

Interview with Andrew Feder, author of “The Heretic”

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to be joined by Andrew Feder, who is here to talk about his new book, “The Heretic.”

Andrew Feder grew up in a dysfunctional Jewish family in California and studied at San Diego State University. Andrew then traveled to Israel where he attended university, worked as a grape farmer, and studied under a holy man. He continued his studies of the kabbalah in the United States, studying under renowned psychic, mystic and healer, Janeau Saint Clair and her husband mystic Elliot Atlas. He has also driven a limo, worked as a telemarketer selling long distance, been an assistant director in the film industry, and currently, works as a graphic artist. He is as the author of two novels, “When Angels Have Risen” and his new novel, “The Heretic.”

Tyler: Thank you, Andrew, for joining me today. Wow! A tale of ancient Greece during the time of Alexander the Great. That must have been fascinating to research and write. To begin, tell me what inspired you to write the book?

Andrew: First having been personally regressed I wanted to create a story connecting past lives. I also have been intrigued with history since my youth. I chose the Alexander the Great period, because Alexander fascinated me with his military and political strategies which were so far ahead of his time. But during my research, I realized that his personality has lightly been dealt with—so I furthered my research of Alexander about his personal life’s events and his own idiosyncrasies. During my research I found him still a teenager emotionally but a prodigy like I said well ahead of his time. So that became the start but only the start. I researched Greece & Crete along with Alexander for about a year before I finally sat down and wrote “The Heretic.” And when I began to write like watching a movie, it was drawn from my images into paper like an artist sketching his rendering on canvas.

Tyler: What did you find most difficult about researching “The Heretic?”

Andrew: Discovering Alexander’s real personality was the hardest. As I mentioned previously, there was a multitude of material on his campaigns but very little of him as an individual. But after researching and reading, I discovered his true personality and attributes. Alexander related everything in a religious context and was inspired by Homer’s “Iliad.” After much research the dots connected on their own. Placing Aias then was the easy part of writing “The Heretic.” Everything seemed to fit like a perfect puzzle.

Tyler: Andrew, what about Alexander the Great and ancient Greece holds an appeal for you?

Andrew: Alexander the Great was a truly unique conqueror and leader, because he utilized political beneficiary as one of his main tactics to gain control of a country. He would allow the people to retain their satraps (leaders) in place as governors while also allowing the people to maintain their customs and religious beliefs and yet maintained control by virtue of his benevolence. This strategic political method was certainly well ahead of his time. Alexander was not ethnocentric and also believed that all people were the same without any ethnic or racist or religious superiority beliefs—something that even the Romans felt—Romans were superior to all others and so on. Also Alexander’s aspiration to unite people as one without any fascist or racist policy such as a belief that the Greeks would be above all other people including those he conquered was certainly a unique philosophy well ahead of his time. And notwithstanding, his military accomplishments in so little time at such a young age is beyond anyone’s accomplishments in world history. And his historical accomplishments certainly affected every single

subsequent event in Man's history including today's culture and speech, so I was quite fascinated by Alexander the Great and what he created in such a short time.

Tyler: Will you tell us about the modern day character Jerry in "The Heretic" and his relation to the ancient Greek Aias?

Andrew: Jerry Fletcher was a hero in his own right as can be found in the prequel, "When The Angels Have Risen." But when I wrote "The Heretic," I wanted it to stand on its own, so one could either read one without needing to relate to the other. Now in regards to Jerry's relationship to his past life of Aias, I wanted to correlate past life experiences and how they could be carried to present life experiences and yet show that each life is special and unique in its own experience.

Tyler: Do you see Jerry/Aias as a hero? Why do you think he will appeal to your readers?

Andrew: Both Jerry/Aias are heroes in their own right. In the past life of Jerry namely as Aias, the combat skills and military and political abilities become obvious. Aias' sexual liaisons would be a curiosity, but as a person the reader will appreciate the growth and experiences of Aias not only as a great soldier but as a man living beyond his times. Aias will be found unique as a true maverick in his day as well as a man with deep compassionate convictions. I think that the aforementioned along with the idea of past lives would intrigue anyone.

Tyler: In the novel, you depict Aias as before his time because he is heterosexual while most Greek men are homosexual? Why did you make that decision in his character depiction?

Andrew: I wanted to show a cultural reversal of what would be considered norm or okay in a society; here Aias is the minority—a heterosexual in a society that is more homosexual or more correctly bisexual. I tried to display how what a society considers morally bad might be morally good or okay in another culture. I also tried to show that how people tend to show their prejudices based upon what they conceive is culturally okay, but in reality have no basis in what is really morally good. We tend to judge upon our own misleading concepts of what we devise as moral but in reality are just cultural differences. Thus Aias is placed as The Heretic of his society not just for his religious concepts but for his cultural as well.

