

Please answer TWO of the following questions in English. (100%)

Question 1 (50%)

The following excerpt is taken from Euripides' *Medea*. Here the heroine Medea is speaking to the Chorus (women of Corinth). This speech is one of the most famous speeches in Greek tragedy. Please read the speech carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

MEDEA: Women of Corinth, I have come outside to you  
Lest you should be indignant with me; for I know  
That many people are overproud, some when alone,  
And others when in company. And those who live  
Quietly, as I do, get a bad reputation.  
For a just judgement is not evident in the eyes  
When a man at first sight hates another, before  
Learning his character, being in no way injured;  
And a foreigner especially must adapt himself.  
I'd not approve of even a fellow-countryman  
Who by pride and want of manners offends his neighbours.  
But on me this thing has fallen so unexpectedly,  
It has broken my heart. I am finished. I let go  
All my life's joy. My friends, I only want to die.  
It was everything to me to think well of one man,  
And he, my own husband, has turned out wholly vile.  
Of all things which are living and can form a judgement  
We women are the most unfortunate creatures.  
Firstly, with an excess of wealth it is required  
For us to buy a husband and take for our bodies  
A master; for not to take one is even worse.  
And now the question is serious whether we take  
A good or bad one; for there is no easy escape  
For a woman, nor can she say no to her marriage.  
She arrives among new modes of behaviour and manners,  
And needs prophetic power, unless she has learnt at home,  
How best to manage him who shares the bed with her.  
And if we work out all this well and carefully,  
And the husband lives with us and lightly bears his yoke,

Then life is enviable. If not, I'd rather die.  
A man, when he's tired of the company in his home,  
Goes out of the house and puts an end to his boredom  
And turns to a friend or companion of his own age.  
But we are forced to keep our eyes on one alone.  
What they say of us is that we have a peaceful time  
Living at home, while they do the fighting in war.  
How wrong they are! I would very much rather stand  
Three times in the front of battle than bear one child.  
Yet what applies to me does not apply to you.  
You have a country. Your family home is here.  
You enjoy life and the company of your friends.  
But I am deserted, a refugee, thought nothing of  
By my husband,—something he won in a foreign land.  
I have no mother or brother, nor any relation  
With whom I can take refuge in this sea of woe.  
This much then is the service I would beg from you:  
If I can find the means or devise any scheme  
To pay my husband back for what he has done to me,—  
Him and his father-in-law and the girl who married him,—  
Just to keep silent. For in other ways a woman  
Is full of fear, defenceless, dreads the sight of cold  
Steel; but, when once she is wronged in the matter of love,  
No other soul can hold so many thoughts of blood.  
CHORUS: This I will promise. You are in the right, Medea,  
In paying your husband back. I am not surprised at you  
For being sad.

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Question 2 (50%)

The following excerpt is taken from *Genesis* 22:1-12. Perhaps no biblical narrative is more dramatic, more poignant, and more confusing than God's command to Abraham that he sacrifice his son Issac. What kind of a God would ask such a thing of a father? What kind of a father would accede to such a request, even from a God? Why did Abraham become silent in the face of so great an injustice toward his own beloved son? Why did God praise Abraham for his willingness to engage in an act of ritual murder? These, and other questions, have been debated by Jews, Christians, and Muslims for generations. Please read the excerpt carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

**22** After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."<sup>2</sup> He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Mo-rí'ah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you."<sup>3</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.<sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.<sup>5</sup> Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."<sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.<sup>7</sup> Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"<sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.<sup>9</sup> When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.<sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.<sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."<sup>12</sup> He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."