

**THIRUGOKARNAM**  
**HYMNS FROM THEVARAM**  
BY  
**THIRUGNANASAMBANDAMURTI SWAMIGAL**  
AND  
**THIRUNAVUKKARASU SWAMIGAL**  

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With Translation in English verse

BY  
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## PREFACE.

Thirugnanasambandamurthy Swamigal and Thirunavukkarasu Swamigal are two of the great Saivite saints and seers who have glorified Tamil Literature with their inspired devotional poetry. God Siva is the noble theme of their hymns, full of enchanting lyrical descriptions and soul-lifting sentiments. Numerous are the shrines celebrated in their songs and these shrines have come to be famous as "shrines that have earned songs" ("பாடல் பெற்ற ஸ்தலங்கள்"). Thirugokarnam is one of these noble shrines immortalised in their songs.

The religious importance of Thirugokarnam is well known. Here we find a rare manifestation of the Siva Lingam. It takes the shape of a cow's ear and hence the place is called Gokarnam. The sacred tradition is that it is the Lingam which Ravana, after severe penance, extracted from God Siva. In making the gift, God Siva imposed the condition that Ravana should carry the Lingam all the way to Lanka and that if he placed it down anywhere it would take root. If Ravana had succeeded in taking it to Lanka and in installing it there, he and his kingdom would have become immortal and the story of Ramayanam would have had a different end. The Gods trembled at this prospect. They approached God Vigneswara for help. He agreed to help them and dressed as a small boy he accosted Ravana who was speeding from Kailas to Lanka with the Lingam. Having come a long way with the Lingam in his hands, Ravana desired to be relieved a little. He handed over the Lingam to the boy

and asked him to keep it for a while. The boy while agreeing to keep it threatened to place it down if Ravana did not come up by the time he was called thrice. The boy called him thrice and as Ravana had not come up, he put it down. And lo! the Lingam at once took root. Soon Ravana came up and saw what had happened. In towering rage he pulled at the Lingam with all his twenty hands but in vain. As a result of the violent pulling, the Lingam took the present shape resembling the ear of a cow as we see it now in Gokarnam.

His Holiness Sri La Sri Subramania Pandarasannadhi Avergal, the present Adhinakartar of the Thiruvavaduturai Adhinam, the famous Saivite institution in our country, desires keenly that the noble faith and ecstatic devotion enshrined in our Tamil hymns sung by these two and other saints should be widely popularised, especially where Tamil is not known. With this end in view he directed these sweet hymns on Gokarnam to be rendered into English, Hindi and Kannada. I rashly agreed to turn them into English verse. It is for my readers to judge especially those who know Tamil and have read these poems in original, whether my translation could in any measure be called a success. I am, however, deeply grateful to His Holiness for having given me this opportunity to dive into the depthless, rapturous devotion of these songs which have a cleansing quality like the waters of Gokarnam depicted by the immortal hymnists.

Tanjore.

S. Gopalan.

**From Thevaram**  
BY  
**Thirugnanasambandamurti Swamigal**

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**THIRUGOKARNAM.**

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1        Girt with thickly-wooded hills,  
          Where giant pythons roam,  
          Cooled by shady groves and gills  
          Lies fair Gokarnam ;  
          Thronged by pilgrims pious  
          Mighty Siva dwelleth there ;  
          He that shineth lustrous,  
          Bright with matted golden hair,—  
          Light that shines unbidden,  
          Save in those doubts-ridden,  
          From me never hidden,—  
          Central theme and meaning  
          Of all Tamil learning !

2        Fair is blessed Gokarnam,  
          Musical with tuneful bees,  
          That from honeyed flowers hum,—  
          Votive flowers that devotees,  
          Offer at his sacred feet.  
          Seated on his sacred Bull,  
          With his spouse he keeps this seat,—  
          He the bright and beautiful,  
          Who, all danger spurning,  
          Swallowed poison burning,  
          At the ocean-churning.



## Thirugokarnam

3        Here where streams and rills abound,  
          Full of freshes, flowers-strewn,  
Boring rocks and bursting round,  
          Into cascades, all sides down,  
Where the tuskers wander free,  
Sits the peerless One who told,  
          Underneath the banyan tree,  
Secrets in our scriptures old,  
          Sublimest philosophy !

