to distinguish between the uncreated divine light of God which is seen by the inner eye and the "material light" which is evident to the externally viewing eye. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

14. The episode under discussion can be found in Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 143-44.

confessor because of his superior "knowledge." He punishes himself for failing to live up to his ideal of perfection by symbolically cutting off the offending member by scorching his right hand.[15] He even falls into depair. He is ready to give up his vocation as priest until he receives a vision.

He sees three ships sailing along the river Volga. Two are golden and occupied by his spiritual sons Luke and Lavrenti whom he will know later. They will martyr themselves for Avvakum's cause and attain the paradise symbolized by the gold. Their ships reveal the sacredness of Avvakum's struggle for which they have accepted death, and indicate Avvakum's own ultimate resurrection and providential destination after he has completed his own martyrdom. Avvakum learns that the third, multicolored ship, piloted by an angelic youth, is his own. Its many colors—black, ash, blue, white, and red—symbolize the process of inner transformation he must undergo to become a healer of his future spiritual children. These colors will mark the stages of a journey of conversion from darkness to light.

Experience of life itself, rather than the "instruction in Christ" he received with his priestly status, will bring about his conversion from this youthful pride which leads him to despair. Morally blind, he is initially unable to understand the import of his vision. He asks: "What does this vision mean, and what will be this journey by water?" Avvakum's conscious awareness of its meaning begins only when he is confronted directly by the journey by water which it predicted.

This journey serves as an experiential catalyst for his inner spiritual journey to divine understanding and deification. Accordingly, the water which facilitates his movement through space and time becomes a metaphor for an inner movement as well. This inner movement begins with his passage over a series of dangerous rapids with the colonizing expedition of Afanasii Pashkov. These rapids come to stand for the obstacles to vision he must overcome on his perilous moral journey. Life will force him to overcome the barriers within himself which keep his intellect

15. Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, p. 218, points out that Avvakum is modelling himself on an Egyptian ascetic when he mortifies his flesh. Fedotov, pp. 112-13 stresses Russian kenoticism's debt to Palestinian spirituality which "humanized the ascetic ideal" as opposed to the severe Egyptian and Syrian traditions. Avvakum's kenotic path will require him to turn away from this rejection of the flesh towards its acceptance and transformation. He will interpret suffering not as a path of self-abnegation but rather of deification of the flesh.

from acknowledging the passions that motivate him, and therefore prevent repentance and the transformation of the passions into love—and also the barriers between himself and the world which cause him in his prideful "blindness" to judge others for being "blind."

Avvakum begins to be aware of his own divisiveness and pride when faced with his moral double, the overbearing and impetuous Afanasii Pashkov, the military governor of Dahuria, who is leading the expedition down the Angara River and beyond Lake Baikal. He wages a battle against Pashkov in the latter's own conflictual power-oriented terms. He pits his status as a priest against the latter's as a military governor, and presupposes that his superior moral righteousness guarantees him victory. However, he loses this worldly battle over the fate of two widows and is brutally punished by Pashkov. This suffering appears arbitrary and unjust to the prideful Avvakum, and forces him to articulate and thus ultimately to recognize the egoistic passions which underlay his apparently righteous defense of God's widows.[16] His humiliation before Pashkov brings to the surface his hypocrisy, his implicit sense of superiority to fate and life; his unwillingness to suffer for the sake of the suffering widows he is trying to protect.

Avvakum conveys the higher meaning of his confrontation with Pashkov as a drama of self-revelation and conversion in a dialog with scriptural and liturgical tradition. Avvakum introduces the first scriptural moment in a letter to Pashkov he writes after Pashkov temporarily exiles him into the mountains. As narrator, he quotes its first few lines:

> O man, fear God who is sitting on cherubims and gazing into the abyss; he before whom trembles the heavenly powers and all creation together with man, you alone despise and resist.

