

# MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS

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## MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS

**Primary Disciplinary Field(s):** Psychology (Behavioral Science, Drive Theory), Comparative Religious Studies, Eschatological Analysis

### 1. Core Definition

The concept of **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** represents a hypothetical, ultimate psychological state of complete internal harmony and fulfilled existence, often situated within a framework derived conceptually from the pioneering work of behavioral psychologist Neal E. Miller. This highly specialized and perhaps obscure theoretical construct posits a culmination of psychological development where internal conflict, drive states, and associated anxieties are permanently resolved or transcended. The term synthesizes the empirical approach associated with Miller's research--particularly concerning conflict resolution and the mechanisms of reinforcement--with a highly aspirational, near-spiritual end-state of profound psychological well-being, denoted as 'Peace and Blessedness.' The inclusion of 'Neal Elgar' suggests a formal attribution to, or derivation from, Miller's expansive body of work on motivation and learning, even if the specific terminology itself remains niche within mainstream psychological literature.

Central to its definition is the concept's explicit analogical comparison to the **Second Coming of Christ**, a defining eschatological event in Christian theology. This comparison suggests that the achievement of the 'Peace and Blessedness' state represents a psychological apocalypse--not in the sense of destruction, but of revelation and definitive finality. Just as the Second Coming signifies the resolution of worldly spiritual struggle and the establishment of an ultimate, perfect divine order, the attainment of this Millerian state implies the absolute and final cessation of psychological struggle, ushering in a personal, internal perfection. This analogy elevates the concept beyond mere mental health, positioning it as the psychological telos--the ultimate aim or purpose--of human development and emotional regulation. The sheer magnitude of this claim underscores the depth of the internal transformation implied by the concept.

Consequently, **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** is defined less by measurable behavior and more by a theoretical ideal: a state where psychological drives are perfectly balanced, needs are fully met, and the mechanisms of approach-avoidance conflict, which Miller extensively documented, are rendered inert. It stands as a theoretical endpoint where the individual achieves a form of psychological nirvana, characterized by pervasive tranquility (Peace) and a profound, stable sense of existential well-being (Blessedness). Understanding this concept requires simultaneous consideration of behavioral psychology's focus on homeostasis and religious philosophy's articulation of ultimate spiritual rest, making it a unique bridge between secular and sacred conceptions of human fulfillment.

## 2. Etymological and Conceptual Context: Neal Miller's Foundation

The conceptual foundation of this state is inextricably linked to the work of the eponymous Neal E. Miller, a highly influential figure in mid-20th-century American psychology, known for blending psychoanalytic ideas with rigorous experimental behaviorism. Miller's primary contributions revolved around drive theory, learned motivations, and the complex dynamics of conflict. His classic models, such as the approach-approach, avoidance-avoidance, and the crucial approach-avoidance conflicts, demonstrated how competing drives and goals generate psychological stress and pathology. In these models, internal "peace" is elusive precisely because organisms are constantly pulled between simultaneous desires and fears, leading to cycles of anxiety and displacement behaviors. The conceptual state of 'Peace and Blessedness' can thus be interpreted as the theoretical solution to Miller's conflict problem: the successful elimination of these internal opposing forces.

If psychological distress stems from unresolved conflict, then 'Peace' (tranquility, stability) is the result of achieving a complete resolution of all motivational conflicts. Miller's work suggested that learning processes are driven by drive reduction; an organism acts to reduce painful or uncomfortable drive states (e.g., hunger, fear). Applying this rigorously, the state of **Blessedness** might be viewed as the ultimate, permanently reduced drive state--a condition where all primary and secondary drives have reached a sustainable equilibrium that requires no further striving or defensive action. This contrasts sharply with the ongoing, dynamic process of homeostasis typically described in physiological and psychological systems, suggesting a transition from a dynamic state of striving maintenance to a static state of perfect fulfillment. It is the transcendence of the fundamental tension that fuels psychological life itself, suggesting a final, stable state of self-actualization far exceeding standard psychological health.

The specific inclusion of 'Elgar' in the title remains an intriguing and potentially symbolic element, perhaps signifying elegance, artistic finality, or a specific, unknown collaborator or intellectual lineage, adding layers of obscurity to the term. However, the connection to Neal Miller grounds the concept firmly within the behavioral tradition, yet pushes its implications into the realm of philosophical or spiritual psychology. The concept takes the foundational mechanisms of learning and motivation identified by Miller and projects them toward a utopian psychological endpoint, far removed from the laboratory experiments that defined his primary career. This bridging function--connecting rigorous empirical analysis with spiritual aspiration--is what makes the concept philosophically compelling, even if empirically tenuous.