4        Stags and bores and lions brave,  
          Elephants in youthful pair,  
Sheltered in Gokarnam's cave,  
Frisk and sport without a care,  
          Where resides great Siva fair,  
Billowing Ganga on his head,  
          With his eightfold hands that bear,  
Leaf-shaped sulam, three-pronged,  
          Hurling fire, pure wisdom's sign,  
Glowing bright with light divine.

5        Here where princes and their crew  
          And the huntsmen learn their skill,  
Armed with arrows sharp and true,  
          Where each coursing brook and rill  
Carries rarest cleansing powers,  
          Lives the Lord who wears a bright  
Crown of sacred leaves and flowers,  
          Symbol of the eremite.

## Thirugokarnam

3

- 6      Thrilling is the faith of men,  
         Thrilling every comer here,  
With the sacred Love of One  
         Whom the several sects revere,  
He the Mendicant divine,  
         Supplicant for charity,  
Hastening with his tinkling ring,  
And his Bull, in playful glee,  
He that owneth everything !
- 7      Here the healing waters cure  
         Damsels bathing with his name ;  
“Hara ! Hara !”, chanted pure  
         By their lips, proclaim His fame,  
Who to us gave “Kokkarai”  
         Played with conches and with bells,  
When tuneful lutes and pipes too ply,  
         Dancer who all rhythm makes  
Clad in bones and hooded snakes !
- 8      In Gokarnam, where hermits great,  
         Having crushed the senses five,  
On the Lord’s feet meditate,  
         Shunning all things fugitive,  
Liveth Siva, full of love,  
         Who to save the Kailas Hill,  
From the wicked Ravana’s move  
         To pluck it out by force and guile,  
Crushed his twenty hands until,  
         With his tenfold mouths he roared,  
Though but lightly stepped the Lord !

## Thirugokarnam

9

Here is Gokarnam the fair,  
 With millet-meadows odorous,  
 Where youthful maidens dry their hair,  
 Here is Siva glorious  
 He that measureless could grow  
 To Brahma and to Vishnu too ;  
 Who vainly sought his bounds to know,  
 But more and more he boundless grew.

10

Of Gokarnam is denizen  
 Siva great who fought the king,  
 Far-famed Arjun with names ten,  
 And gave him, after vanquishing,  
 All the blessings that he sought :  
 He that nipped each loveless thought  
 And tenet, by the faithless spread,  
 And with love his followers fed.

11

Those that sing these stanzas sweet,  
 With the love of Lord replete,  
 In honeyed Tamil, offerings meet  
 At great Siva's sacred feet,  
 Sung by *Gnanasambandam*  
 Who from Seerkali doth come,  
 Glorifying Gokarnam  
 Where sweet flowers their petals rain  
 From the mountain sides, will gain,  
 Wide renown *and Heaven* attain.

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ஸ்ரீ மகாபலேசர் --- Sri Mahabalesar.

**From Thevaram**  
by  
**Thirunavukkarasu Swamigal**

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**GOKARNAM**

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- 1      To the truly devoted unfailing,  
        With His beautiful matted locks trailing,  
Destroyer of demons that blackened the skies ;  
Lo ! Formless is He who all wisdom embodies :  
        Of four Vedas the Author,  
        Of all music the father,  
Of all scriptures the meaning sublime ;  
        Crowned with the crescent,  
        With cool Ganga ever present,  
Great Siva in Gokarnam lives for all time,  
        By ocean surrounded  
        In Grace unbounded.
- 2      Than all Gods he is greater,  
        Rescuer of Brahma, Creator,  
At the Deluge when all things perish ;  
Him like nectar his followers cherish ;  
        Of flowers he is smell  
        Who in Adhikai doth dwell  
On the banks of the Gadilam river.  
There is none to destroy Him and He endeth never.  
        Himself His peer  
        Who His forehead with ashes doth smear.

