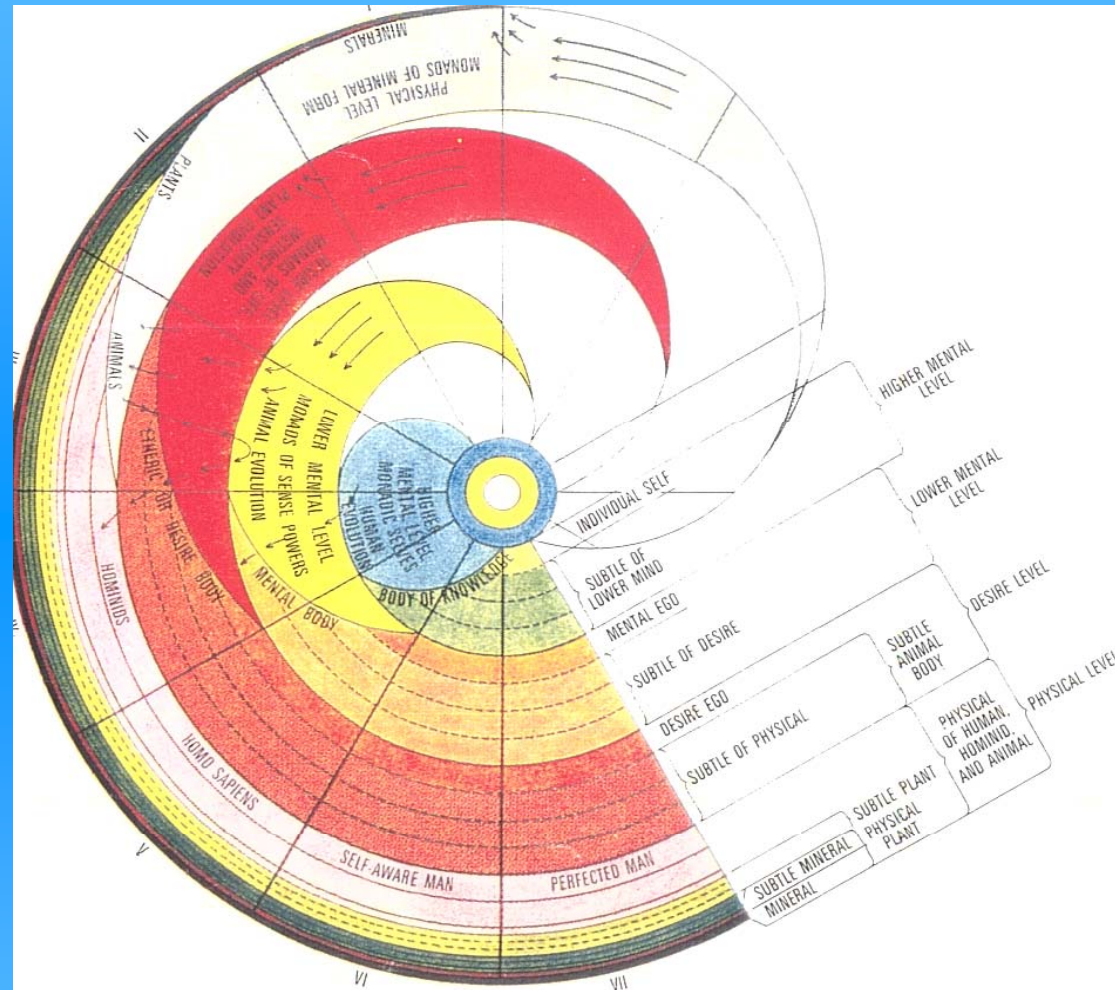


# Sri Madhava Ashish



Engineer, Homeopath, Master Builder, Farmer,  
Environmentalism, and above all, a Mystic



They say there  
is but one road  
which leads to  
the Path.

William Blake called it 'Jerusalem'.

Others – Shangri La.

A few know it as ...





Mirtola

The 'true' Mirtola is a state of mind and heart in which existence is infused with ultimate meaning and every aspect of one's being is accepted and integrated in the spirit.

‘Mirtola’ stands for being united  
by love; for acceptance of  
suffering; for introspection; for  
service; for holding and  
transforming tensions; for  
intelligent enquiry; for  
challenging perceptions ...





... for dedication,  
meditation, self-  
remembering,  
constant  
watchfulness,  
constant service  
of the beloved,  
courage, vigour,  
fire ...

To reach  
this Mirtola  
you have to  
journey  
through the  
jungle of  
your mind.







... till you reach  
the Inner Door,  
which leads to  
what has been  
called 'Truth'  
or  
*sat-chit-ananda*.

All men, at one time or another,  
have fallen in love with the  
veiled Isis – the Truth behind the  
Inner Door.

With most this love is a passing  
passion; their unrequited search  
makes them turn to more  
practical things.

RONALD NIXON  
Gopald, Cambridge, 1918

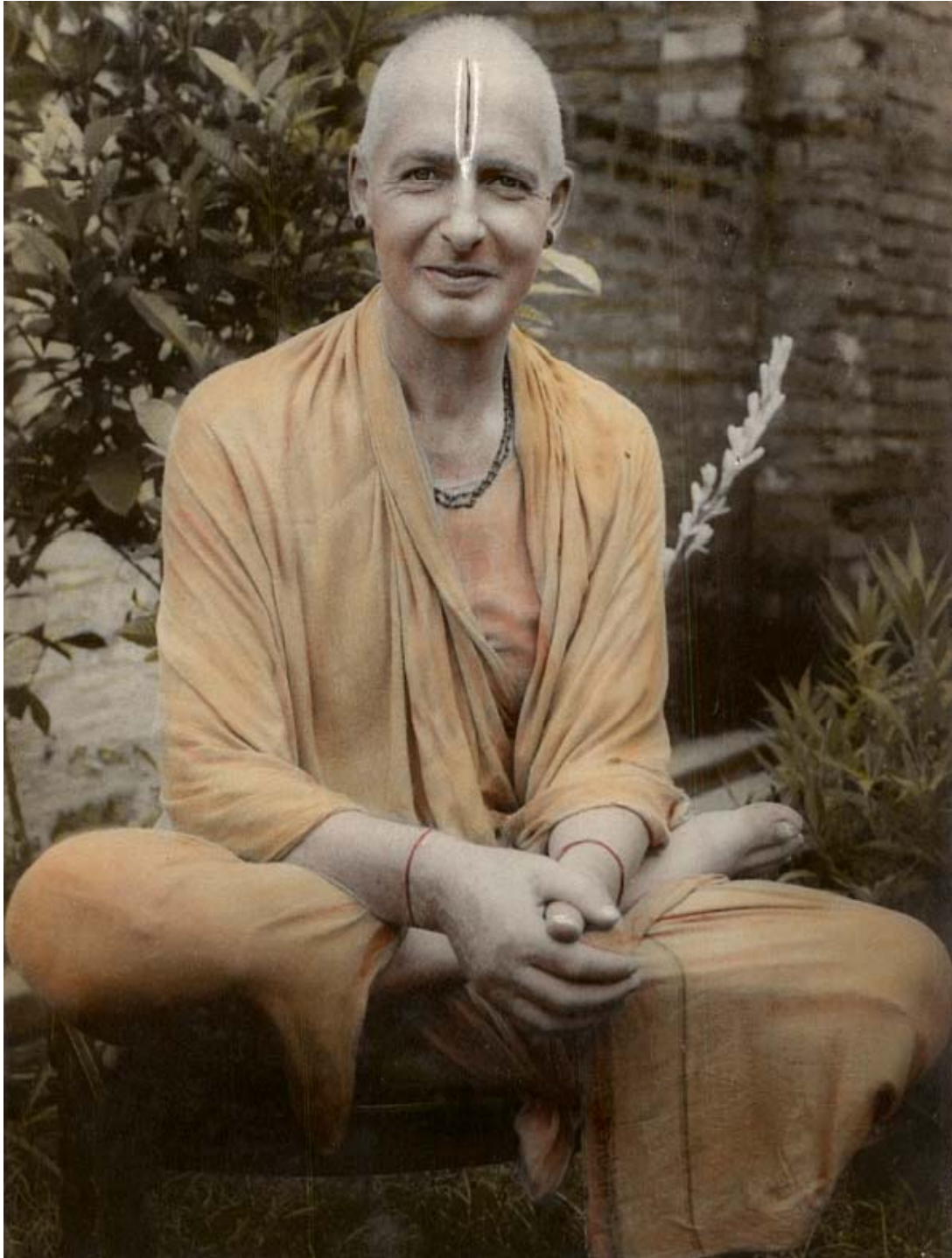


However, some had the courage to embark on this quest which, for them, constituted the whole meaning of life.

Soon others followed them ...







A few,  
despite early  
difficulties,  
remained all  
their lives the  
devout lovers  
of Reality.





Bare feet,  
shaven heads  
and the  
saffron of  
renunciation  
would mark  
their intent.





Their one  
passion was to  
find a way  
back to a state  
which alone  
could satisfy  
their craving  
for absolute  
truth.

