



CHAPTER XLII

Protagoras (480 - 411 B.C)

Man is the Measure of All things.

One of the active Sophists of the Ancient Greek world, Protagoras, flourished in Greece as a teacher of wisdom for more than 40 years.

Starting with the doctrine of Heraclitus that “all is flux”, Protagoras holds that all things and beings of the natural world are subject to ceaseless change.

The philosopher claims that: “we cannot say about anything that it is thus or otherwise. We can only say how it is at that very moment that we observe it, for the next moment it will have changed.”

For Protagoras, judgments are relative. In general, man is the measure of all things, of what exists and what does not exist, what is likely to exist, and what is likely not to exist.

The epistemology of Protagoras is totally perceptual and expresses an unobjectionable subjectivism.

For Protagoras, there is no absolute truth. Everything is relative; every viewpoint can be doubted, and for each form of knowledge there can be skepticism.

Protagoras is teaching
his students.



PROTAGORAS

His dialectic is consistent with his epistemology. He declares that for anything whatever there are in every case two opinions, and one can support either the one or the other without leaving room for error, because conflicting arguments are natural to conflicting opinions.

Protagoras, with his subjectivism and relativism created a current of negative reflection among the youths of Athens, but he met with the preaching on Ethics and Values of Socrates, with the result that he limited his teaching to specific training sites without influencing society at large.



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