Tyler: Jerry finds out he is the reincarnation of Aias by several regressions back to previous lives before arriving at his ancient Greek life. Why did you decide to frame the book in this way with reincarnation?

Andrew: I wanted the reader to see and experience at first hand a regression as I have experienced myself. I also wanted to show first the very method of performing a regression along with experiencing what one would perhaps experience under a regression toward his/her past lives by the examples of Jerry's own experience of his past lives.

Tyler: What do you find interesting about reincarnation and also its use as a plot device?

Andrew: In my own spiritual belief, we do reincarnate for the opportunity to heal and better ourselves. I also wanted the readers to become their own Heretic by questioning things that are told to them whether by their parents, clerics and/or authorities. Never taking things for granted and as Thomas Paine had said, "Reason obeys itself; and ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it." Also besides using regression and reincarnation in my book for the spiritual endeavor, it was also a great tool for experiencing time travel thus opening the door toward historical events.

Tyler: "The Heretic" is the sequel to "When the Angels Have Risen." Do readers first need to read that book before reading "The Heretic"? What is the connection between the books?

Andrew: No. They both can be read separately and are independent of each other. But they both complement one another. So if you read "The Heretic" first, you can still read "When The Angels Have Risen" afterwards and of course visa-versa. And the connection of course is Jerry Fletcher and the rest will follow.

Tyler: "The Heretic" begins in a post-modern day after the second revolutionary war in America. Will you tell us a little about this post-revolutionary war America—why couldn't Jerry just have his regressions in 2007?

Andrew: In the book, “When The Angels Have Risen” there is a about a year that is left open which is where “The Heretic” time setting is placed. This is after Jerry has his famous disclosure of his experience with aliens which culminated to world change including the Second Revolution.

Tyler: Why is the book’s title “The Heretic”?

Andrew: Because it is the Heretic who challenges us with our own belief system no matter what place, culture or time he/she might be found. The Heretic allows us the opportunity to grow and progress. Aias is that individual. He went against the grain of his countrymen both religiously and culturally, and by his very actions and demeanor he challenged the belief systems of his day.

Tyler: Andrew, you said earlier you want readers to become their own heretics. Do you feel like a heretic yourself? Is reincarnation not acceptable in orthodox Judaism? How do you reconcile reincarnation with your upbringing?

Andrew: Regarding Judaism, there is the absolute belief of reincarnation. In fact, the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Yochanon Ben Zachai often referred to the idea of reincarnation as well as others. The concept of the soul returning over and over to heal and better itself is Karma and in Hebrew called Tik’un. Thus there is the understanding that each generation reaps from the actions of the prior generations is really we reap from our own actions; hence reincarnation and the cycle of life with our souls.

Often times I feel like a heretic because my ideas may clash with what clerics in particular have presented in spirituality. So yes I am a Heretic. But I think if one has developed his own self-worth/love he too would be a Heretic because he would question both Authority and Clerics... ie Spinoza, Jesus, Buddha, Jefferson, Thoreau and so and so on.

Tyler: Will you tell us a little bit about your own past-life regressions and how they inspired you to write “The Heretic”?

Andrew: In my book, “The Heretic,” the first three transitions of past lives for Jerry under his regression were my own, so I incorporated my experiences within my book.

Tyler: What are those three regressions that Jerry experiences before going back to his life as Aias?

Andrew: Well, in one of my past lives, I was a Jewish Resistance fighter during Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis during World War II. I also was an Arapaho Native American in the 1800’s. And in the Middle Ages, I was a knight in Britain. The detailed events in my book are my own past life experiences.

Tyler: Jerry is a senator following the second revolution—how is this in keeping with his character in his previous life as Aias?

Andrew: It is separated and yet connected and that is what the reader will determine from his/her own experience in reading “The Heretic.”

Tyler: Because Aias is a warrior, do you think “The Heretic” appeals primarily to male readers, or will women equally enjoy the novel?

Andrew: Men will enjoy the battle scenes, but today’s women will also enjoy that as well. Both men and women will enjoy the high energy scenes of military aspects but also the sensitive side of Aias’ demeanor. And did I forget to mention the sex and romantic side of Aias? But all in all both genders will equally enjoy my book for all its intriguing attributes.

Tyler: Thank you, Andrew, for joining me today. Before we go, will you tell our readers about your website and what additional information they might find there?

Andrew: Please check out my website for “The Heretic” www.AndrewtheHeretic.com My site has information about me and my book along with direct links to Amazon, Barnes Noble and my Publisher for more information and purchase. There is also a direct link to my prequel “When The Angels Have Risen” (also direct access at www.AndrewFeder.com which has a link back to “The Heretic”)

Thank you.

Tyler: Thank you, Andrew. “The Heretic” certainly sounds intriguing. I wish you lots of luck with it.