1. Brahma first of the Gods was born, the creator of all, the world’s protector; he to Atharvan, his eldest son, declared the God-knowledge in which all sciences have their foundation.

2. The God-knowledge by Brahma declared to Atharvan, Atharvan of old declared to Angir; he to Satyavaha the Bharadwaja told it, the Bharadwaja to Angiras, both the higher and the lower knowledge.

3. Shaunaka, the great house-lord, came to Angiras in the due way of the disciple and asked of him, “Lord, by knowing what does all this that is become known?”

4. To him thus spoke Angiras: Twofold is the knowledge that must be known of which the knowers of the Brahman tell, the higher and the lower knowledge.
5. Of which the lower, the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda, chanting, ritual, grammar, etymological interpretation, and prosody and astronomy. And then the higher by which is known the Immutable.

6. That the invisible, that the unseizable, without connections, without hue, without eye or ear, that which is without hands or feet, eternal, pervading, which is in all things and impalpable, that which is Imperishable, that which is the womb of creatures sages behold everywhere.

7. As the spider puts out and gathers in, as herbs spring up upon the earth, as hair of head and body grow from a living man, so here all is born from the Immutable.

8. Brahman grows by his energy at work, and then from Him is Matter born, and out of Matter life, and mind and truth and the worlds, and in works immortality.

9. He who is the Omniscient, the all-wise, He whose energy is all made of knowledge, from Him is born this that is Brahman here, this Name and Form and Matter.
1. This is That, the Truth of things: works which the sages beheld in the Mantras were manifoldly extended. Works do ye perform religiously with one passion for the Truth; this is your road to the heaven of good deeds.

2. When the fire of the sacrifice is kindled and the flame sways and quivers, then between the double pourings of butter cast therein with faith thy offerings.

3. For he whose altar-fires are empty of the new-moon offering and the full-moon offering and the offering of the rains and the offering of the first fruits, or unfed, or fed without right ritual, or without guests or without the dues to the Vishwa-Devas, destroys his hope of all the seven worlds.

4. Kali, the black, Karali, the terrible, Manojava, thought-swift, Sulohita, blood-red, Sudhumravarna, smoke-hued, Sphulingini, scattering sparks, Vishwaruchi, the all-beautiful, these are the seven swaying tongues of the fire.

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1. The inspired verses of the Veda.
2. The second of the four ages.
5. He who in these when they are blazing bright performs the rites, in their due season, him his fires of sacrifice take and they lead him, these rays of the Sun, there where the Overlord of the gods is the Inhabitant on high.

6. “Come with us”, “Come with us”, they cry to him, these luminous fires of sacrifice, and they bear him by the rays of the Sun speaking to him pleasant words of sweetness, doing him homage, “This is your holy world of Brahman and the heaven of your righteousness.”

7. But frail are the ships of sacrifice, frail these forms of sacrifice, all the eighteen of them, in which are declared the lower works; fools are they who hail them as the highest good and they come yet again to this world of age and death.

8. They who dwell shut within the Ignorance and they hold themselves for learned men thinking “We, even we are the wise and the sages”—fools are they and they wander around beaten and stumbling like blind men led by the blind.

9. They dwell in many bonds of the Ignorance, children thinking, “We have achieved our aim of Paradise”; for when the
men of works are held by their affections, and arrive not at the Knowledge, then they are overtaken by anguish, then their Paradise wastes by enjoying and they fall from their heavens.

10. Minds bewildered who hold the oblation offered and the well dug for the greatest righteousness and know not any other highest good, on the back of heaven they enjoy the world won by their righteousness and enter again this or even a lower world.

11. But they who in the forest follow after faith and self-discipline, calm and full of knowledge, living upon alms, cast from them the dust of their passions, and through the gate of the Sun they pass on there where is the Immortal, the Spirit, the Self undecaying and imperishable.

12. The seeker of the Brahman, having put to the test the worlds piled up by works, arrives at world-distaste, for not by work done is reached He who is Uncreated. For the knowledge of That, let him approach, fuel in hand, a Guru, one who is learned in the Veda and is devoted to contemplation of the Brahman.

3 Or, “He, the uncreated, lives not by that which is made.” Literally, “not by the made (or, by that which is done) the Unmade (He who is uncreated)”.

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13. To him because he has taken entire refuge with him, with a heart tranquillised and a spirit at peace, that man of knowledge declares in its principles the science of the Brahman by which one comes to know the Immutable Spirit, the True and Real.
CHAPTER TWO: SECTION I

1. This is That, the Truth of things: as from one high-kindled fire thousands of different sparks are born and all have the same form of fire, so, O fair son, from the immutable manifold becomings are born and even into that they depart.

