
On The Sharp Edge Of Falling

Out of many natural disasters, an earthquake is considered one of the most dangerous and evil. Until these recent days, the prediction of the shocks is one of the hardest tasks for the scientists to do. When the earthquake appears the giant cracks happen in the Earth's stone shell called lithosphere. The rising edges of the ripple emit elastic waves which propagate at a speed of several kilometers per second and quickly reach the Earth's surface causing catastrophic consequences. According to geological and seismological data, this is the result of a sudden discharge by dynamic stress caused by processes occurring in the bowels of the Earth. In some cases, the length of these cracks emerging from the depths of the planet to the surface reaches hundreds of kilometers and vertical and horizontal displacements of the edges of the rupture about several meters. An earthquake is a very tremendously dangerous natural disaster because the seismic strikes occur exceptionally quickly causing grave consequences in a matter of seconds, destroying cities and causing deaths of hundreds and thousands of inhabitants on our planet.

Sunday morning, 5 am, I open my eyes without an actual understanding if I am even awake. Something forces me to wake up, unnaturally open my eyelids, and pushes me out of my bed while pulling in the opposite direction; and it feels the gravitation of the earth changed from the original 9.8 to about as high as 25.7. Turning to another side, I try to close my eyes and fall asleep but suddenly my bed begins to lean to the side and my silky sheets and comforter slide towards the floor. In a full confusion, I sit on the bed holding on to the edge of my chair and trying to focus my vision. My sight immediately falls on the wall across from my bed covered with picture frames, posters from my favorite cartoons and awards. Walking up closer, I notice that some of the picture frames broke, pictures are hanging pictures out of them, and the pieces of glass are laying all over my carpet. To get a clearer understanding of what is happening at the moment, I look around the room and notice that my lamp on the ceiling is beginning to swing at a very slow speed from left to right. I walk further from the lamp to be safe and see how my books are sliding off the bookshelf ripping the pages as they collapse with each other falling on the ground and hitting their hardcovers on the dark wooden parquet. I rush quickly to pick them up and without realizing, accidentally step on a piece of glass that has been sticking out of the carpet with its sharp edge; small drops of blood begin to drip on my white carpet. Slowly crawling on the side and trying to protect myself from everything around me I work my very best to reach for the box of tissues to wipe the blood off of my foot. However, as I stand up, my legs begin to shake, and the feeling of unsteadiness overtakes me. I look around the room, and it seems that I am locked in a box of some sort and that somebody keeps shaking and spinning it from multiple altitudes.

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The fear rushes through my mind, and I begin to panic which causes my heart rate to rise, and my blood pressure to pulse in my head like as an echo giving me a tremendous headache. I try to call for my parents, but due to the shock and fear no noises are coming out of my mouth, I feel paralyzed and uncontrollable. Luckily my father rushes into the room to get me as I begin to faint, screaming: “ Earthquake! It's an earthquake! We must head downstairs!” I can't entirely walk because there is a small piece of glass that is stuck inside of my foot causing a lot of pain, every time I apply pressure; my father picks me up and carries me over to the living room. My father commands me to protect my head by placing my hands on it and commands me to sit under the table until he comes back. For the next five minutes, I sit alone under the table and look out every second trying to see my parents packing up stuff in the room across. Carrying a big bag with all the essential documents my parents run into the living room rushing to reassure that I am well and join me. We hear a loud and hard cracking noise, but at first, have been unaware of what it is. Then as we lean out of the table, we notice that the wall above us is beginning to crack, making it seem that it would crash on us like a sand castle. The crack moves along the wall from the very top of the ceiling to the bottom in nearly 10 seconds. Thinking that my life will end in a matter of seconds, I close up my eyes and hold my breath as I hug my knees to my chest. Next ten more minutes go by very slow as we keep ourselves in the same seated positions hoping for everything to be finally over having no idea of the future upcoming outcomes. My father asks to hold each other's hands and then he says with a slight smile: “The earthquake is over, trust me! We can get out now. ”After his words, the sweat of nervousness rushes through my body, and I almost begin to faint as the very salty tear drips down my face. All of the senses are slightly starting to come back to me forcing the fear to leave as I realize that my family and I are finally safe and well. During this first earthquake experience of mine, my family and I lived in Almaty, Kazakhstan which is a country between China and Russia, known for beautiful Zailiyskiy Alatau Mountains. Earthquakes have always been a problem for Almaty city since the magnitudes can reach up to 7-8. Overall many regions on Earth are more seismic than others are causing people who live in those regions to experience less or perhaps more earthquakes.

Some areas located around the faults which are breakages in the crust, or near active mountain building systems. For example, such countries as Turkey, Japan, Nepal, Ecuador, and Indonesia are considered countries with strong seismic activities. Our earth divides into four main layers: the inner core, outer core, mantle and crust where the tectonic plates locate. The place where the tectonic plates meet is called boundaries, and over the years there have been recorded a few different types. The first type is converging boundaries which are when two plates begin to move towards one another. The second type is called transforming boundaries during which the two plates are moving in the opposite directions from one another. The third type when the plates are moving away from each other is called diverging boundaries which cause earthquakes. Since the edges of the plates are rough, they get stuck while the rest of the tectonic plates continue to move; when the plate moves far enough, the edges suddenly unstick

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on one of the faults causing an earthquake. During the earthquake the energy outwards from the faults in different directions in the form of the seismic waves at a very rapid pace. Then the seismic waves begin to shake the earth as they move through, however, when they finally reach the surface of the earth they start to shake the ground and anything else that is on it causing damages to all human properties and lives. Scientists have always struggled with predicting the earthquakes, but at least they have learned how to record and measure them by using seismograms and seismogram recordings. Besides the tremendous damage to the human infrastructure and the cause of the deaths of millions of people all over the world, earthquakes cause such effects as landslides, liquefaction, and tsunamis. All of these factors make an earthquake a very powerful, yet unpredictable natural disaster that can be considered one of the most dangerous. Most importantly people seem to have passions to explore this topic and find many resources to answer questions, but the most accurate answer they will get is that this is nature and nature keeps its secrets well, trying to prevent human involvement and challenge the reality of life.

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