These phrases echo the exorcism of the devil in the baptismal prayer. Avvakum changes the prayer by replacing its opening invocation to the devil with his invocation to man. The rest of the exorcism, not quoted by Avvakum, provides us with a context for interpreting the higher meaning of the action. The exorcism confronts its prideful addressee with creation imagery to evoke the

16. Avvakum defends the right of two widows not to be remarried as Pashkov would like but to retire to a monastery according to the mandate of the Church.

notion of God's transcendence in relation to his insignificance: "Fear God who has created the heavens and delimited the mountains and measured the valleys." Avvakum's reference to a subtext which speaks of mountains as a sign of God's creative power appears to be directly inspired by the mountains in which Avvakum finds himself. Avvakum cites his letter just after he has celebrated these mountains teeming with animal life, whose ineffability and grandeur he says are "impossible to take . . . in with the eyes." In light of the letter's subtext, these literal mountains become a symbol of God as Life and Creativity transcending man. On the symbolic level, Avvakum's relation to them expresses his relation to God's transcendence as well.

The protagonist reacts to the mountains as a dangerous and impassable wall: "O, woe befell me! High mountains, impassable gorges, a slope of stone stands like a wall. You break your neck looking at it." At this point in his spiritual journey, on the threshold of his conversion, the understanding of God's transcendence is an obstacle to him, even as he presumes to teach Pashkov about it. The final edition of his Life underscores the irony of this situation by noting: "I thought of myself as a leader of the blind, and was myself blind from within."[17]

Avvakum's ultimate recognition of his own blindness will provide the higher drama of this episode. This will entail his exorcising the same devil of pride from himself which he presumes to exorcise in Pashkov. Both are implicitly the addresses of Avvakum's invocation to "man" to cease "despising and resisting" God. Avvakum will learn to do this through the lesson of suffering at Pashkov's hands.

Called back from the mountains, Avvakum provokes further punishment by his arrogant emphasis on his status as a priest when this is challenged by Pashkov (who was aware that Nikon had placed him under interdiction in 1653).

> He stood before me with his sword and trembles, and said to me: "Are you a priest or defrocked priest?" And I answered: "I am Avvakum the archpriest; say: what do you want with me?"

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17. See *Pustozerskii sbornik*, p. 30. Avvakum again emphasizes his moral brotherhood with Pashkov at the end of the journey, when the protagonist has overcome the blindness they shared: "For ten years he tortured me or I him. I don't know; God will make sense of it at the Last Judgment." See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 157-58.

Even after the beating begins, Avvakum remains "blind," i.e., unaware of his part in bringing on the beating. Ironically, he continues to taunt Pashkov with not understanding why he is beating Avvakum.

> In the midst of the beating I cried out to him: "Enough of this beating!" and so he ordered them to stop. And I declared to him: "Why are you beating me? Do you know?" And he again ordered them to beat me on the sides and then they let me go. I convulsed and then fell.[18]

He rebels against the injustice of the beating in view of the fact that he is championing God's law. He asks, "Why did you, Son of God, allow him to beat me so painfully? After all I stood up for your widows! Who will stand as a judge between you and me?" His questioning the justice of a God who would submit him to "innocent" suffering for the sake of His widows opens the door for an examination of the mystery of Christ's suffering, and its redemptive nature. This mystery will be understood by Avvakum as he confronts his reciprocity and likeness with other men in sin and suffering. This causes him to ultimately embrace his humiliation as a redemptive force, like the kenotic Christ.

The suffering Avvakum unexpectedly brings on himself through his own confrontational behavior opens his eyes to the fact that he is vulnerable, subject to pain and injustice, like his widows, despite his status. His sense of powerlessness before destiny ultimately brings him to recognize that the justice of God transcends human rational categories. This invalidates his own prideful separation of righteousness from sin, and reveals their sacred meaning to be the inverse of their worldly one: From the point of view of the sacred, a sense of righteousness is indeed a sin; while the acknowledgement of sin is the path to true righteousness.

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18. See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 149-50. This whole episode, describing Avvakum's confrontation with Pashkov, symbolizes the lust for power which inspired Avvakum to urge the cossacks to rebel against Pashkov because of his injustices. See V. I. Malyshev, "Tri neizvestnykh sochineniia Protopopa Avvakuma i novye dokumenty o nem" in *Doklady i soobshcheniia Filologicheskogo instituta Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. A. A. Zhdanova*, vyp. 3 (1951), pp. 255-66.

Avvakum as narrator of his life's journey, having arrived a an appreciation of God's transcendence through his earlier su fering, enters into a dialog with himself at this earlier moment dramatize his impending conversion. He places his earlier se in broader perspective by holding his complaints about sufferir up against the example of Job first of all, and secondly and mo importantly against the example of St. Paul.

