

LEVELED Book • Q

Gandhi

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Written by Jennifer Dobner

Gandhi



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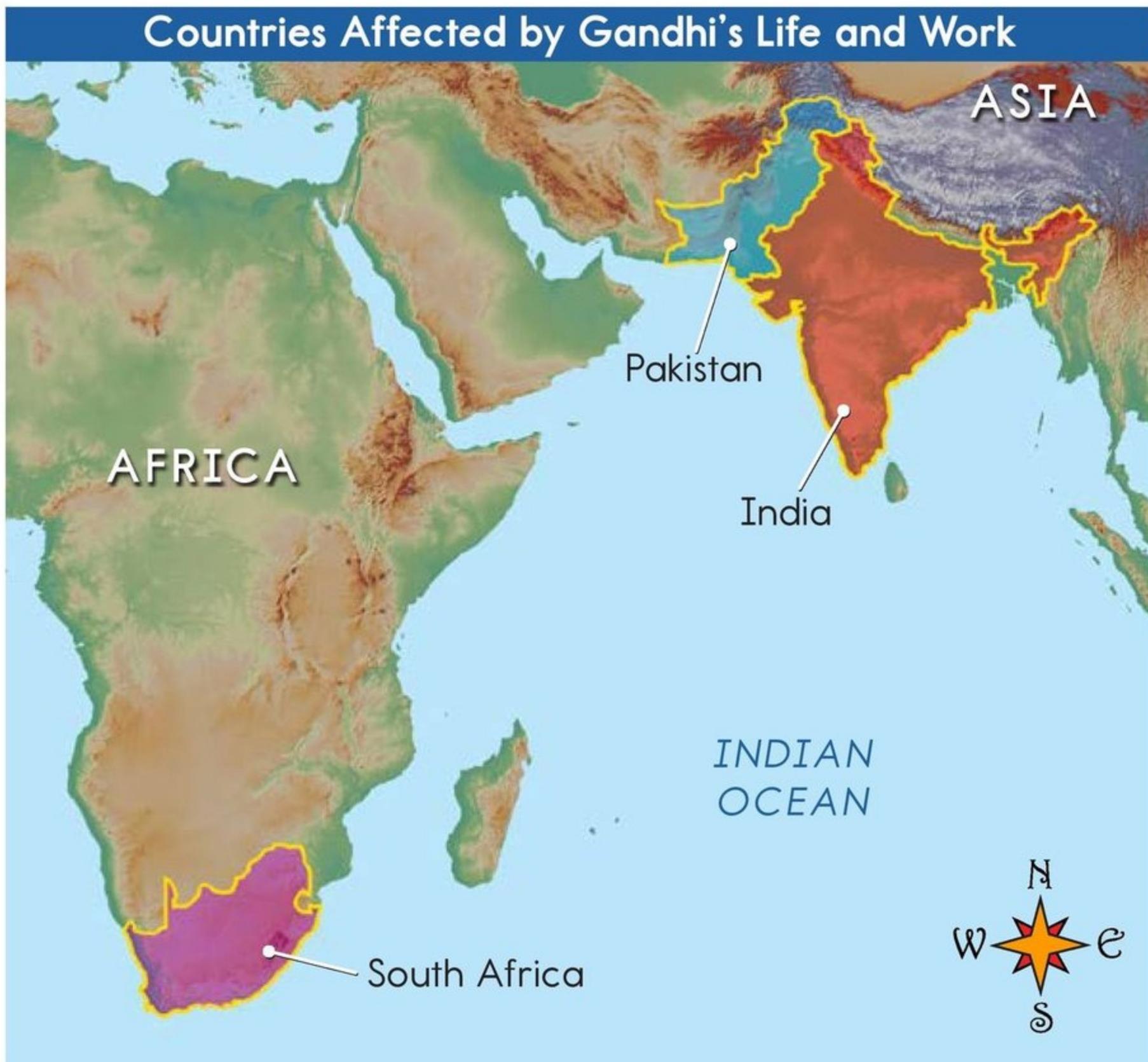
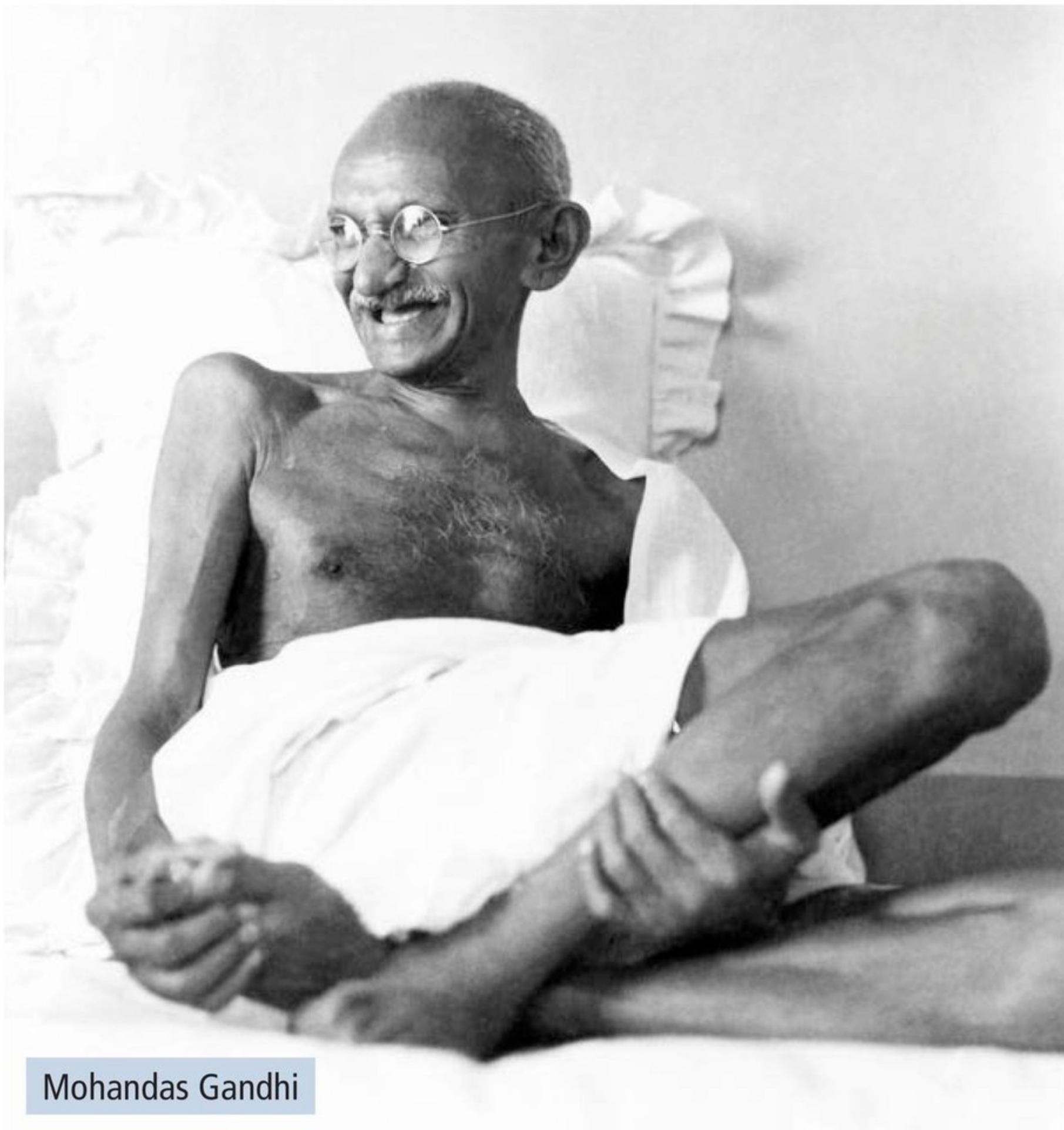