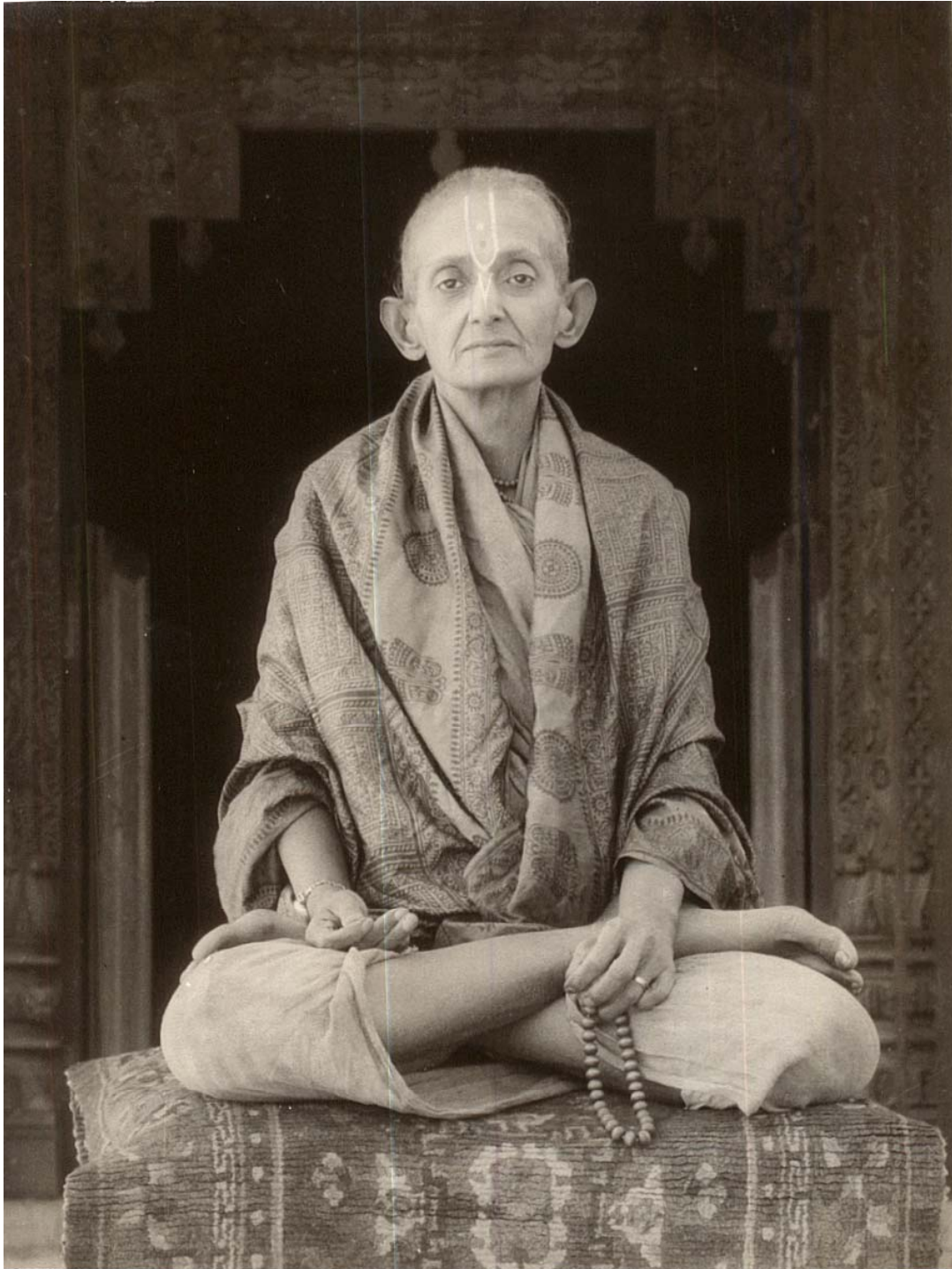


Perhaps, what is required is the refusal to be satisfied by what other men call experience; and to enquire what is it in man that looks out at the world and yet has the capacity to look at itself .



Their quest  
was  
personified  
as Thakur,  
literally  
‘Lord’.





They found  
the living  
embodiment  
of Thakur in  
their Guru,  
Sri Sri  
Yashoda  
Mai.





There was  
also a  
'Benefactor'  
who helped  
erase their  
personal  
history.



They gave  
up name,  
family and  
material  
security.





They  
centered  
their  
emotions  
through  
devotion.



and  
meditated ...

and worked ...





And, of course, there was play!



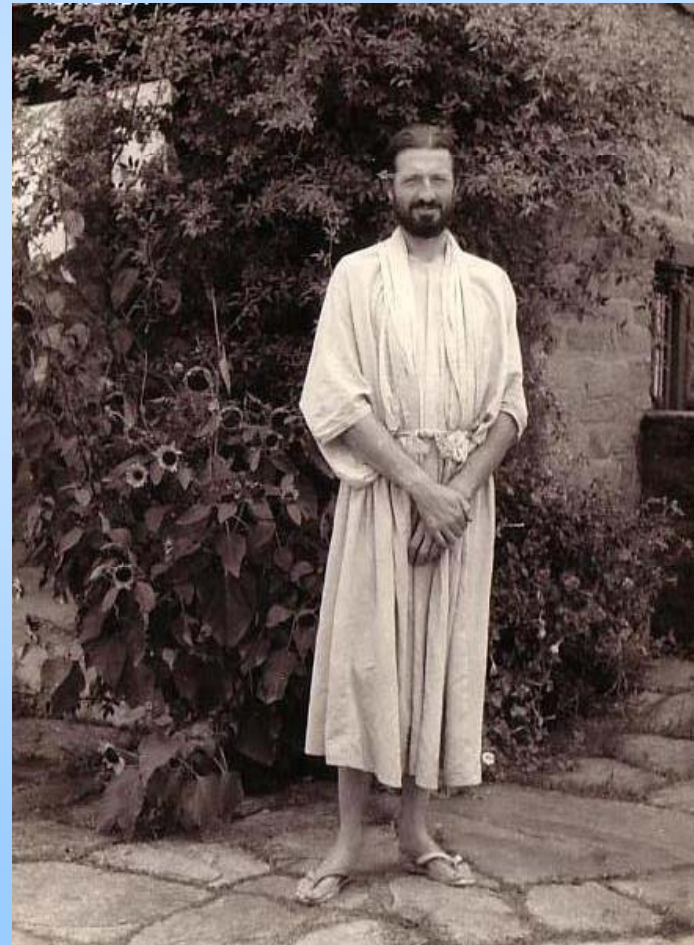
ASHISHDA, 1954



And he  
selflessly  
served them  
on the farm.



An austere life, hard work and contemplation had soon wrought its magic -- the transformation had begun.

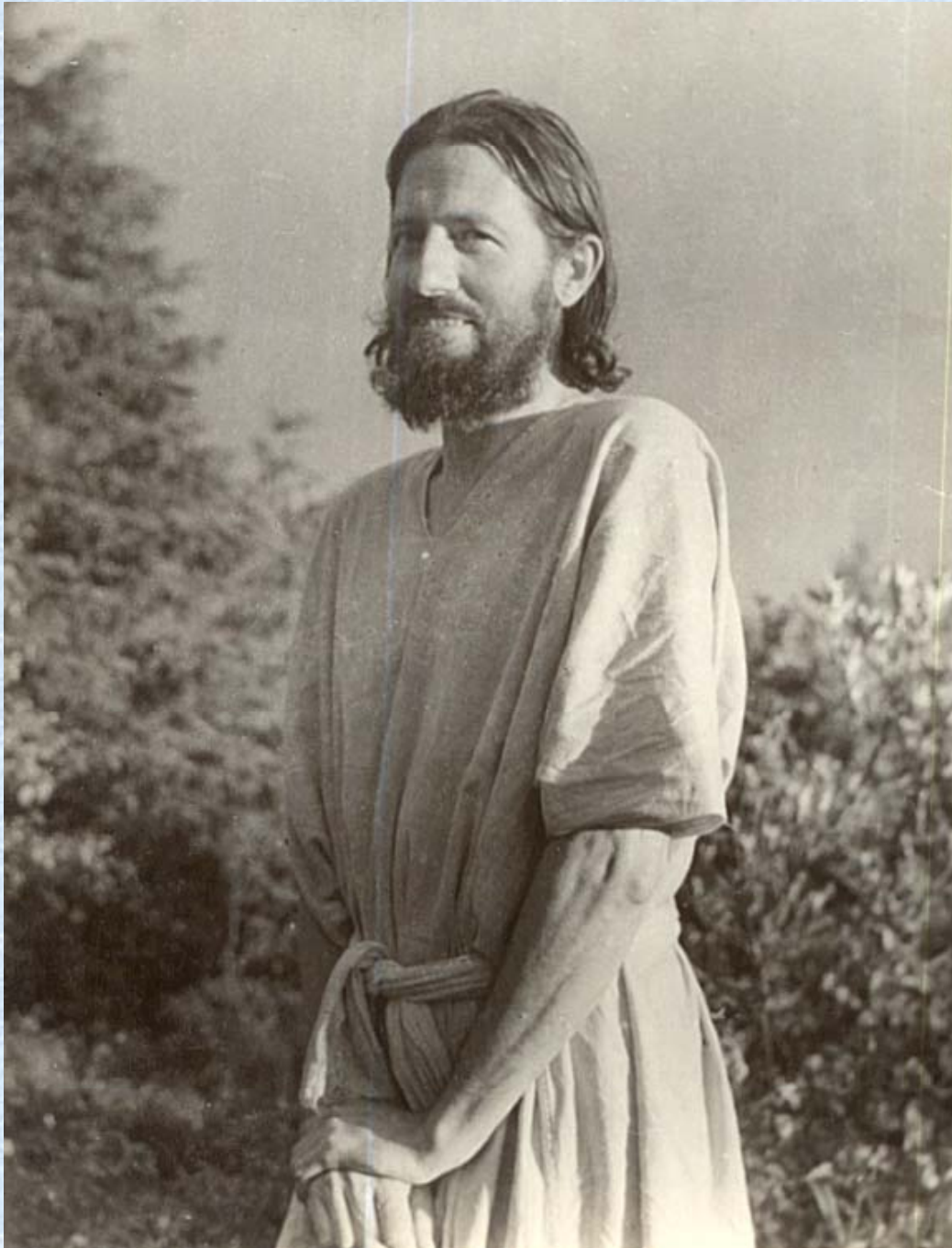




GOPAL DA, 1960



In the elder,  
feeling &  
thought had  
fused into a  
unity and  
his being  
emanated  
love.