Avvakum points out that he in his false righteousness had r right to imitate the truly righteous Job in "taking the Lord t court." He castigates his younger self for not benefiting from th example of Job, who *because* of his righteousness was put to th test, and forced to come to terms with the mystery of innocent su fering. He had the advantage of the Scripture while Job had t learn about the higher justice in suffering through the Book c Nature alone.

> As if a good man—another shit-faced pharisee—I wanted t take the lord to court. If Job spoke this way he was righteou without sin, and didn't know the scripture. He was outside th law in a barbarian land and knew God from creation. And I first of all, am sinful, and secondly, I rest in the law and ar strengthened all around by Scripture.

However, the young Avvakum's lack of true understandin despite the availability of Scripture rhetorically affirms th Pauline stance which he is dramatizing to refute the Nikonians secular rationalistic mentality. Avvakum's reference to himsel as "another shit-faced pharisee" is a key to the fact that he is self consciously replaying Paul's conversion from a self-righteous bookish pharisee to a son of God. At the same time, the epithe "shit-faced" likens him to the first sinner Adam, whom Avvakum imagines covered from "head to toe" in his own shi and vomit after the fall.[19]

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19. In Avvakum's exegesis of Genesis, Adam falls because of his passions or "lack of restraint." He can't resist the sweet berries from the forbidden tree, overindulges in food and drink, and lies with Eve. See *Pustozerskii sbornik*, 103-04. Having assumed terrible responsibility for "knowledge" of good and evil, he does his best to rationalize it away by laying the blame on Eve. Avvakum dramatizes Adam's sense of false righteousness in language that recalls his own behavior in his confrontation with Pashkov. "Prosto reshchi: 'na shto-de mne takuiu duru sotvoril.' A sam bytto umen, na boga zhe peniaet . . . i nyne pokhmel'nye takzhe govoriat, . . . pravitsia bednoi, . . . na liudei perevodiat, a sami ishchut tovo. . . . Chto Adam na Evvu perevodit? A sam gde byl? Chem bylc

Avvakum is witnessing to the fact that rational apprehension of the Book in no way guarantees emotional acceptance of its spiritual message about God's higher providence. It is not a guarantee of faith. Indeed, a purely rational approach to God leaves the emotions unexamined and unchallenged by life. It gives free reign to the passions to seduce reason into their service as opposed to the service of God. In Avvakum's view, the rationalist is secretly ruled by lust, and he demonstrates this through his ironic portrayal of himself as a "mirror" of Pashkov, despite his veneer of righteousness. Only suffering can break down his false perspective on himself by revealing God's transcendence, and lay the foundations for faith.

Avvakum next calls on St. Paul to foreshadow the insight he is soon to gain from Life "that we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22).[20] As the younger Avvakum approaches death, he finds his way to the Father:

> At that time my bones began to crack and my sinews to contract and my heart stopped and I began to die. They splashed water in my mouth and I sighed and repented before the Lord.

The description of his suffering implictly alludes to the days of affliction of the righteous Job.

> My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. . . . By the great force of my disease is my garment changed. . . . He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and *ashes*. . . . My skin is *black* upon me,

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reshchi: 'Sogreshikh, gospodi, prosti mia' . . . i krugom delo poshlo: drug na druga perevodiat a vse zaodno svorovali. . . . Bednye! Vse pravy i vinovatova net."

20. This scriptural citation from Acts 14:22 directs us to another subtextual passage, from the *House Orderer*, which expands on St. Paul's meaning, stressing the curative nature of suffering and patience: See "Kako vrachevati kristianom ot boleznei i ot vsiakikh skorbei," in *Domostroi*, W. F. Ryan, ed. (Letchworth, England: Bradda Books, 1971), pp. 26-27: ". . . Napisano bo est vo sviatom apostole, mnogimi skorb'mi podobaet nam vniti v tsarstvo nebesnoe. . . . iako dolgoterplivyi pravednyi iov i nishchii lazar . . . i temi skorbmi vniidosha vo tsarstvo nebesnoe . . . i obidy boga radi terpiashchie, i u boga milosti prosiashche i pomoshchi chaiiushche . . . i v domu, i v puti, i na vodakh, i vezde prizyvaiushche veroiu gospoda boga. . . ." This passage seems to influence Avvakum's comparison of himself with Job in his confrontation with Pashkov, and also his ensuing comparison of himself with the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) in the next episode at the Bratsk Fortress. (The comparison with Lazarus is explicit in the earliest edition, GIKhL, pp. 319-20.)