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Mohandas Gandhi

“Father of India”

With his bald head, thin body, wire glasses, and shy nature, Mohandas Gandhi seemed like a kind grandfather. Within this quiet man, however, was a powerful **will**. His strong beliefs in **fairness**, freedom, kindness, and peace changed nations. Even many years after his death, “The Father of India” continues to **inspire** people around the world.



Gandhi (right) and his older brother

Early Life

Gandhi was born into a large Hindu family on October 2, 1869. Many Hindus believe in **nonviolence** and caring for others. His mother was a great example. She prayed daily and took care of people who were sick or poor.

His father worked as a local government leader. He often settled disagreements between the local people and the British, who ruled India. From his father, Gandhi would learn to **respect** others and their beliefs.



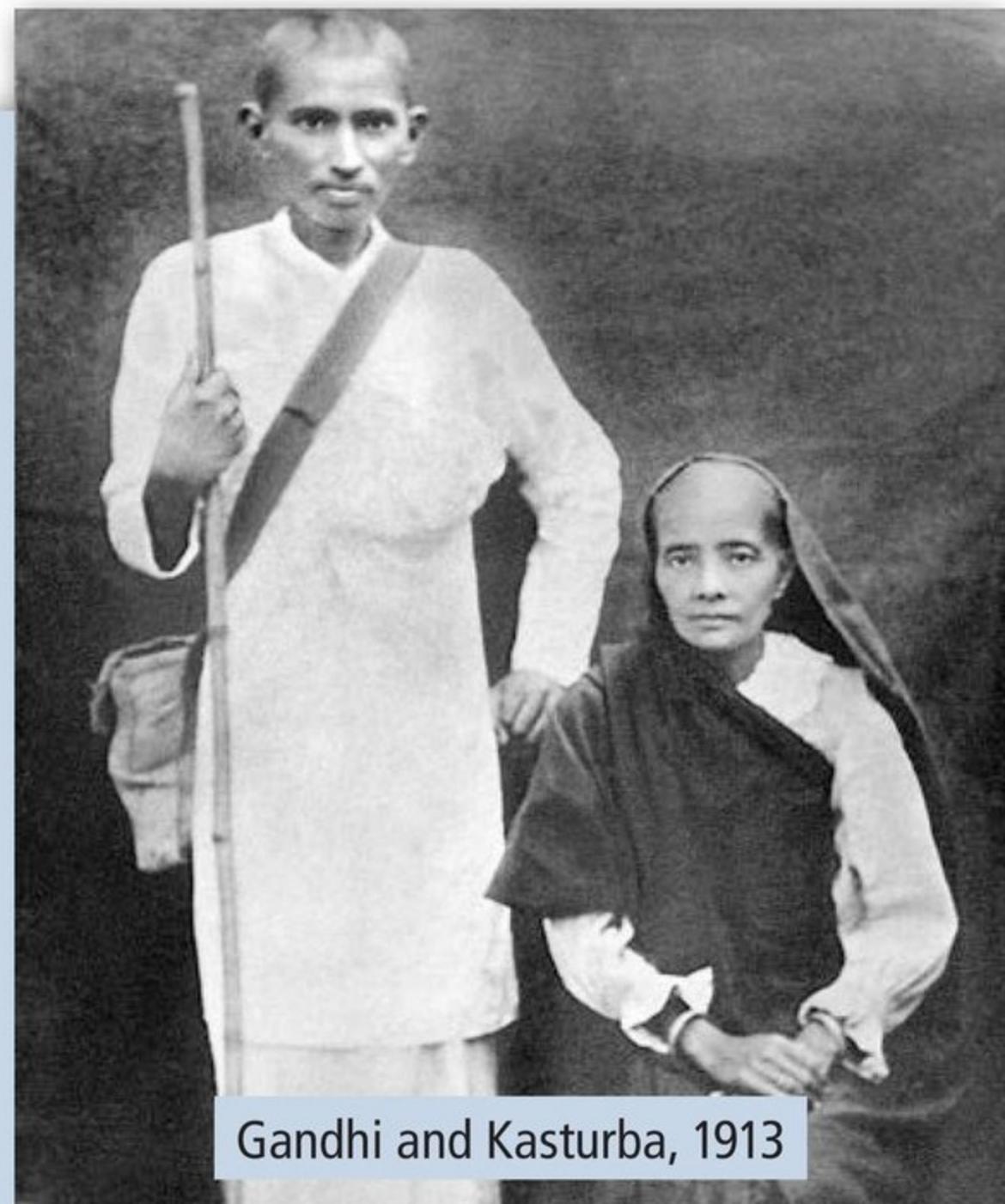
Gandhi in London, 1908

At eighteen, Gandhi sailed to England to study law. While attending school in London, he began to study different religions and their texts.

After a few years, Gandhi became a lawyer and returned to India. Still very shy, he **struggled** to find work. He agreed to take a job in South Africa in 1888.

Marriage

When Gandhi was very young, his parents arranged his marriage. This custom was common in India. At thirteen, Gandhi married Kasturba, who was the same age.