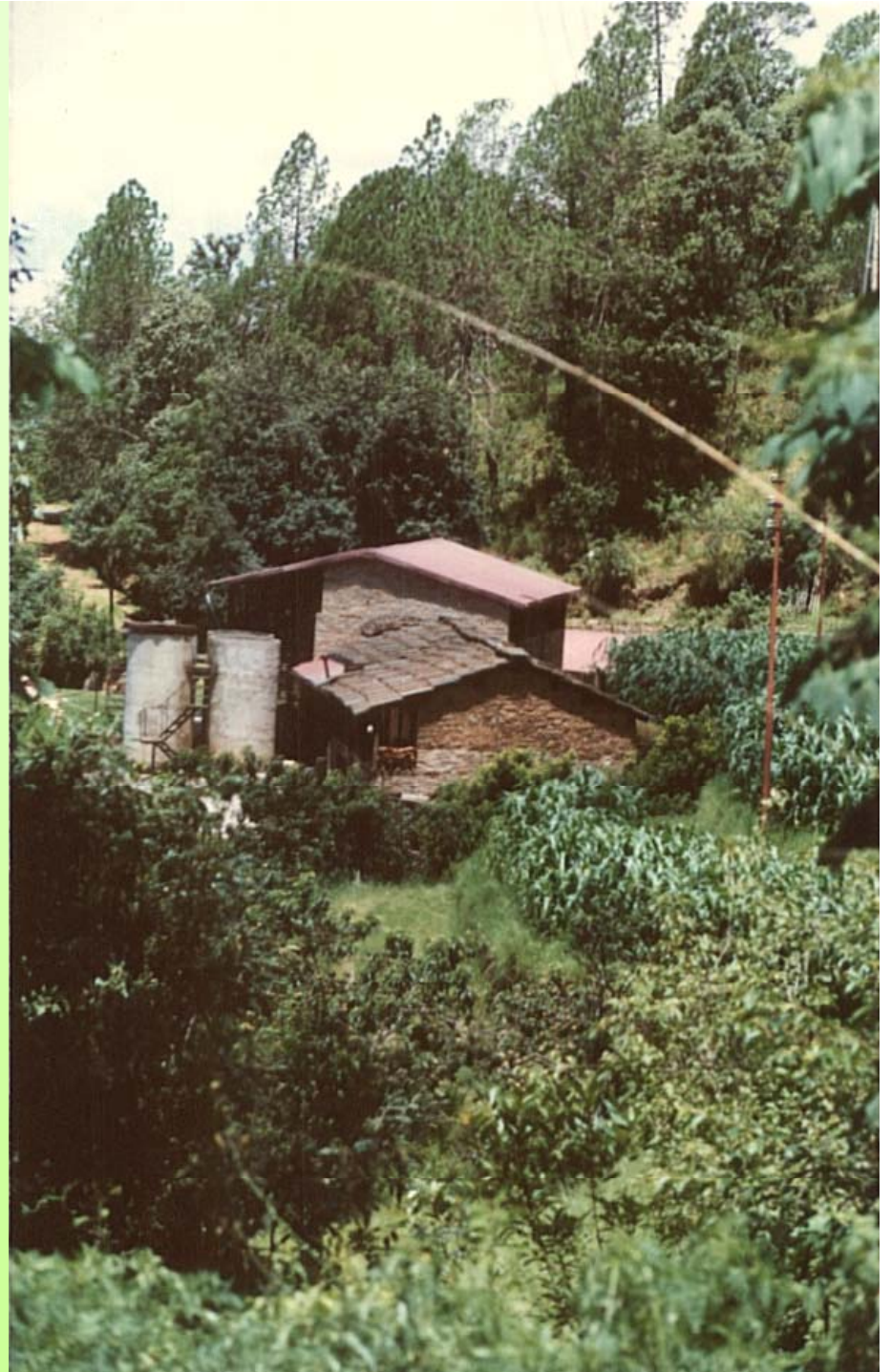


The  
younger  
was  
Christ-like.



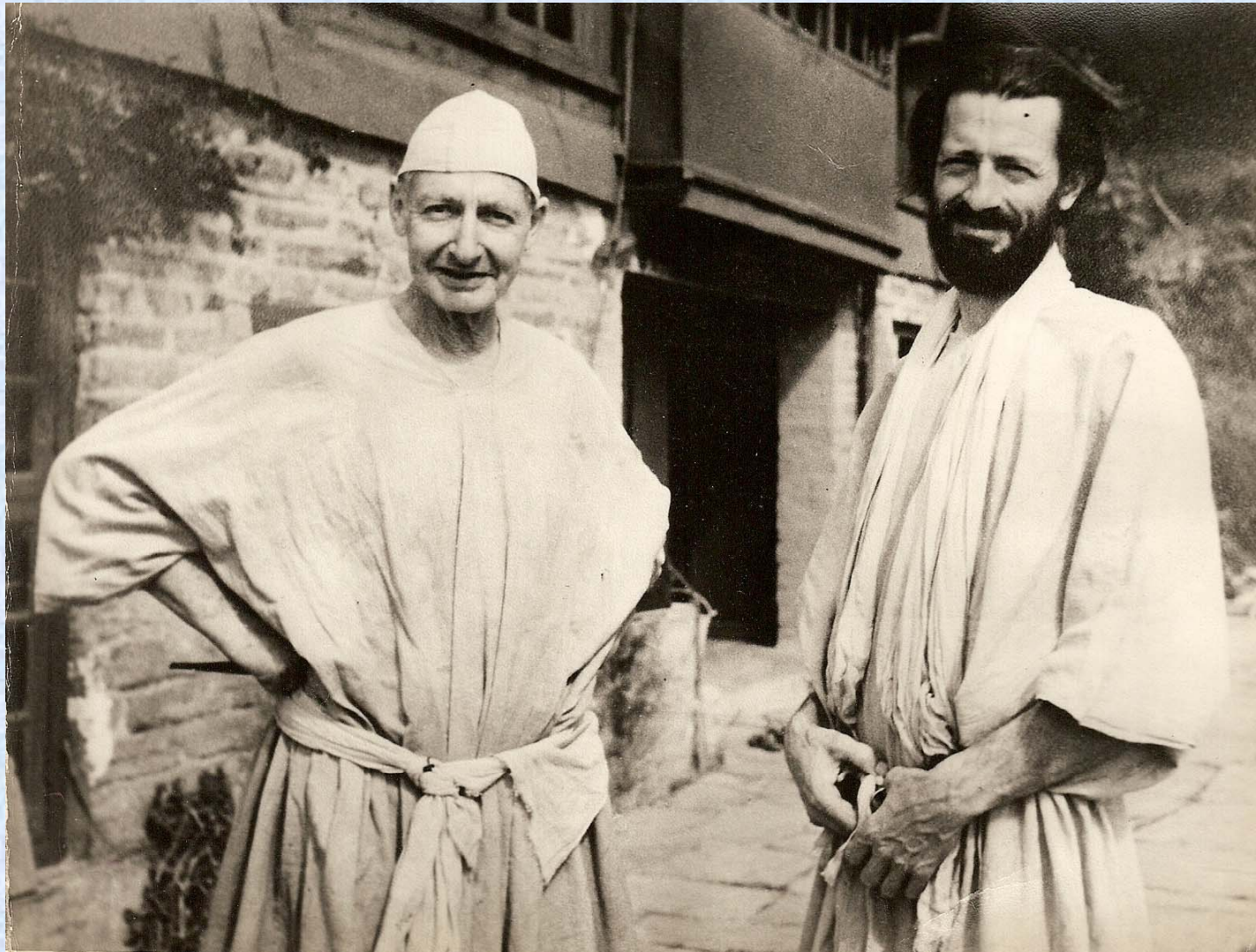
Though they were  
sadhus they still  
had not freed  
themselves from  
the illusion they  
needed to eat to  
live.

They ate what  
they could grow.