> and my bones are burned with heat. (30:16-31) [My ital
> P.H.]

Now that Avvakum has repented, he has passed the test of exp
ence and is on his way to becoming a "beloved son" of God.
has earned the right to compare himself with Job. The imagery
the Job subtext marks Avvakum's place on the path of transf
mation invoked by the colors of his ship of fate. It presents a
and black as symbols of extreme humiliation and sufferi
They are symptoms of the moral disease and its consequen
which Avvakum is in the process of healing. The heat which
burning Job's bones emerges in Avvakum's text as a metapl
for the intensity of suffering he must endure in order to
changed and gain new vision.

Avvakum initially burned his hand in the heat of a fire
overcome his disease of lust. Now he refers to his torments at t
hands of Pashkov as a burning and stretching, "fire and t
rack."[21] Later, when he is arriving at the end of his journey,
equates this *red* fire of suffering with the trial of the La
Judgment which purifies the elect, burning them *white* a
deifying their flesh with the *gold* of divine light.

At this initial stage of his journey, Avvakum reaches the out
limits of seemingly arbitrary suffering, and "comes to an end
unknowing."[22] Echoing Job's plaint that his "garment
changed," Avvakum describes the desecration of his clothes (t
symbol of his status) with blood and dirt, the sores on his body an
the snow and rain. He thus signifies the impossibility of huma
purity, and the vanity of worldly status; that he is part of the con
munity of nature, of sin and suffering, despite himself.[23] Th
subtext from Job carries this message: "If I wash myself in sno

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21. Pashkov's association with the function "burning" in relation to Avvaku
comes to light most clearly in the earliest edition of the *Zhitie*. See GIKhL, 322. ".
. The voevoda beats with the knout and burns with a fire and is tormenting peopl
to death. He is always abusing me and wishes to torture me, I don't know for wha
reason. Once he wished to burn me at the stake and gathered wood, and I don'
know how God spared me."

22. Again the earliest edition, GIKhL, p. 322, gives a notion of Avvakum's
sense of the arbitrariness of his suffering when he writes, "He is always abusing
me and wishes to torture me, I don't know for what reason."

23. See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, p. 150. The earliest edition emphasizes
Avvakum's bloody sores and clothing. "And my uncovered bloody sores. I had
only my bloodied kaftan, mingled with blood and dirt, on my body." See GIKhL,
p. 319.

water and make my hands never so clean; yet thou shall place me in a ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (9:30).

Dragged over sharp rocks, and washed in snowy waters reminiscent of Job's Leviathan, Avvakum participates in the latter's transformational energy and experiences a new vision: "It hurt a lot but it was good for the soul: I won't complain to God another time."[24] He now begins to "live in understanding," as he finally recognizes suffering's providential nature, its role as an instrument of spiritual rebirth. He personally experiences how suffering brings together the heights and the abysses, good and evil, pride and repentance in a divine process of renewal. Avvakum's understanding of the redemptive nature of suffering in the spirit of the Book of Job is a first step to his actively embracing suffering in imitation of the kenotic Christ of the Gospel according to St. Paul.

The newly enlightened Avvakum confirms this lesson of suffering with a citation from St. Paul's epistles. It builds on his earlier citation from Acts 14, preparing us for Avvakum's arrival at this moment. His scriptural quotation affirms his new willingness to see the suffering which all must experience anyway as purposeful, as the punishment of a loving God, calling forth correction. It reveals that his *faith* in the providential nature of his suffering and his *endurance* of this suffering is the mark of the son of God, "begotten . . . through the gospel." It opposes the legitimate son to the "bastard" who despite receiving "instruction in Christ," continues to "despise and resist" the Lord.