Gandhi and Kasturba, 1913

South Africa

South Africa was also ruled by the British. People who were not white were treated poorly. One day while Gandhi traveled by



Gandhi in front of his law office in South Africa

train, a conductor told him he couldn't sit in the first-class car. Gandhi said that he was traveling on business and had bought a first-class ticket. None of that mattered because of the color of Gandhi's

skin. When Gandhi would not leave, he was thrown off the train. On another trip, a driver beat Gandhi for refusing to make room for a white passenger.

Gandhi thought this was unfair and felt he had to do something. He stayed in South Africa and worked hard to help the Indians in that country. His work brought attention to him as well as to the struggles of Indians in South Africa. He also became a leader among the Indian people.

During this time, every Indian in South Africa was forced to register with the government. Gandhi held a **protest**, during which he explained his idea of *satyagraha* (suh-TYAH-gruh-huh). The word means “holding firmly to the truth.” Gandhi used it to represent his form of nonviolent protest. He called for Indians to disobey the law and accept the punishments. Many Indians were beaten or jailed, including Gandhi. News of the protests and punishments reached around the world. People were shocked. They spoke out against the government. The government had to talk with the protesters.



A police officer confronting Gandhi as he leads a protest in South Africa in 1913

Gandhi remained in South Africa for twenty years. He continued to work for better treatment of Indians. During this time, he stopped wearing western clothes. Instead, he wore the homemade robes and sandals for which he would become known.

A Leader in India

When Gandhi returned to India, he worked to free India from British rule.



Gandhi on his return to India, 1915

In 1919, the government passed acts that let authorities arrest people who caused **political** trouble. Gandhi called for people to stay home from work and school in protest. When violence broke out against the British, Gandhi canceled the protest.

A few days later, thousands of people gathered in the city of Amritsar in a

peaceful, yet illegal, protest. Suddenly, the British troops surrounding the protest started shooting. Hundreds of people died, and many others were hurt.

The events in Amritsar changed everything. Soon after, Gandhi started another nonviolent protest. He called for Indians to no longer buy British goods or work for the British in any way. While his efforts were somewhat successful, some Indians still caused violence.

Gandhi was seen as the leader of the protest. Because of the violence, he was arrested and sent to prison. He was released after two years and immediately continued his work.



Kasturba with her sons

Gandhi and Kasturba

Gandhi and Kasturba supported the same ideas. Kasturba worked with Gandhi. She even stood in for him while he was in prison. Kasturba and Gandhi had four sons. Their marriage lasted until she died in 1944.



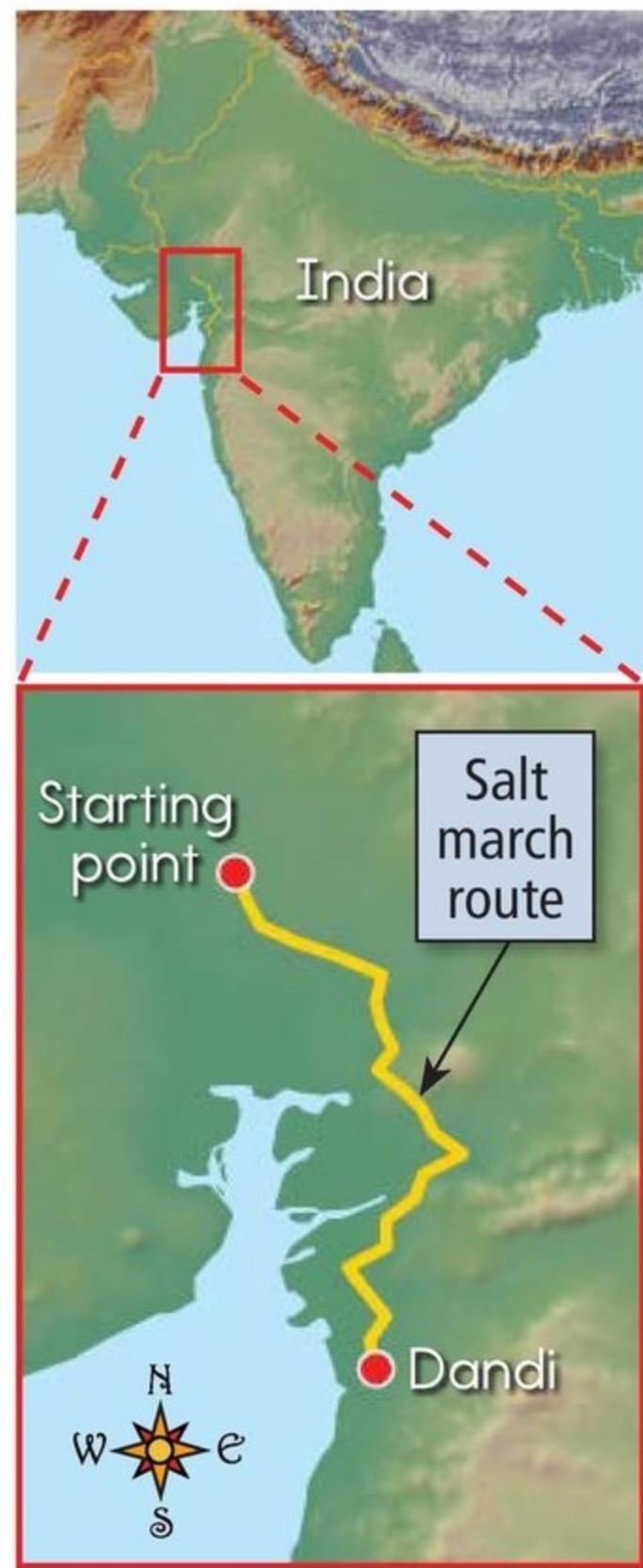
Gandhi and his followers marching to the shore