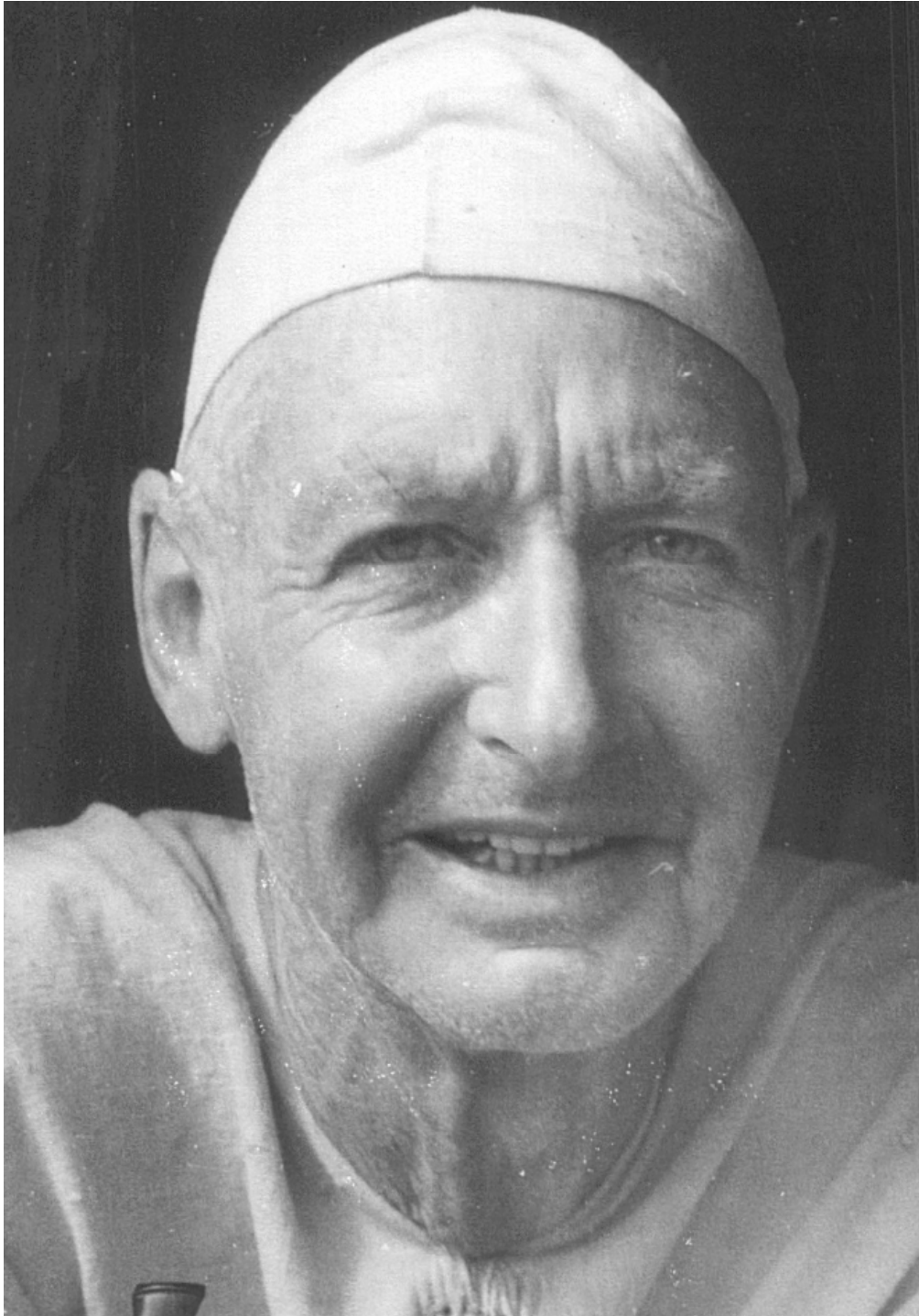
The days of discipleship over, now was the time to integrate what they had experienced







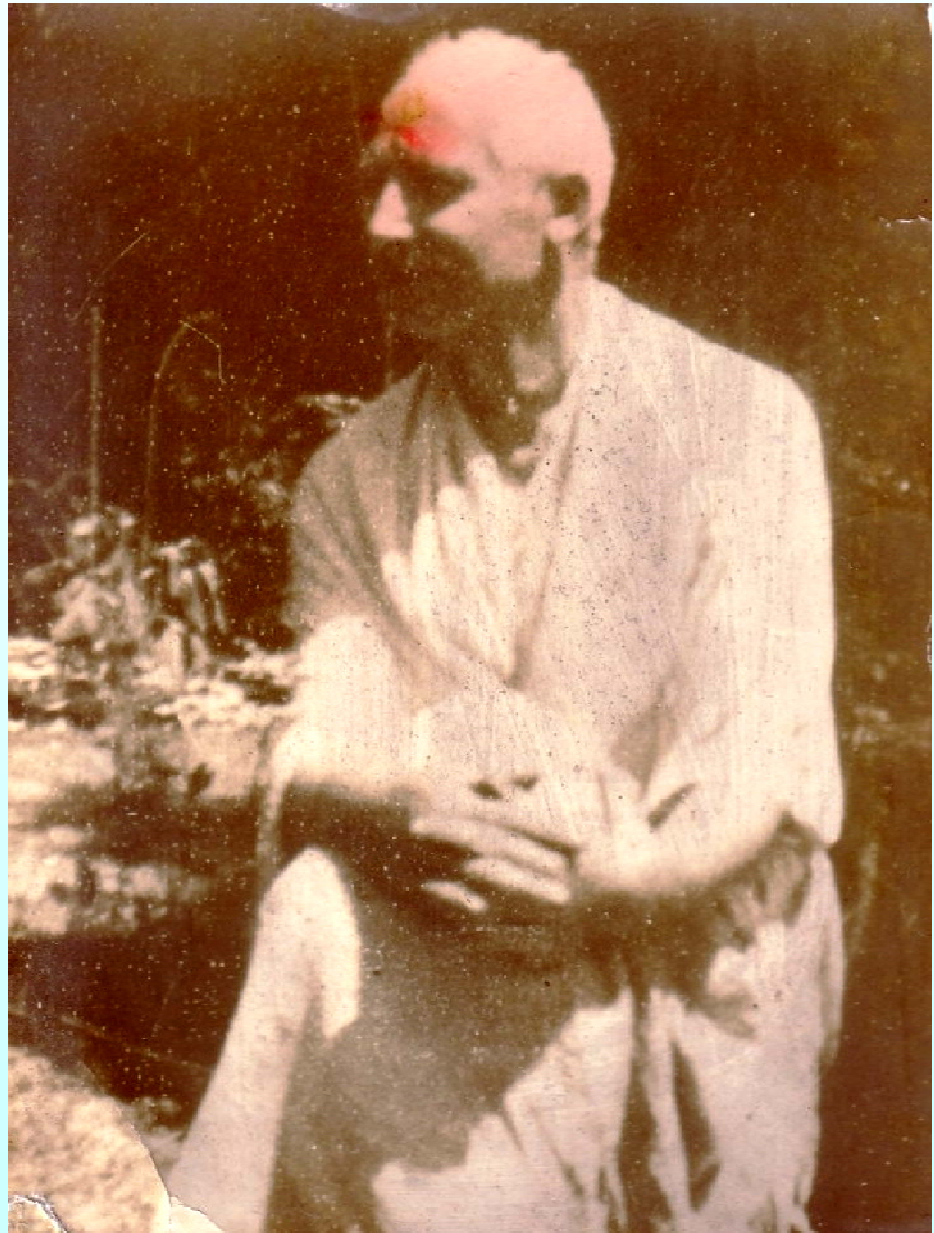
Gradually the distinction between them (older/younger, senior/junior, guru/shishya) metamorphosed into a friendship.



Prompted by  
inner perception,  
they abandoned  
the orthodox  
framework that  
had guided their  
early growth.



Only that part  
of the temple  
ritual was  
retained  
which spoke  
directly of the  
inner enquiry.



The transition was not without glitches



Oh no! Ashish! Not like that ...

Soon their separateness dissolved. One began a thought, the other completed it.





Gradually the mantle was transferred.



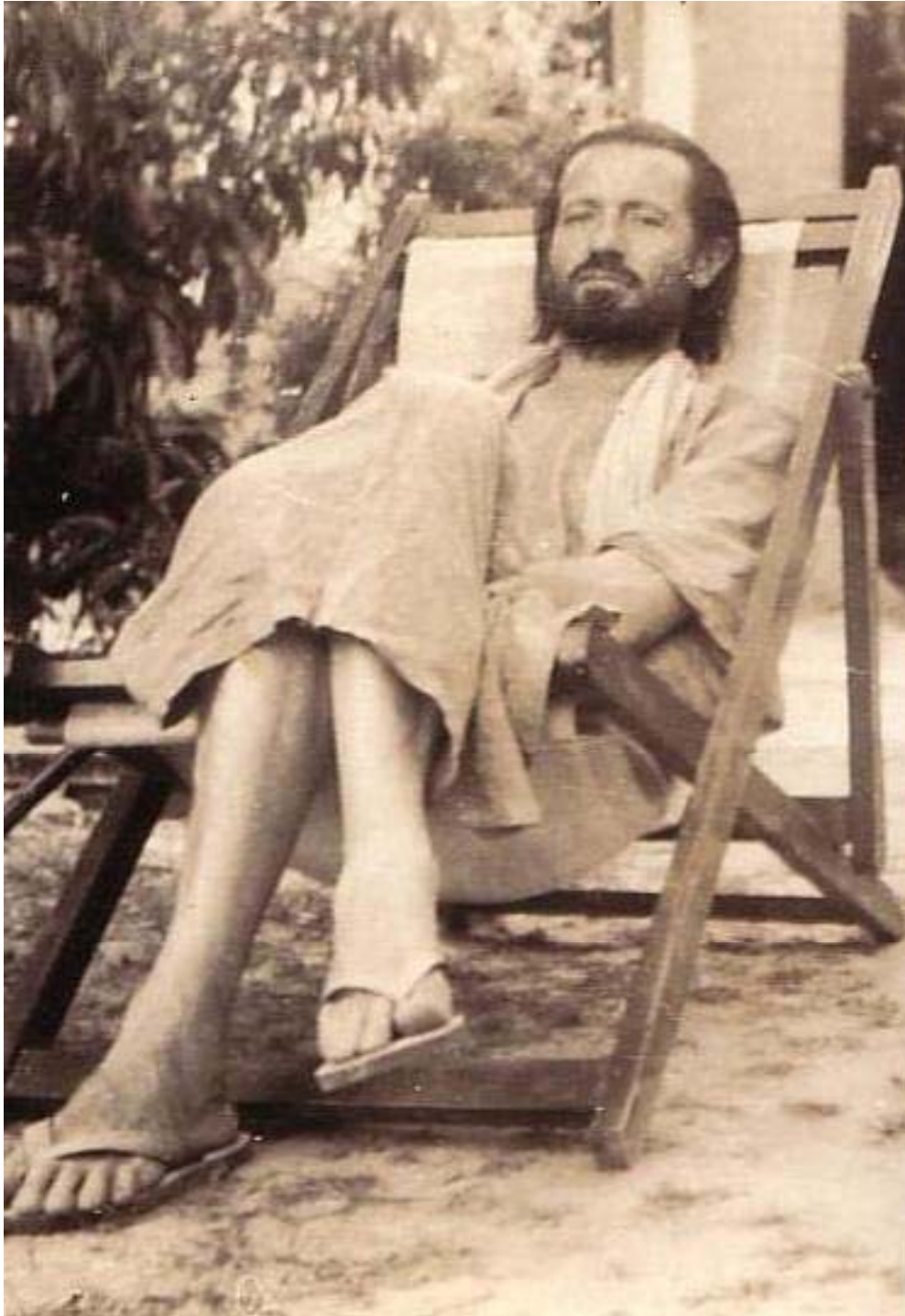


He was no  
longer a seeker,  
but one who  
had found.  
It was not long  
before his  
'ship' would set  
sail.