> My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth. . . . If ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as sons; . . . yet if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. (Hebrews 12:5)

The remainder of the narration dramatizes the implications of Avvakum's conversion to a son of God who has found faith. It

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24. Avvakum writes: "Pulling me out of the boat, they drag me bound over the rocks on the side of the rapid." This recalls the evocation of the Leviathan: "Sharp stones are under him; he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire" (Job 41: 30). The Leviathan's powers of transformation are evoked in terms of the water imagery which is central to Avvakum's portrayal of his inner transformation: "Or who can stay the bottles of heaven when the dust groweth into hardness and the clods cleave fast together?" (Job 38:37-38).

elaborates on the transformational power of "endurance," and "obedience unto death" as the path to eternal life. Now understood as a chastisement for sin rather than an arbitrary injustice, suffering forces Avvakum to be aware of his community in sin with the rest of suffering mankind. The remorse and repentance he feels for violating this community inspires him to consciously, voluntarily take on mankind's suffering. He ultimately dedicates this suffering to purifying his fleshly passions by transforming them into a spiritual force which actualizes his community with mankind. He thus becomes a son of God, takes on the image of the kenotic Christ, and approaches the end of his journey.

Avvakum fully accepts his own part in fallen human nature when he reaches the outermost limits of endurable suffering. This occurs as the expedition reaches the furthest Russian outpost, travelling along the waterways to the Fortress of Nerchinsk beyond Lake Baikal. His journey makes him part of the community of sufferers by divesting him of the attributes of status which separated him from them. His clothes and belongings rot after his raft is overturned on the Khilka River. As he is laid bare in his vulnerability, he epitomizes the sufferings of those around him. His own earlier "chastisement" and sorry condition seem to be visited on the expedition as a whole, his family, and Pashkov's men.[25]

Starvation forces Avvakum to be part of a profound collective degradation. He together with Pashkov's men eat unclean things, the carrion left behind by the wolves and a foal with its caul ripped from a mare who had died. "And I too, a sinner, willfully and against my will shared the flesh of the mare and of dead beasts and birds. Alas, my sinful soul!" Avvakum laments his loss of purity; but his understanding of his shared sinfulness is the beginning of his transformation. This is the message conveyed by the scriptural subtext from Acts 10:10-16.[26]

25: Like Avvakum, Pashkov's men are tortured, both by Pashkov and by water, while his children are forced to forage for food "over sharp rocks." See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, p. 151.

26. Although Avvakum does not directly allude to this subtext , the similarity of themes, i.e., the eating of unclean food, invites comparison. Moreover, the moral message of Acts 10: 10-16 builds on the higher spiritual message Avvakum has been conveying about his gradual understanding of Christ's foolishness through the experience of "common" degradation. This makes Acts 10: 10-16 a perfect fit with Avvakum's narrative on both the actual and spiritual levels, which suggests its function as a subtext.

Simon Peter becomes "very hungry," falls into a trance, and sees coming from heaven a vessel,

> wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

This biblical passage celebrates the inversion of values characteristic of foolishness in Christ. It articulates the higher viewpoint from which the "unclean" is a source of transcendent purity which defies the worldly opposition "pure"-"impure." God gives Peter permission to eat "unclean food" as a sign that the distinction between clean and unclean, chosen people and gentiles, has been emptied out by Christ's kenosis. ("What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.") Every person, precisely because of what he has in common with others, that is, his sinful, unclean nature, is called to redemption. In light of this scriptural passage, Avvakum's description of his eating carrion with the others exemplified his overcoming his false righteousness in the law, and embracing the totality of life like the kenotic Christ. His acceptance of suffering's corrective lesson—his community with others—makes his human nature a pathway to the divine.

Avvakum underlines this crucial moment by an implicit reference to the path of transformation in his earlier vision of his three ships. He does this by way of another scriptural subtext, this time from the Prophet Jeremiah. It suggests the progress of his penitential journey by reinterpreting the color black in the context of healing rather than illness (where it first appeared in the Job subtext). Black is a metaphor for the healing "agony" of the prophet's identification with his sinful and suffering people.

Avvakum gives us access to his higher spiritual message by lamenting in the words of Jeremiah: "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep for my poor soul, which I have destroyed with worldly passion."[27] This

27. Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, p. 152. Pliukhanova, "Traditsionnost' i unikal'nost'," notes Avvakum's personal continuation of the laments of Job and Jeremiah in his *Kniga besed*.

echoes Jeremiah's lament not for his own soul but the "hurt of the daughter of my people and the slain of the daughter of my people...." He exclaims: "I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me." The prophet asks: "Is there no balm in Gilead: is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of my people recovered?" (8:21-22; 9:1).