The Salt March

One of Gandhi's most successful protests took place in 1930. In India, only British companies were allowed to produce and sell salt. The government also placed a large **tax** on any salt sold. Gandhi thought it was unfair for Indians to pay the British for salt from Indian lands.

Salt

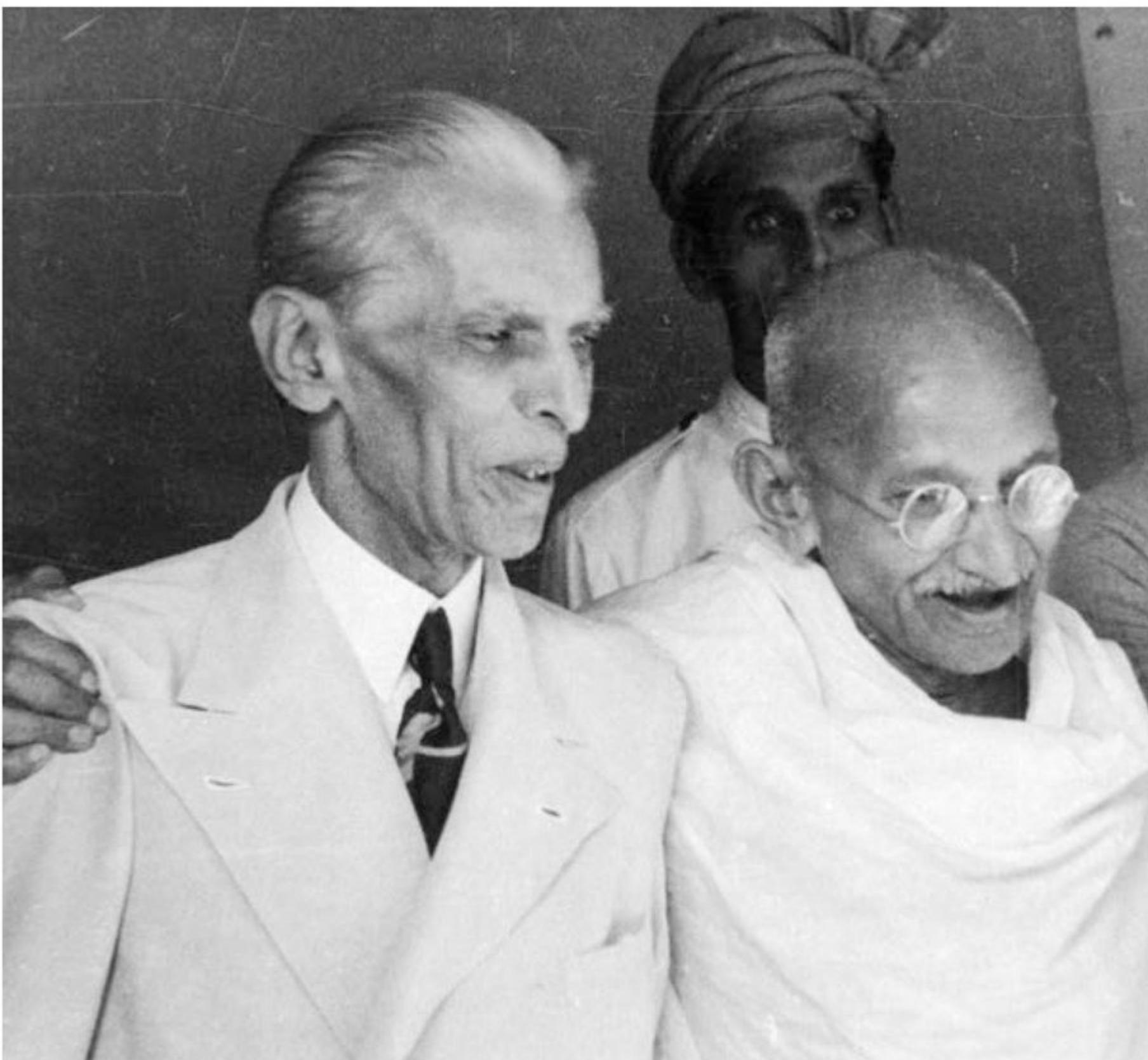
Along India's coast are large salt flats. Seawater evaporates here, leaving salt behind on the ground. Until the government made it illegal, Indians could simply gather and use this salt for free.