Where once  
there were  
Two,  
now stood  
One.





Alone he  
grieved;  
his being  
saturated  
with the  
sayings of  
Gopalda.



But the discipline  
had done its work.  
He was a man who  
had already found  
the source of  
stimulus within  
himself. The inner  
life was his only  
determinant.



Meanwhile, disciples started to  
gather around him ...

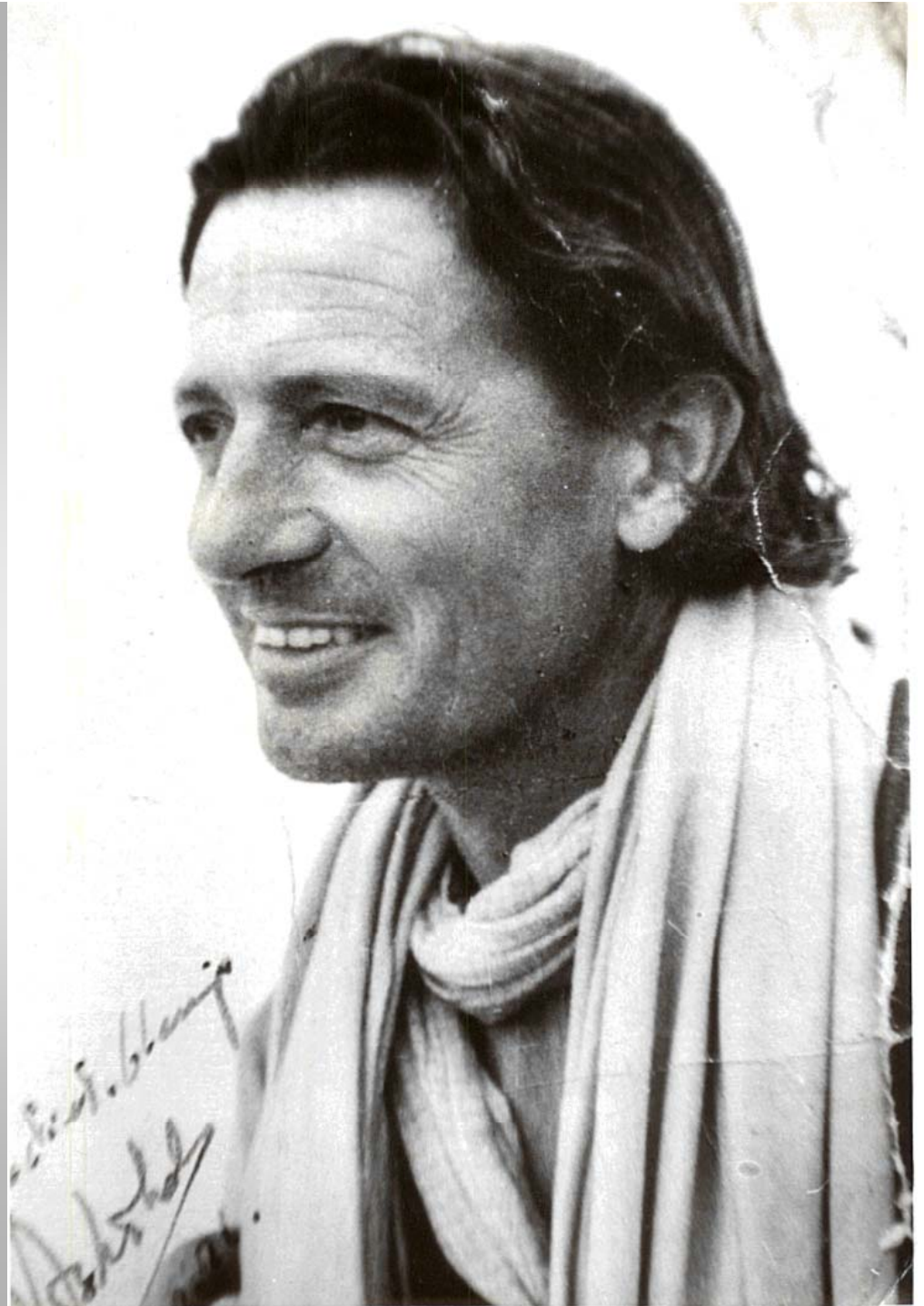




Increasingly,  
people were  
projecting on  
to his  
Christ-like  
looks.



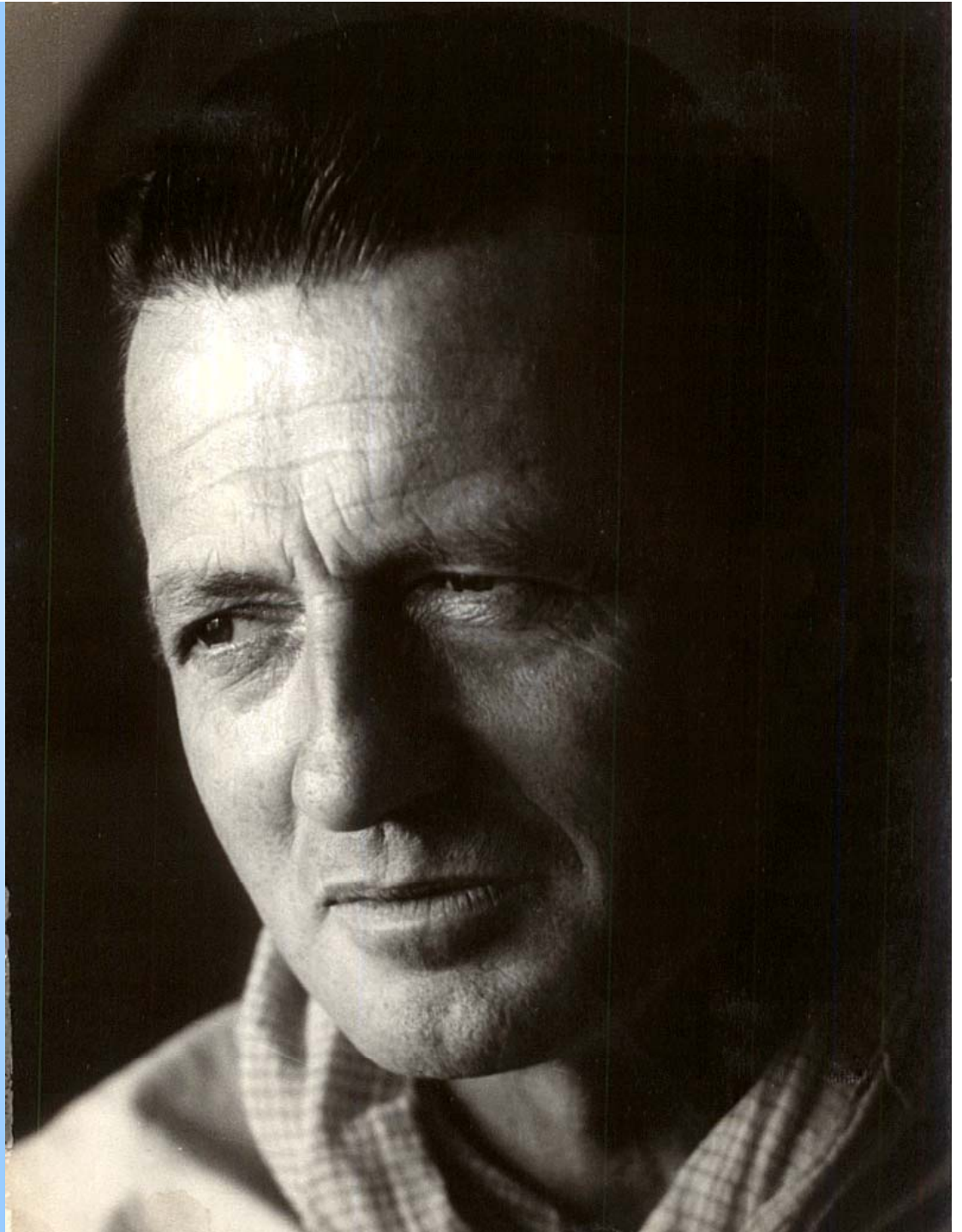
So off went  
the beard.





But he was  
mistaken! The  
projection did  
not end.

Now it was  
Clint  
Eastwood!





He had already  
been joined by  
a young Dev  
who, in time,  
shouldered the  
responsibility  
of running the  
Ashram.



This allowed him the freedom to teach  
the ever-growing band of disciples.



In non-  
sectarian  
terms he  
taught about  
the mystery  
lying at the  
heart of the  
inner search.







From ordinary  
activities and  
everyday emotions a  
secret needed to be  
coaxed out,  
a new awareness  
discovered that  
would lead to the  
mystery of being.



The 'Work'  
required that  
nothing be rejected.  
The body, the mind  
and the emotions  
all had to be  
harnessed with a  
single intent – to  
find yourself.

The hours spent in manual work would be an offering. The resistance to this effort would be tempered by introspection.