Avvakum directly responds to Jeremiah's challenge and emerges as the physician of his people, beginning with his family and especially his daughter. He makes his own recognition of sin and dedication to expiatory suffering a force for their redemption as well through his prophetic ability to put their suffering in a sacred context. He describes the long sufferings of his womenfolk, especially his oldest daughter then and at the moment he is writing many years later. Portraying his daughter begging for food from Pashkov's wife, he writes:

> My daughter, the poor sufferer (*goremyka*) Ogrofena, wandered secretly to her window . . . then she was small but now she is 27 years old—the young woman, my poor one, is in Mezen with her younger sisters getting along as best they can; they live weeping. And their mother and brothers are sitting buried in the earth.

He suggests they are suffering for his sins. He commits himself and them to *endure* this inevitable suffering for the sake of self-cleansing and affirmation of the faith. He has gone beyond appreciation of the "corrective nature" of uninvited suffering to celebrate suffering's redemptive role. He voluntarily takes on martyrdom, and invokes his family to join him.

> What can we do? Let them, poor things, suffer for the sake of Christ! . . . So it is laid down: one has to suffer anyway, so let him suffer for the faith of Christ. The archpriest loved to be a brother to the famous, let him now love to endure, miserable one, to the end. For it is written: not he who begins is blessed but he who finishes."[28]

By the end of his journey, he no longer rebels against the suffering inevitable in the human condition. He embraces it as a path to the transcendent God, the Father. His changed relations to

28. See Matt. 24:13 or Mark 13:13.

the outside world are evidence of his new perspective on life and himself.[29] This becomes clear in his attitude to the mountains he passes through on entering and leaving Dahuria.

We discussed earlier how Avvakum included a passage from the baptismal prayer to indicate the mountains' function as an archetype of God's transcendence and creativity. The Job subtext deepened their significance as an emblem of the multiplicity of being and its totality, embodying the heights and the abysses encompassed by Job's Leviathan. Initially they had represented a terrifying and impenetrable barrier. Finally, Avvakum describes them as a city of God with abundant food which he comfortably compares to what he gets at home.[30]

The description of the colorful grasses on the mountain suggests the range of colors of his own ship of fate which symbolized his conversion. They also echo the sweet-smelling grasses he describes in the Garden of Eden in his exegesis of Genesis.[31] Furthermore, in his exegesis of Psalm 45, he celebrates this multicolored splendor in the raiments of the daughter of Solomon. They symbolize for him the beauty of the spiritualized Church: ". . . within is your beauty, in your heart and will. And the Lord said, within you is the kingdom of heaven."[32]

His changed relation to the mountains fulfills the promise of his ship of fate. It marks his arrival at Paradise on earth, and his containment of the Church within him. It indicates the transformation of his inner vision and the purification of his heart and will through confrontation with Life. This confrontation exposed and changed his inner world so that it mirrors the spirit of God in the outer one. It "made manifest the councils of his heart" before the Last Judgment and brought him to repentance and renewal. It revealed him one of the elect, entitled him to stand forth as a

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29. The women in the camp of his enemy now begin to provide him with sustenance, especially the miraculous hen that lays two eggs a day. At the same time they become his spiritual children. Finally, even Pashkov sends food. See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 155-56.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 149 and 159. "Naverkhu ikh polatki i povalushi, vrata i stolpy, ograda kamennaia i dvory, vse bogodelanno . . . a vo dvorakh travy krasnyia, i tsvetny i blagovonny gorazdo."

31. See *Pustozerskii sbornik*, p. 101. "I izrastosha byliia prekrasnaia, travy tsvetnyia raznymi tsvety: . . . pestry i pepelesy po gospodniu glagolu *iako i Solomon premudryi* ne mog sebe takovyia tsvetnyia odezhdy ustroit'. One zhe i blagoukhaniem dobrovonnym oblagoukhaiut." [My italics, P.H.]

32. See Avvakum's *Kniga tolkovanii* in *Pamiatniki istorii staroobriadchestva XVII v.*, kn. 1, vyp. 1, *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, t. 39 (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1927), 456.

prophet and healer. Finally, his confrontation with life enabled him to embody the synergy of the human and divine wills perfected in Christ's kenosis.

Avvakum's prophetic voice emerges in the context of his dramatization of Christ's foolishness after his return to Moscow. He calls forth further persecution for his faith at the hands of the Nikonian elite when he continues to exhort the Tsar to return to the national spiritual traditions. First he is defrocked and anathematized. Finally he is called before the Church Council of 1666-67, standing in judgment on the Old Russian faith.