Gandhi picking up salt at the end of his long march

On March 12, Gandhi and some followers began a 21-day, 240-mile (386 km) walk across India to the sea. Along the way, Gandhi spoke to people and made speeches to large crowds. When he reached the coast, tens of thousands of Indians were following him.

Early on the morning of April 6, Gandhi went down to the shore. He picked up a grain of salt from the ground. His followers did the same. Gandhi was arrested, along with more than 60,000 others.



Gandhi with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, an important Muslim leader

Change Begins

The arrests and treatment of Indians caused anger throughout the world. In 1945, British and Indian leaders began to discuss the British leaving India.

Throughout India's history, Hindus and **Muslims** had often been in **conflict**. Gandhi believed that the people of these two religions could live in peace in India. The Muslim leaders wanted their own country.



Muslims climbing onto a train headed for Pakistan

The agreement that ended British rule was signed in 1947. The country was split, against Gandhi's advice. The Muslim people formed the new country of Pakistan. More than ten million people moved from one country to the other. There was much fighting. Gandhi worked tirelessly and achieved a number of temporary peace agreements. No one else was able to do this at the time.

Fasting

Fasting, or going without food, is a regular practice in many religions, including Hinduism. Gandhi often fasted as part of religious practice. He also used fasting as a protest. In 1947, Gandhi fasted to protest the conflict in Calcutta, and it ended. He fasted again in 1948 and convinced the people of Delhi to find peace.



Gandhi with his granddaughter and grandniece, 1948

Death and Legacy

On January 30, 1948, Gandhi was on his way to a prayer meeting. About five hundred people had gathered to hear his prayers. A young Hindu man in the crowd didn't approve of Gandhi's work to make peace with Muslims. He shot Gandhi three times.

Gandhi's death saddened people everywhere. However, this small man, whom Indians called *Mahatma*, or "Great Soul," continued to change the world. He inspired such great leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. He will continue to inspire people for many years to come.

Glossary

conflict (<i>n.</i>)	a disagreement of ideas, principles, or opinions between people or groups (p. 13)
fairness (<i>n.</i>)	justice and equality (p. 4)
Hindu (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to the major religion in India, which includes many gods and a belief in reincarnation (p. 5)
inspire (<i>v.</i>)	to encourage a person to act (p. 4)
Muslims (<i>n.</i>)	people who follow the religion of Islam (p. 13)
nonviolence (<i>n.</i>)	the refusal to use physical force or violence as a response (p. 5)
political (<i>adj.</i>)	having to do with government, politics, or politicians (p. 9)
protest (<i>n.</i>)	an action to express strong disagreement or disapproval (p. 8)
respect (<i>v.</i>)	to feel admiration for someone or something; to understand that someone or something should be treated with honor or in a careful manner (p. 5)
struggled (<i>v.</i>)	had a difficult time achieving a goal; used force to try to stop something or get free of something (p. 6)
tax (<i>n.</i>)	a fee collected by a government to pay for its services, functions, and operations (p. 11)
will (<i>n.</i>)	a strong determination or resolve to accomplish something (p. 4)

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