## Gokarnam

He made God Veerabhadra in His anger sheer.  
Owner of Kailas hill,  
Even to Brahma inscrutable,  
It is He that abides in Gokarnam still,  
By ocean surrounded,  
In grace unbounded.

3      With his matted locks flowing  
To the truly faithful, Radiance glowing,  
His form is the form of all Bliss unsurpassed ;  
Bathed in pure Ganges,  
Eternal, without changes,  
The home of five elements vast.  
Bright as lightning by his side  
Ever dwelleth his divine bride.  
He that foiled his scheming foes  
By destroying the elephant that rose  
And decked himself with its hide :  
It is He in Gokarnam doth abide  
By sea surrounded,  
In grace unbounded.

4      He that bears  
Fair Ganga in his hairs,  
Worshipped in Arur and Palanam ever ;  
The sea of love,  
Resplendent his brow  
That the white sacred ashes do cover ;  
He is the Monarch and One without second,

The inventor of dances jocund.  
Of flaming weapons he is armoury,  
Who shattered the magic fortresses three  
Fashioned by fiends in devilry ;  
Controller of demons, with His Grace  
Endowed for ever Gokarnam stays  
By sea surrounded,  
In grace unbounded.

- 5 Mount Meru is his bow divine,  
Fashioned of fire his arrows fine,  
By a look He destroyed the foul fortresses three,  
Of all elements he is composed ;  
Controller of demon host,  
He that danceth in fire  
When the universe ends entire ;  
Sweetest of food to His devotee,  
Sweetly fragrant his matted hair,  
Dweller in Gokarnam fair  
By sea surrounded  
In grace unbounded.

- 6 Adorned with the crescent  
His spouse by his side ever present  
He abides with a thousand beautiful names,  
He never dies nor was He ever born,  
The vile poison rank, .  
Unflinchingly he drank  
And let it his throat adorn.

He holds for his weapons the burning flames  
 And the world in his hands he carries  
 All music doth come  
 From the sound of his drum,  
 All Vedas he turns to melodious songs,  
 He is the noblest Dancer who tarries  
 In Gokarnam where he belongs.  
 By ocean surrounded  
 In grace unbounded.

- 7 With Him is the tallest peak crowned,  
 Of all Gods he is the most renowned;  
 To the noble three  
 Supreme is He !  
 The three-pronged Sulam grand  
 Glittering rests in his hand.  
 He is the noblest archer fine.  
 Even God Vishnu who with his feet  
 Measured out the world complete  
 Could not Him divine :  
 It is He that in Gokarnam doth shine  
 By ocean surrounded  
 In grace unbounded.

- 8 In His plaited hairs  
 The holy crescent he wears,  
 In mercy like ocean  
 The object of all devotion  
 Who birthless and deathless doth dwell for all time,  
 Of the fortresses three destroyer sublime,  
 There is none his form to discover.



The oceans and worlds seven  
 In his Being find haven,  
 Who never from his side doth his spouse sever,  
 It is His love that Gokarnam doth dower  
 By sea surrounded  
 In grace unbounded.

- 9      Column he is of measureless light  
         That baffled the vision and sight  
 Of Brahma and Vishnu who thought themselves  
    greater

He that in Veerattam is enshrined,  
 With His forehead eye rare  
 He reduced to ashes Manmatha fair,  
 All elements in Him are combined,  
 The black-throated Lord,  
 Controller of fiendish horde,  
 Wearing the holy crescent  
 With bees-thronged garlands pleasant,  
 It is He that in Gokarnam is present,  
     By ocean surrounded  
     In grace unbounded.

- 10      When Ravana tried  
         In his foolish pride,  
 With his twenty hands Kailas to uproot  
 It was Siva that crushed him with his foot  
     And later released him,  
     When he pleased Him •  
 By turning himself into a Veena sweet,  
     With his nerves for strings

**Gokarnam**

On which he smote

Melodious tunes

And earned his boons !

Bright with quelled poison at His throat,  
From the faithless minds ever in retreat  
Bearing all weapons of war in his hands  
Though none to oppose Him there stands,  
He, of the matted locks, brings  
All blessed things  
To Gokarnam, by sea surrounded,  
In grace unbounded.

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