2. He, the divine, the formless Spirit, even he is the outward and the inward and he the Unborn; he is beyond life, beyond mind, luminous, Supreme beyond the immutable.

3. Life and mind and the senses are born from Him and the sky, and the wind, and light, and the waters and earth upholding all that is.

4. Fire is the head of Him and his eyes are the Sun and Moon, the quarters his organs of hearing and the revealed Vedas are his voice, air is his breath, the universe is his heart, Earth lies at his feet. He is the inner Self in all beings.

5. From Him is fire, of which the Sun is the fuel, then rain...
from the Soma, herbs upon the earth, and the male casts his seed into woman: thus are these many peoples born from the Spirit.

6. From Him are the hymns of the Rig Veda, the Sama and the Yajur, initiation, and all sacrifices and works of sacrifice, and dues given, the year and the giver of the sacrifice and the worlds, on which the moon shines and the sun.

7. And from Him have issued many gods, and demi-gods and men and beasts and birds, the main breath and downward breath, and rice and barley, and askesis and faith and Truth, and chastity and rule of right practice.

8. The seven breaths are born from Him and the seven lights and kinds of fuel and the seven oblations and these seven worlds in which move the life-breaths set within with the secret heart for their dwelling-place, seven and seven.

9. From Him are the oceans and all these mountains and from Him flow rivers of all forms, and from Him are all plants, and sensible delight which makes the soul to abide with the material elements.
10. The Spirit is all this universe; He is works and askesis and the Brahman, supreme and immortal. O fair son, he who knows this hidden in the secret heart, scatters even here in this world the knot of the Ignorance.

CHAPTER TWO: SECTION II

1. Manifested, it is here set close within, moving in the secret heart, this is the mighty foundation and into it is consigned all that moves and breathes and sees. This that is that great foundation here, know, as the Is and Is-not, the supremely desirable, greatest and the Most High, beyond the knowledge of creatures.

2. That which is the Luminous, that which is smaller than the atoms, that in which are set the worlds and their peoples, That is This, — it is Brahman immutable: life is That, it is speech and mind. That is This, the True and Real, it is That which is immortal: it is into That that thou must pierce, O fair son, into That penetrate.

3. Take up the bow of the Upanishad, that mighty weapon, set to it an arrow sharpened by adoration, draw the bow with a heart wholly devoted to the contemplation of That, and O fair son, penetrate into That as thy target, even into the Immutable.
4. OM is the bow and the soul is the arrow, and That, even the Brahman, is spoken of as the target. That must be pierced with an unflinching aim; one must be absorbed into That as an arrow is lost in its target.

5. He in whom are inwoven heaven and earth and the mid-region, and mind with all the life-currents, Him know to be the one Self; other words put away from you: this is the bridge to immortality.

6. Where the nerves are brought close together like the spokes in the nave of a chariot-wheel, this is He that moves within,—there is He manifoldly born. Meditate on the Self as OM and happy be your passage to the other shore beyond the darkness.

7. The Omniscient, the All-wise, whose is this might and majesty upon the earth, is this self enthroned in the divine city of the Brahman, in his ethereal heaven.

8. A mental being, leader of the life and the body, has set a heart in matter, in matter he has taken his firm foundation.
By its knowing the wise see everywhere around them That which shines in its effulgence, a shape of Bliss and immortal.

9. The knot of the heart-strings is rent, cut away are all doubts, and a man’s works are spent and perish, when is seen That which is at once the being below and the Supreme.

10. In a supreme golden sheath the Brahman lies, stainless, without parts. A Splendour is That, It is the Light of Lights, It is That which the self-knowers know.

11. There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not, how then shall burn this earthly fire? All that shines is but the shadow of his shining; all this universe is effulgent with his light.

12. All this is Brahman immortal, naught else; Brahman is in front of us, Brahman behind us, and to the south of us and to the north of us and below us and above us; it stretches everywhere. All this is Brahman alone, all this magnificent universe.

4 Or, “to the right and the left of us”.
CHAPTER THREE: SECTION I

1. Two birds, beautiful of wing, close companions, cling to one common tree: of the two one eats the sweet fruit of the tree, the other eats not but watches his fellow.

2. The soul is the bird that sits immersed on the one common tree; but because he is not lord he is bewildered and has sorrow. But when he sees that other who is the Lord and beloved, he knows that all is His greatness and his sorrow passes away from him.

