



# Who was Thomas Breakwell?



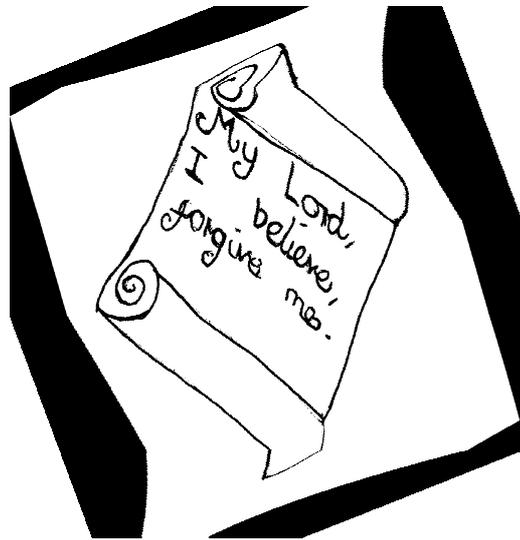
Thomas Breakwell was the first Englishman to become a Bahá'í. He was born in Woking, Surrey, on 31 May 1872 and his family later moved to the United States.



He worked in a cotton mill and earned a lot of money. When he was 29 years old he went on holiday to Paris where he met a Bahá'í lady called May Bolles. She was staying in Paris because 'Abdu'l-Bahá had told her to, but He had not told her why.



May taught Thomas about the Bahá'í Faith and after just three days Thomas devoted his life to the Cause. He wrote a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking permission to go on Pilgrimage. The letter was only 2 lines long. It said:



*"My Lord, I believe, forgive me.  
Thy servant Thomas Breakwell."*



He then set off for 'Akká with an American Bahá'í. He was the first English person to make the journey as a Bahá'í pilgrim. On the day that he left, May received a cablegram from 'Abdu'l-Bahá saying she could leave Paris at any time. He had asked her to stay in the city just so that she would be there to meet Thomas Breakwell.



Thomas explained that the cotton mill where he worked used children as workers. When He heard this 'Abdu'l-Bahá looked sad and told him he must write to them immediately to say that he was leaving the job. Thomas was obedient and did this straight away.



'Abdu'l-Bahá asked Thomas to go back to Paris and live there to teach people about Bahá'u'lláh. So Thomas returned and wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá every 2 weeks to tell Him what he was doing and the plans he had made. He lived in a very cheap apartment on the outskirts of Paris and walked to meetings so that he could save money for the Fund.





He understood the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and this gave him great love for everyone. People who had suffered received so much love from Thomas that they would be drawn to him like a magnet and would be much happier after they had met him.



Soon Thomas became very ill with tuberculosis but he still wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was a very caring person and even though he was ill he asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá for permission to return to England so that he could look after his parents. His father was so touched by Thomas's love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he too became a Bahá'í.



Thomas died on 13th June, 1902, and is buried in Paris. He had been a Bahá'í for less than a year. 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew, without being told, that Thomas had passed away, and He was heartbroken. He revealed a prayer in his honour and wanted it translated so perfectly that everyone who read it would weep. (There is a copy of the prayer on the centre page.)



A year after Thomas died his father sent 'Abdu'l-Bahá a card. Attached to it was a small violet picked from Thomas's grave. It said:

***"He is not dead. He lives on in the Kingdom of God."***

