



## ՀԱՐԱՐԱՏ-Ի ԳԼԵՆԴԵԼԻ ԱՐԱՐԱՏ ՄԱՍՆԱՃԻՐԻ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ԲԱԺԱՆՍՈՒՆՔ

Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter  
Cultural Division

*Get to Know...*

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### RAFFI

**September 5, 1835 – April 25, 1888**

Raffi (Hakob Melik-Hakobian) famous Armenian writer, author of historical novels, ethnographic essays and poems was born in 1835 in Iran. His education began at **Ter Todik**, his village's school, which was known for its strictness and punishment methods. Raffi described and denounced these methods in one of his novels, **Kaytzer**. At the age of 12, Raffi was sent by his father to continue his secondary education at a boarding school in Tiflis, away from his native land. Tiflis, today known as Tblisi, was one of the largest Armenian intellectual centers. Unfortunately due to the degradation of his father's financial affairs, Raffi was forced to return to his native country.

It was at this point that he began teaching Armenian language and history in the Armenian school in Tabriz, the Augoulis school in the Nakhitchevan region and, later on, in Tiflis.

Throughout his life, Raffi took many trips to the villages and provinces of **Eastern** and **Western** Armenia. Wherever he visited, he became aware of the daily misery experienced by the unarmed Armenian population, who lived in constant terror of the **Turks** and **Kurds**. Raffi, like other Armenian intellectuals, was convinced that it was not possible to continue living in this way.

Raffi was a productive writer. His works were published in the magazines *Mshak* and *Ardzakank*. His main work, **The Fool**, first appeared in series in the magazine *Mshak*, (an Armenian journal founded by Grigor Artsruni in 1872) and was a great success. Raffi's patriotic text was read by virtually all Armenian youth of the time. In his novels, Raffi depicted characters of national heroes and Armenian revolutionaries. In fact, there is a well-known Armenian phrase that goes: "there are no Armenian freedom fighters (Feddayines) that have not read Raffi." Raffi considered that teaching the population the Armenian language was a fundamental and vital measure. He used various methods (the press, novels, teaching) to improve the education of the Armenian commoners.

Raffi died in **1888** in Tiflis, and his funeral attracted a huge crowd. He is buried in the Pantheon of Armenians at the **Khodjivank cemetery** in Tblisi, where Hovhannes Tumanian, Gabriel Sundukian, Ghazaros Aghaian and Grigor Artsruni are also buried.

Presently, there is a school as well as a street named after Raffi in Yerevan, Armenia. His works were translated in several languages.