Stripped of the clothing which marked his priestly status, he feels not rage and humiliation as he did when his garments were bloodied and his *skuf'ia* knocked off by Pashkov.[33] Instead, he turns his debasement into an image of spiritual potency, identifying him with the kenotic Christ and the persecuted Russian Church.[34] He places this collective suffering in an apocalyptic context, envisioning it as a threshold to rebirth and the end of time. He takes on the viewpoint of the end when the dynamic of renewal will be manifest as Divine Judgment.

He celebrates the necessity of evil and suffering because they serve a higher good and bring about change. He associates enlightened suffering as a voluntary act of self-purification with the colors red and white. He thus distinguishes martyrdom from the blackness of unilluminated and uninvited suffering, the vehicle of remorse, which marked the initial stages of his penitential journey. He turns to his audience and crystallizes the lesson he dramatized during his "trial by fire" in Dahuria.

> Look listener, our misfortune is unavoidable and impossible to escape! God allows for tribulations so that there will be an elect, so that they will burn clean and *white* so that the tried will be manifest among us. The Devil asked for our radiant Russia to turn her *red* with the blood of martyrs. You did well devil, and we are glad to suffer for Christ our light! [My italics, P.H.]

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33. See GIKhL, p. 322. "He ordered that I be dragged from his presence to the executioners. After stomping on me and beating me they carried me to my wife and children *without my skufiia*, having torn out my hair" [my italics, P.H.].

34. The eleventh-century St. Theodosius also used his relationship to clothing to signify that he had "put on" the debased kenotic Christ. He refused to wear the fine clothes appropriate to his worldly status, and chose instead garb befitting beggars. See Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind*, 1, 116.

Avvakum exhibits this same rhetorical intensity in his description of his confrontation with his earthly judges at the Council of 1666-67. Playing the fool by falling on his side before them, he judges and exposes them in his turn by citing Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, 4:10: "We are fools for Christ's sake! . . . ye are honorable, but we are despised . . . ye are strong but we are weak." The full context of this passage suggests that his remarks contain a prophetic "warning" to them against betraying their "heritage" as "beloved sons" and becoming "bastards" in the eyes of God.[35]

After his anathematization, and again after his confrontation with his judges, Avvakum refers the reader to another subtext, his own Fifth Petition to the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich.[36] There he articulates and justifies his stance as a prophet and judge of the Tsar, and reveals himself participating in Christ's divine nature through his own human one. On the one hand, he describes a vision of Christ and the Mother of God "within him." On the other, he sees his body expanding to contain heaven and earth.[37] These visions reveal his "transparence" to both Being and Spirit, his attainment of the transcendence of the Father in his human nature. These empower him to mirror the Last Judgment in his own, and separate the religiously defined Nation from the secular State.[38]

This paper has demonstrated how Avvakum's Life made use of St. Paul's rhetoric of foolishness to respond to a crisis of national identity. He appealed to Paul's vision of the human nature of Christ embracing what men have in common, what is universal to them and creates unity, to express a sense of "nationhood," shared destiny, purpose and norms. Like Paul he places this religious metaphor for identity in opposition to a secular "worldly ideology" which celebrates difference rather than unity. On the

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35. See above (where Hebrews 12:5 foreshadows I Cor. 4:10). A. M. Panchenko, in "*Smekhovoi mir*" 149-50, points out that Avvakum's lying on his side is an allusion to Ezekial 4:4-6. It signifies his taking on the sins of his judges, and prophesies their deaths through plague, hunger and the sword. Here Avvakum explicitly portrays his accusers' "rationalism": "a nashi . . . blevat" stali na ottsev svoikh, govoria: 'Glupy-de byli i ne smyslili nashi russkie sviatyia, ne uchonye-de liudi byli, chemu im verit'? One-de gramote ne umeli!'"

36. See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 167-68.

37. These passages from the Fifth Petition are actually included in the narrative of the earliest edition of his Life. See GIKhL, pp. 330 and 339.

38. This is more fully examined in Hunt, "Eschatological Myth."

one hand are those who stand for community in Christ because they accept the redemptive nature of suffering; on the other stand those who do not understand suffering's universal nature, consider themselves above it and the human condition in general, and express this through social status, moral self-righteousness, and rationalism. On these Pauline grounds Avvakum distinguished himself and his followers from the elite of Church and State.