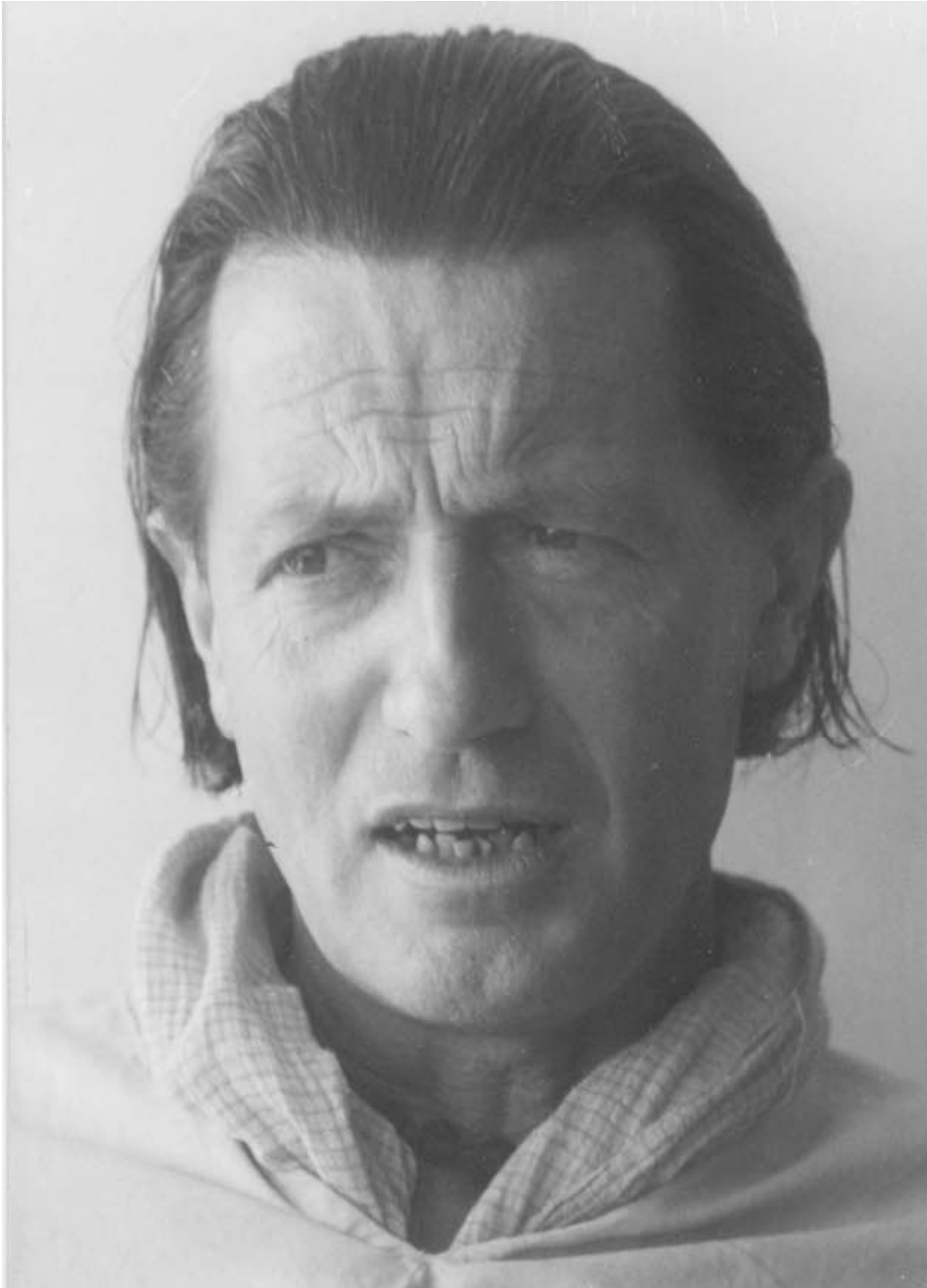
Meditation would help stop the internal chatter of the mind. And the complexity of the emotional nature would be unravelled by dream analysis.





Thus purified, the  
disciple may  
become '*An Open  
Window*'.

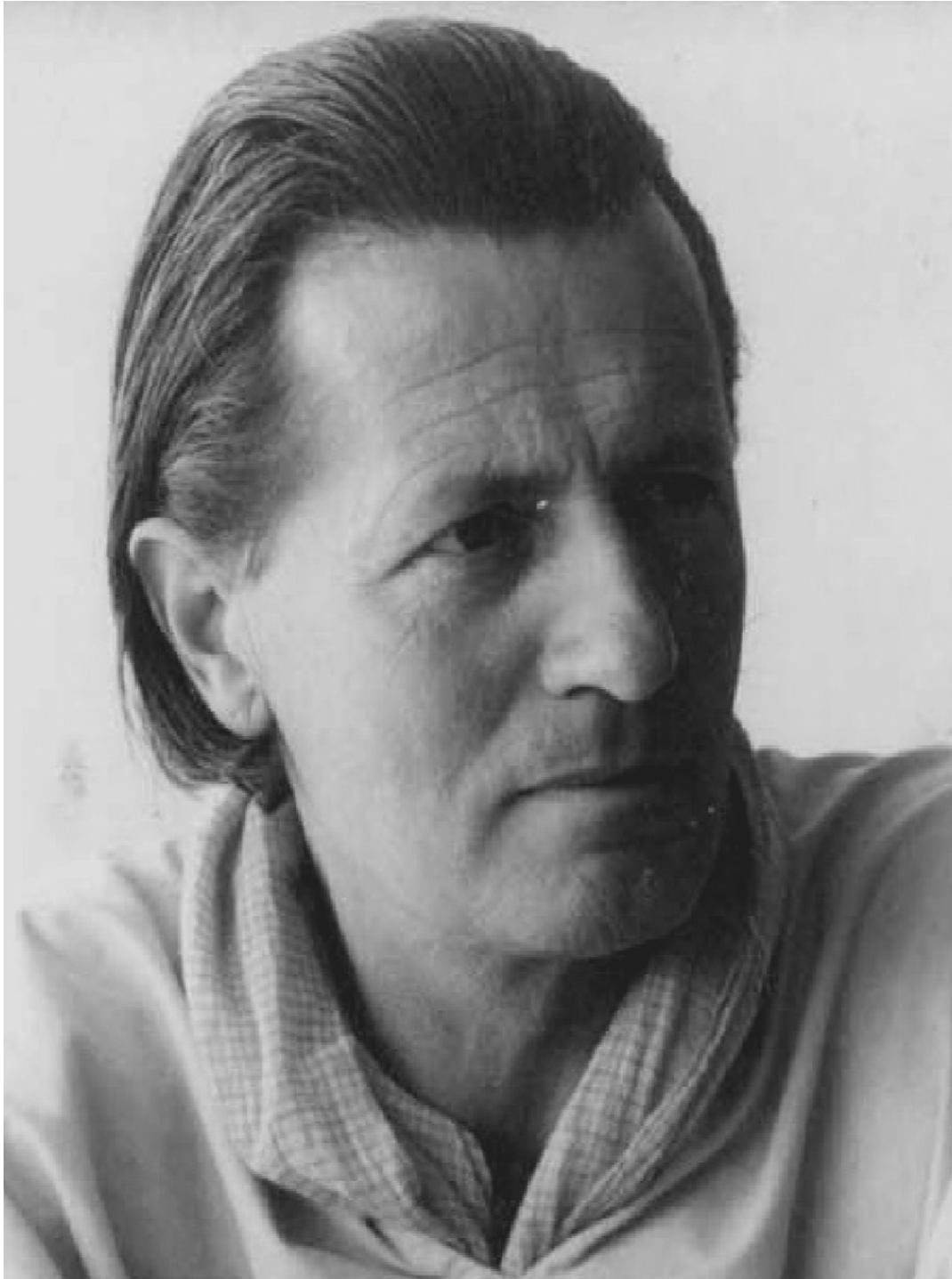
Besides allowing  
light into the  
room, window  
panes also reflect  
the light from  
within the room.