3. When, a seer, he sees the Golden-hued, the maker, the Lord, the Spirit who is the source of Brahman, then he becomes the knower and shakes from his wings sin and virtue; pure of all stain he reaches the supreme identity.

4. This is the life in things that shines manifested by all these beings; a man of knowledge coming wholly to know this, draws back from creeds and too much disputings. In the Self his delight, at play in the Self, doing works, — the best is he among the knowers of the Eternal.

5 Or, “whose source is Brahman”; Shankara admits the other meaning as an alternative, but explains it as “the source of the lower Brahman”.

6 Or, “pure of all staining tinge he reaches to a supreme equality.”
5. The Self can always be won by truth, by self-discipline, by integral knowledge, by a life of purity,—this Self that is in the inner body, radiant, made all of light whom by the perishing of their blemishes the doers of askesis behold.

6. It is Truth that conquers and not falsehood; by Truth was stretched out the path of the journey of the gods, by which the sages winning their desire ascend there where Truth has its supreme abode.

7. Vast is That, divine, its form unthinkable; it shines out subtler than the subtle: very far and farther than farness, it is here close to us, for those who have vision it is even here in this world; it is here, hidden in the secret heart.

8. Eye cannot seize, speech cannot grasp Him, nor these other godheads; not by austerity can he be held nor by works: only when the inner being is purified by a glad serenity of knowledge, then indeed, meditating, one beholds the Spirit indivisible.

9. This Self is subtle and has to be known by a thought-mind

7 Or, “minuter than the minute”.

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into which the life-force has made its fivefold entry: all the conscious heart of creatures is shot through and inwoven with the currents of the life-force and only when it is purified can this Self manifest its power.  

10. Whatever world the man whose inner being is purified sheds the light of his mind upon, and whatsoever desires he cherishes, that world he takes by conquest, and those desires. Then, let whosoever seeks for success and well-being approach with homage a self-knower.

CHAPTER THREE: SECTION II

1. He knows this supreme Brahman as the highest abiding place in which shines out, inset, the radiant world. The wise who are without desire and worship the Spirit pass beyond this sperm.  

2. He who cherishes desires and his mind dwells with his longings, is by his desires born again wherever they lead him, but the man who has won all his desire and has found his soul, for him even here in this world vanish away all desires.

8 The verb *vibhavati* seems here to have a complex sense and to mean, “to manifest its full power and pervading presence”.

9 Shankara takes it so in the sense of semen virile, which is the cause of birth into the cosmos. But it is possible that it means rather “pass beyond this brilliant universe”, the radiant world which has just been spoken of, to the greater Light which is its abiding place and source, the supreme Brahman.

10 Or, “finished with desires”.
3. This Self is not won by exegesis, nor by brain-power, nor by much learning of Scripture. Only by him whom It chooses can It be won; to him this Self unveils its own body.

4. This Self cannot be won by any who is without strength, nor with error in the seeking, nor by an askesis without the true mark: but when a man of knowledge strives by these means his self enters into Brahman, his abiding place.

5. Attaining to him, seers glad with fullness of knowledge, perfected in the Self, all passions cast from them, tranquillised,—these, the wise, come to the all-pervading from every side, and, uniting themselves with him, enter utterly the All.

6. Doers of askesis who have made sure of the aim\textsuperscript{11} of the whole-knowledge of Vedanta, the inner being purified by the Yoga of renunciation, all in the hour of their last end passing beyond death are released into the worlds of the Brahman.

\textsuperscript{11} Or, “meaning.”
7. The fifteen parts return into their foundations, and all the gods pass into their proper godheads, works and the Self of Knowledge,—all become one in the Supreme and Imperishable.

8. As rivers in their flowing reach their home in the ocean and cast off their names and forms, even so one who knows is delivered from name and form and reaches the Supreme beyond the Most High, even the Divine Person.

9. He, verily, who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes himself Brahman; in his lineage none is born who knows not the Brahman. He crosses beyond sorrow, he crosses beyond sin, he is delivered from the knotted cord of the secret heart and becomes immortal.

10. This is That declared by the Rig Veda. Doers of works, versed in the Veda, men absorbed in the Brahman, who putting their faith in the sole-seer offer themselves to him sacrifice,—to them one should speak this Brahman-knowledge, men by whom the Vow of the Head has been done according to the rite.

12 Or, "come to their end".
11. This is That, the Truth of things, which the seer Angiras spoke of old. This none learns who has not performed the Vow of the Head. Salutation to the seers supreme! Salutation to the seers supreme!