In his Fifth Petition to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich he explicitly stands in judgment of the Tsar and prophesies the latter's damnation at the Last Judgment, while himself claiming to embody the messianic destiny previously borne by the State. The Fifth Petition comes into play at the climax of his Life's story. It motivated Avvakum to write his Life in order to demonstrate how he arrived at his status of prophet and healer revealed there.[39] The way his Life does this manifests his orientation on a sacred ideal rooted in Christ's human nature. His portrayal of himself dramatized how Christ's "emptying himself out" into manhood expressed His love for and acceptance of the human condition as a potential force for salvation as well as judgment.

Avvakum's use of the Pauline kenotic tradition expressed a radical personalism, an understanding that human community, and in his case national identity, depends on the moral wills of the persons comprising the social organism.[40] He therefore focuses on the drama of the will as it expressed itself in confrontation with the particular challenges offered by his "national" destiny.

The religious expression of perfection of the will was the central kenotic moment embodied in Christ's confrontation with death. His struggle to accept the fate of martyrdom imposed on

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39. Avvakum wrote the Fifth Petition in 1669, the same year he started working on his Life. It circulated together with his Life in his own and other Old Believer compilations. See N. S. Demkova, *Zhitie protopopa Avvakuma (tvorcheskaia istoriia proizvedeniia)* (Leningrad: Leningradskii universitet, 1974). Both the Fifth Petition and Avvakum's Life rely on the writings of St. Paul to express their dominant higher spiritual message. See Hunt, "Eschatological Myth." This consonance of subtextual dominant between the Fifth Petition and his Life is evidence of their genetic relationship, as is the fact that Avvakum initially quoted from the Fifth Petition in the climax of the earliest edition of his Life, as noted in note 36.

40. P. Hunt, in "The Tsar and I: The Archpriest Avvakum's 'Emancipation of the Personality,'" a paper she delivered on March 9, 1989 to the Slavic Department of Harvard University, discusses Avvakum's radical personalism as manifest in his Fifth Petition. See also Pliukhanova, "Traditsionnost' i unikal'nost'."

Him by His transcendent Father—His agony of fear and doubt on Gethesemane and His sense of abandonment on the cross—called into play His human will. At the foreground of this drama was His inner reality, the voluntary nature of the sacrifice He made in order to fulfill His divine mission of expiation of sin and creation of community.

Avvakum built on this moment from the point of view of Man (himself) who is not perfect like Christ but is called to this perfection. Confronted not only with his own imminent death but with the impending end of the world, he was called to testify to his faith and become a source of spiritual renewal. He dramatized the agony this involved, laying bare the inner councils of his heart and giving birth to the penitential journey.

This required him to examine human nature not in its apparent perfection, revealed by Christ, but at its origins, in its freedom and potential for evil as well as good. This was exemplified by Adam's exercise of his will to separate himself from God. Christ's struggle on the cross witnessed to the human effort required to overcome Adam's initial rebellion. Avvakum's need to illuminate the creative potential of mankind required him to dramatize the full extent of Christ's effort. This called forth his own kenosis, or emptying out of himself, his laying bare his nature in Adam. Avvakum for the first time in Russian literature mapped out the inner dynamics of man's sin and expiation of sin to show how he arrives on the road to Christ, so clearly marked by the Gospels and the acts and writings of St. Paul.

Avvakum's "kenotic" focus on the inner life as the source of external renewal expressed a unique kind of "humanism" at the root of Russian national identity.[41] His "emptying out" of himself motivated the autobiographical, confessional form of his narrative, as well as its particular, concrete, anti-intellectual "realistic" mode. Avvakum's own kenosis also gave birth to a "higher" symbolic spiritual dimension which may represent the genesis of "psychological realism" in Russian literature.

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41. On Avvakum's "negative" humanism (as opposed to the Nikonians' scholastic humanism), see S. Mathauzerová, "Baroko v ruské literatuře XVII století" in *Československé přednášky pro VI mezinárodní sjezd slavistů v Praze* (Praha: Academia, 1968), pp. 255-58. D. S. Likhachev in *Chelovek v literature drevnei Rusi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 138-39 suggests that seventeeth-century Russia's "democratic literature" (including Avvakum's Life), focusing on human degradation and preoccupied with death, lays the ground for the unique kind of humanism expressed in the nineteenth-century Russian novel.