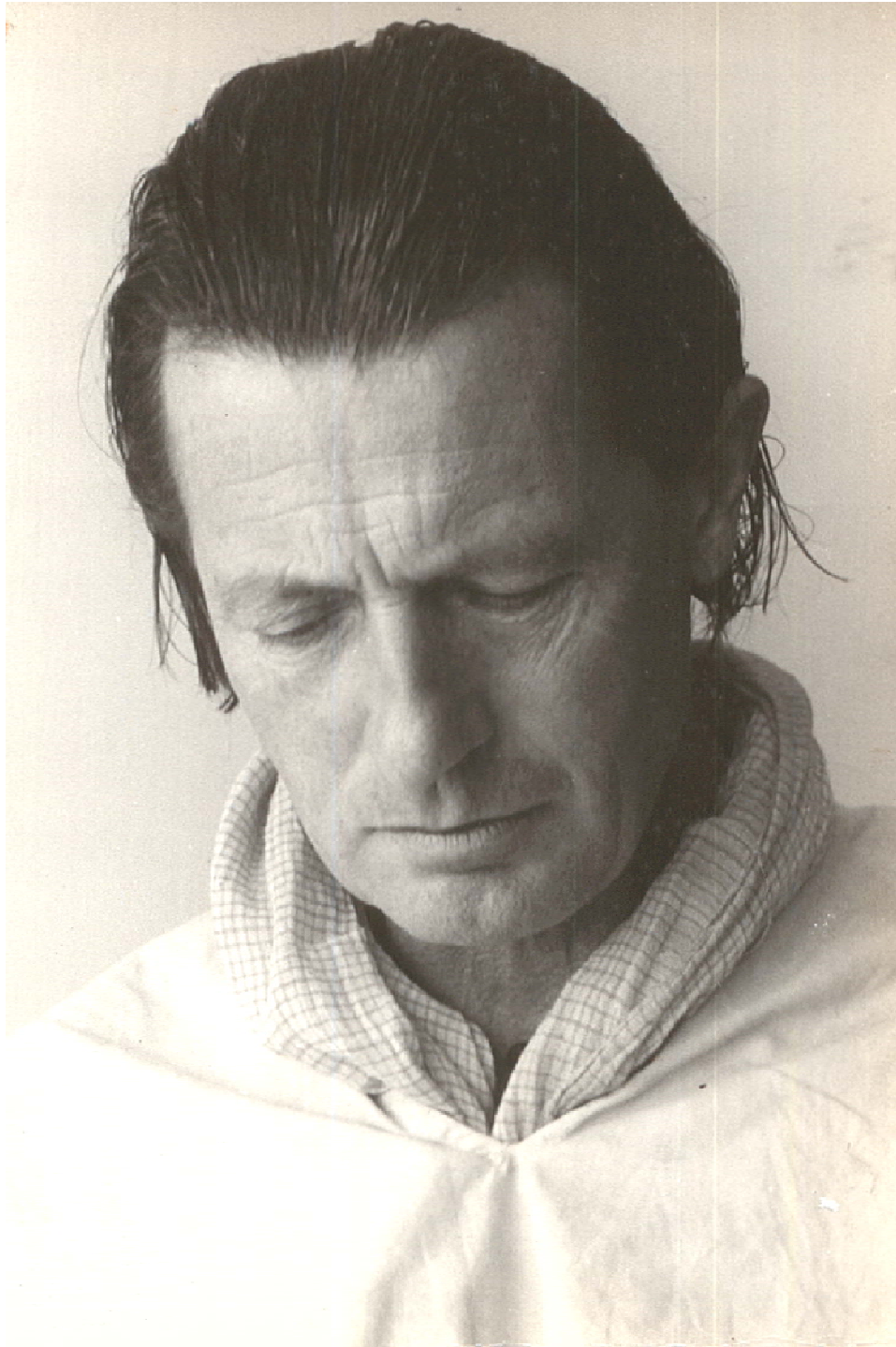
Psychological  
work would  
clean the  
reflected  
image that  
stands between  
us and the real  
world.

“The root of the mystery lies at the root of our being, somewhere in our awareness. When that self-awareness is traced to its inner source, then only can the identity of the individual with the Universal be found. Then only can the mystery of being be solved.”





Self  
remembering  
would centre the  
disciple beyond  
the ego, and  
make his/her  
outer life  
pirouette around  
the inner.



Meditation  
would get the  
eyes to  
perceive the  
light beyond  
the glass —  
light that at  
first seems to  
be darkness.



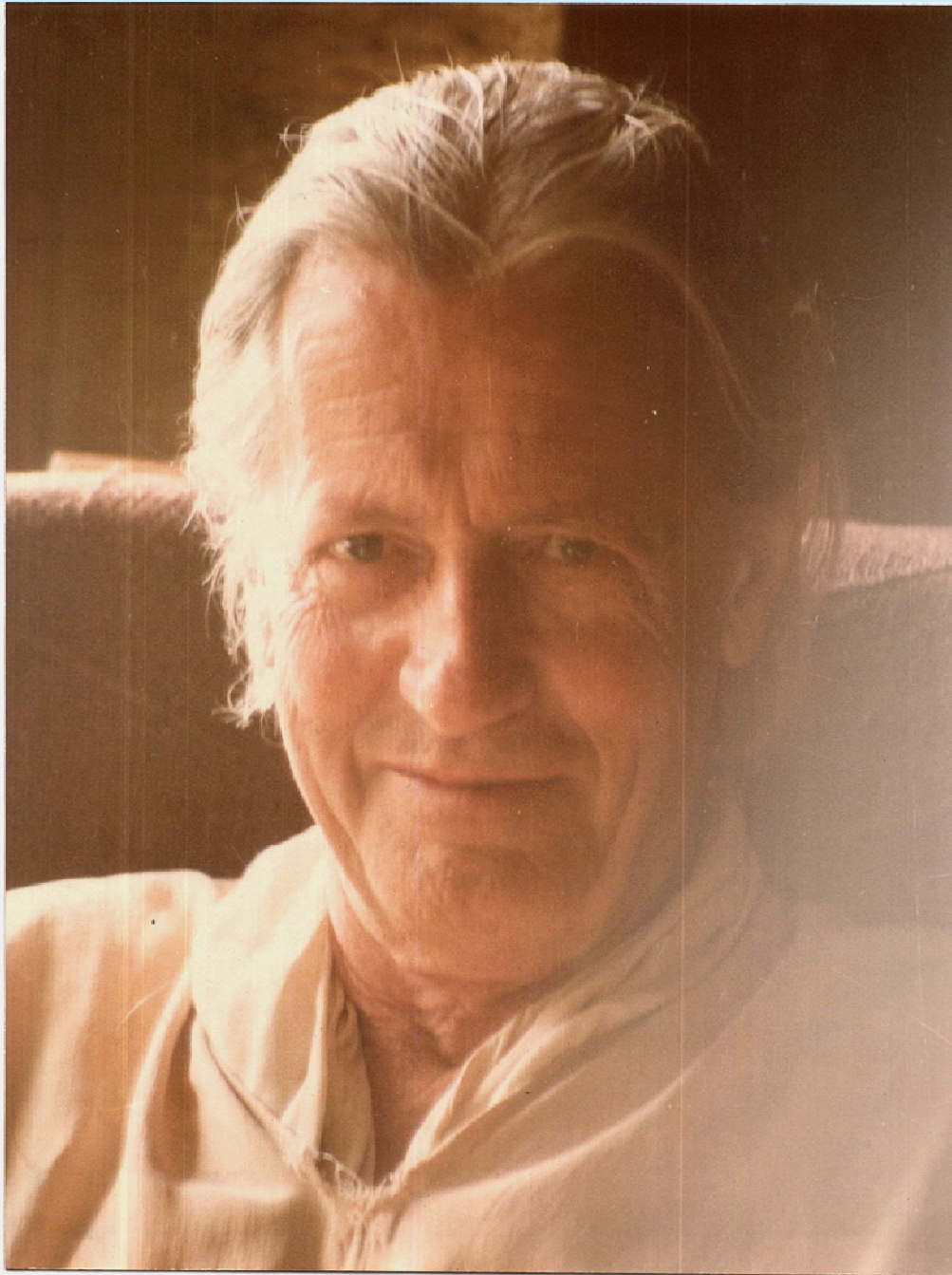
Gradually the  
mirror of  
dream may  
become the  
window of  
vision.



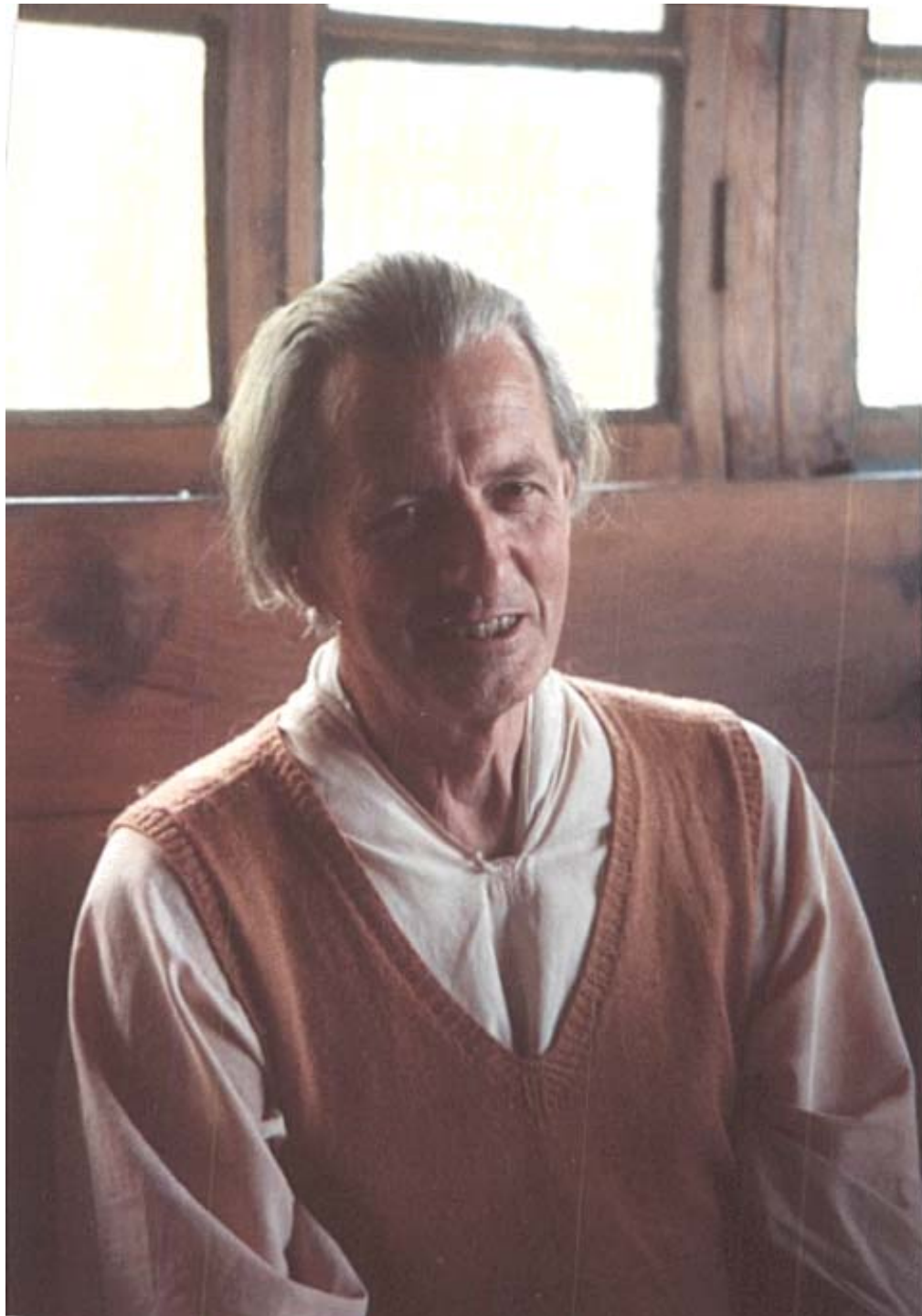


But before uniting with the Eternal, one must first unite with the beloved in the here and now. Learn to submit to your spouse, so that like twin stars both revolve around a common centre of gravity -- Love.





