

ヨブ記 1–2 章における *ḥāṭā'* の意味分析 —— *wāw* の訳し方への含意 ——

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ABSTRACT Nobuyoshi KIUCHI, “A Semantic Analysis of *ḥāṭā'* in Job 1–2: Implications for Translating *wāw*.” Conventionally, *ḥāṭā'*, whether translated “to sin” or “to commit a sin,” has been understood as denoting conscious transgression or violation. This interpretation has dominated both Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions. However, the New Japanese Bible 2017 (*Shinkaiyaku* 2017) adopted ‘*tsumi ni ochiiru*’ (‘to fall into sin’) in contextually appropriate passages, a translation which suggests an unconscious state rather than a deliberate action. On the basis of this rendering in the New Japanese Bible 2017, this study examines *ḥāṭā'* in Job 1–2 to provide guidance for translating *wāw* through a more precise semantic grasp of *ḥāṭā'* than that offered by traditional interpretations.

All three occurrences in Job 1–2 (1:5, 1:22, 2:10) follow a consistent pattern: *ḥāṭā'* in relation to a speech act. This structure indicates that *ḥāṭā'* refers not to the speech act itself but to an underlying condition of the heart which manifests itself in speech.

In Job 1:5, the patriarch worries that his sons “have sinned and cursed God in their hearts,” distinguishing between an internal state and its expression. The phrase “in their hearts” modifies only “cursed God,” suggesting *ḥāṭā'* itself points to an unconscious realm underlying the cursing.

Comparison of 1:22 and 2:10 illustrates *ḥāṭā'*’s meaning. Job 2:10 gives an indication of how *ḥāṭā'* can manifest itself beyond the conscious realm. But not all *ḥāṭā'* relating to speech acts manifest themselves in actual speech. In fact, the biblical writer’s evaluation in 1:22—that Job “did not utter *tipēlāh*” (folly/complaints) to God—reveals that the euphemistic *bērēk* (‘bless’ meaning ‘curse’) encompasses a range of negative attitudes from outright cursing to mild complaint. This semantic breadth supports interpreting Job’s concern in 1:5 about his sons ‘cursing in their hearts’ as

referring to an unconscious disposition; if, in Job's understanding, even mild complaint constitutes 'cursing,' he would have to worry about the inner state of his sons, not just conscious cursing.

Job 2:9 provides crucial evidence. Job's wife, acting from compassion, unwittingly becomes Satan's instrument by urging Job to "curse God and die." Job's calling her words those of a "foolish woman" (*n^ebālāh*)—a term denoting impiety—suggests she had fallen into sin unconsciously. This exemplifies how *ḥāṭā'* occurs: unconscious alignment with opposition to God.

Ḥāṭā' in Job 1–2 designates an unconscious state of the heart involving turning from God without awareness, rejecting divine sovereignty, and adopting an adversarial stance. This state manifests through speech acts ranging from cursing to complaint, but quite crucially, *ḥāṭā'* itself denotes the underlying condition rather than external expression.

This is further corroborated by considering the relationship between *ḥāṭā'* and 'fear of God.' The "fear of God" (Job 1:1, 8) represents Job's fundamental character. Exodus 20:20 explicitly connects becoming God-fearing with the prevention of *ḥāṭā'*, implying both phenomena operate at the unconscious level of human disposition. Job's righteousness consisted in maintaining inner trust even when circumstances might unconsciously turn the heart against God.

Having examined the meaning of *ḥāṭā'*, this study examines the translation of *wāw* in Job in 1:5 and 1:22, applying the above conclusions about *ḥāṭā'*. As a function word, *wāw* does not possess specific meaning, but rather relies for its interpretation on the meanings of the preceding and following words, phrases, or clauses. Thus, the interpretation of *wāw* first requires the correct interpretation of its context. When viewed from this perspective, the *Shinkaiyaku* 2017's 'fall into sin' represents a significant hermeneutical advance, faithfully capturing the text's nuanced view of human condition.