He advised -- Look  
for the promise of  
perfection in each  
other – the ability to  
love, the ability to  
change, the vision of  
a fulfillment that lies  
beyond ego-  
gratifications....  
Don't sleep over a  
fight.



Cut off negative feelings: petty grievances are a poor substitute for personal honesty. Don't blame the other but examine your own attitude. This is the self-discipline love demands.



ASHISHDA



Love also meant  
a harmonious  
inter-relationship  
with all things --  
inner and outer.  
His extended to a  
concern for the  
environment he  
lived in.

The Kumaon he loved was dying: over-cultivated, over-grazed, denuded of forest cover.







He wrote, ran pilot studies, served on the Planning Commission Committees. His efforts acknowledged with a Padmashree.



Not only was Mirtola a place where undistracted the inner enquiry could be pursued, it was also a model ecological project for the villages around.

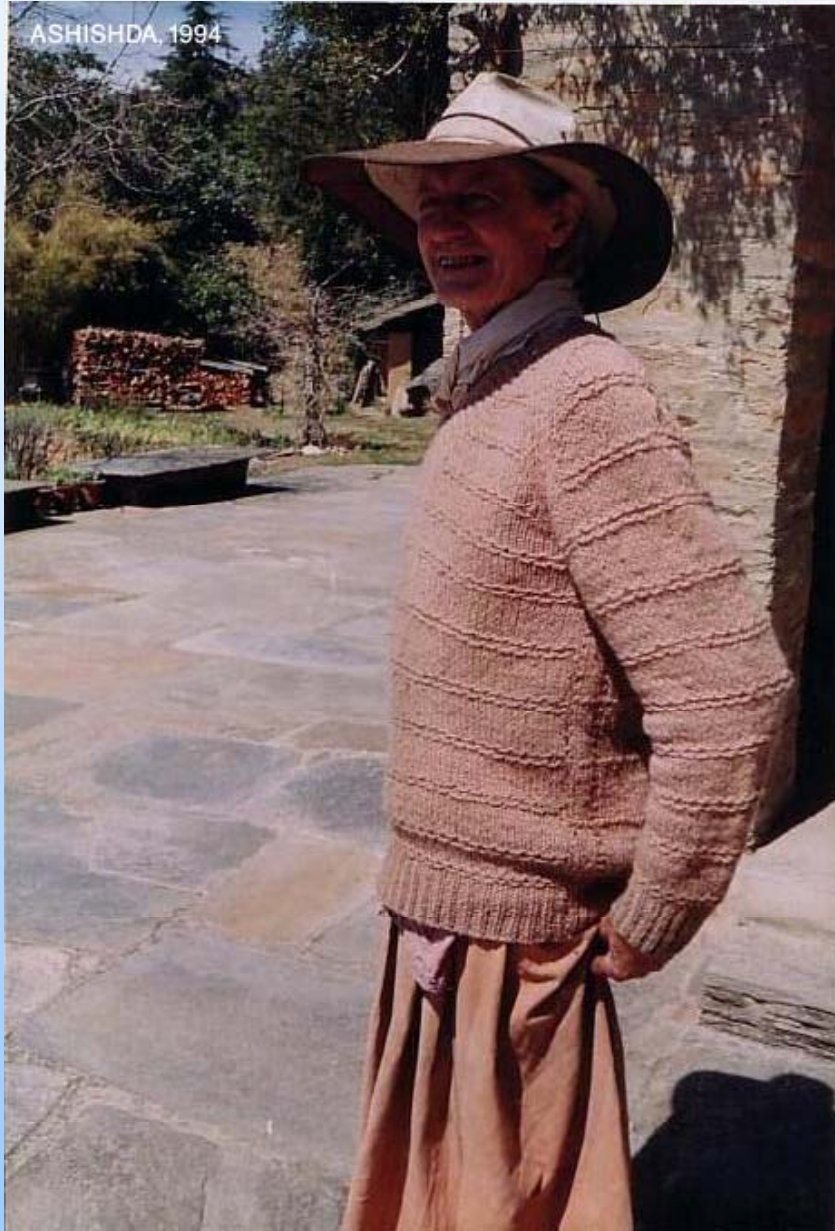




Both inwardly and outwardly, he had broken  
free of the limitations of human consciousness  
into broader realms.

He was truly a man of knowledge.





However, even  
a man of  
knowledge  
needs  
protection  
from the Sun  
and sometimes  
the need to  
scratch!





Astride the bird  
of life he pointed  
the Way, as does  
the Evening Star  
to those in  
darkness.

Like Gopalda, he  
was the tangible  
proof of the  
Intangible.



Lore has it that  
there is always a  
comet in the sky  
when a great man  
passes on...

There was at  
Gopalda's time.

In 1997 there was  
Hale-Bopp.



He said, “What matters is not what may happen to the body, but that you should be centred on what is beyond the body.”

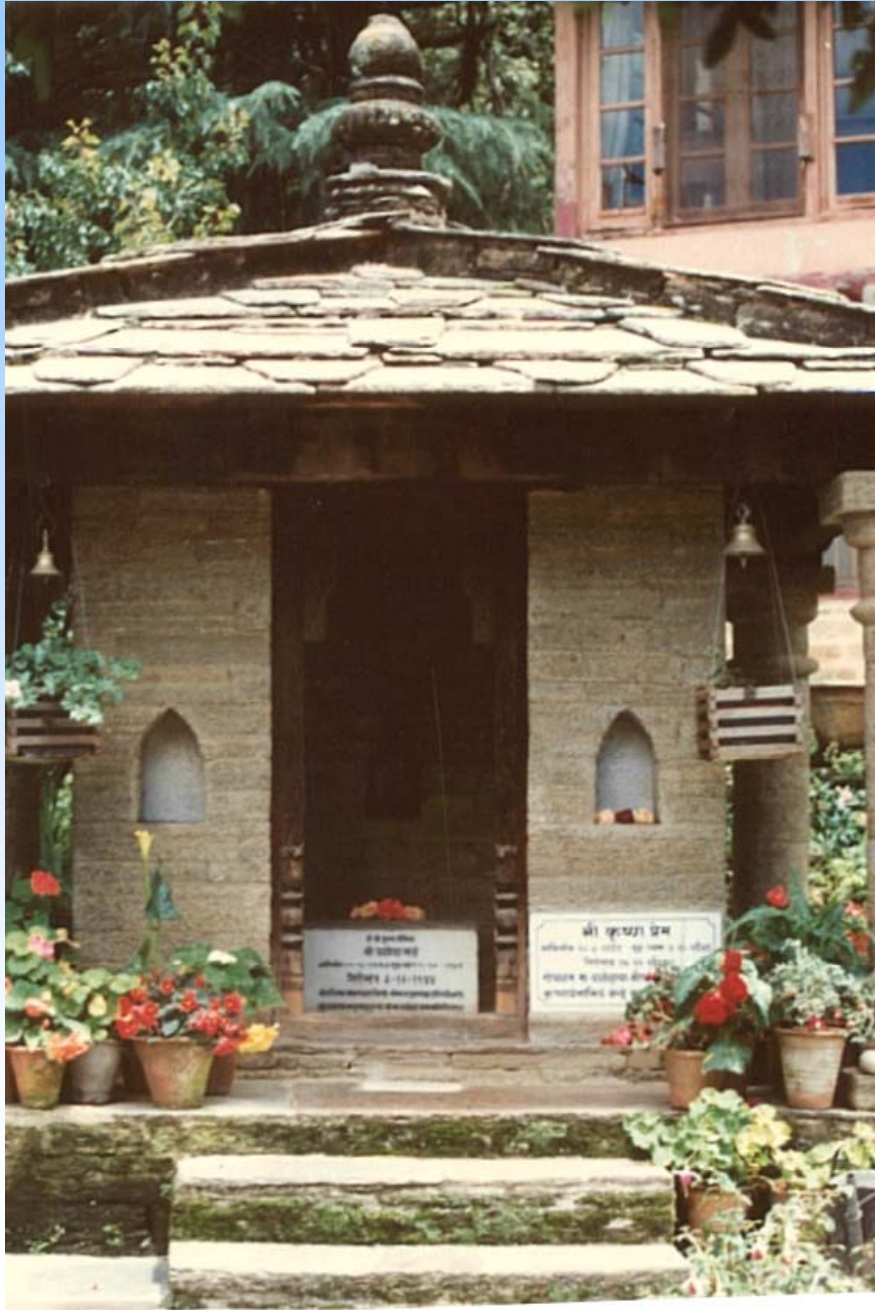






Love is the guide,  
And love is the  
goal,  
Where'er love's  
camels turn,  
The one true way  
is there.





Of course, there is grief, but love and grief go together. We have lost him, yet not lost him. There lies the paradox.





He promised no  
wonders and no  
automatic  
liberation, only a  
connection that  
would never be  
dropped even if  
we ourselves let  
go of it.