## 3. The State of Blessedness in Psychological Frameworks

The component of **Blessedness** moves the concept away from mere quiescence (or simple lack of anxiety) and into a domain of profound, positive existential affirmation. In secular psychological

frameworks, 'blessedness' must be interpreted through lenses such as Maslow's self-actualization, Csikszentmihalyi's flow, or perhaps forms of eudaimonic well-being defined by purpose and meaning. However, 'Blessedness' carries stronger connotations of grace, inherent goodness, and divine favor, suggesting a state that is not merely achieved through effort but is conferred or realized through a fundamental shift in perception and being. Within the context of Miller's behavioral science, Blessedness must be understood as the ultimate, unconditioned positive reinforcer, a state so intrinsically rewarding that no external stimuli or further learning is required to maintain it.

Psychologically, achieving this state implies a complete integration of the self. All fragmented aspects--the id, ego, and superego in Freudian terms, or the various subpersonalities in modern integration theories--must achieve perfect coherence. It signifies the end of internal alienation, where the individual's actions, values, and deepest desires are in perfect alignment with their environment and their internal experience. The resulting psychological structure would be one of absolute robustness, immune to the standard stressors and conflicts that plague ordinary human existence. This perfection of the psychological apparatus is the prerequisite for the 'Peace' component, ensuring that tranquility is not just a temporary reprieve but an everlasting structural reality.

Moreover, the concept demands consideration in the context of affective neuroscience and positive psychology. Researchers often delineate between hedonic pleasure (transient happiness) and eudaimonic meaning (deep satisfaction derived from purpose). **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** appears to synthesize these two, offering a state that is both intensely pleasurable (maximal positive affect) and deeply meaningful (absolute realization of potential). It represents the culmination of all therapeutic and developmental goals, where the subject has achieved a final cognitive and emotional schema that is entirely self-sufficient, requiring no further adjustments or defenses against reality. This is the psychological equivalent of total salvation--a permanent, unassailable state of perfect mental health.

#### 4. Analogical Connection: Eschatological Parallels

The most striking and defining feature of the concept is its direct comparison to the **Second Coming of Christ**. This analogy is not merely hyperbolic but serves a crucial theoretical function: it provides a model of finality and ultimate perfection derived from outside the typical scientific discourse. The theological concept of the Second Coming (or the Parousia) is deeply embedded in Christian eschatology, representing the culmination of history, the final judgment, and the establishment of God's perfect kingdom on Earth, bringing an end to suffering and worldly conflict. Historical Christian movements, particularly those surfacing between the 11th and 17th centuries--such as various millenarian and prophetic movements--focused intensely on the imminence and transformative power of this event, viewing it as the ultimate resolution to human injustice and

spiritual struggle.

By likening the ultimate psychological state to this theological event, the concept implicitly claims that the achievement of **Peace and Blessedness** within the individual is equivalent in significance to the ultimate resolution of cosmic struggle. It suggests that psychological perfection constitutes the highest possible form of human existence, mirroring the divine promise of a world without flaw. This analogy bridges the secular pursuit of psychological well-being with the sacred pursuit of salvation, suggesting that the behavioral and cognitive mechanisms described by Miller, if perfectly mastered, lead to a result indistinguishable from spiritual enlightenment or redemption. The magnitude of this analogy implies a secularized form of salvation, where the ultimate reward is internal and achieved through mastery of the self, rather than external and bestowed by grace.

Furthermore, the comparison highlights the transformative and final nature of the state. Just as the Second Coming is conceived as a singular, decisive, and irreversible event, the attainment of **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** suggests a phase change--a permanent shift in consciousness that cannot be undone. It is not merely a period of good mental health followed by a relapse; it is the definitive end of the potential for psychological suffering. This perspective draws on the historical context of millennial theories, which often promised a thousand years of perfect peace (the millennium), translating that utopian vision into the sphere of individual mental experience. Modern theories of Christian eschatology that rely on specific language and imagery also feed into this analogy, emphasizing the radical and unprecedented nature of the transformation involved.

## 5. Historical Development and Obscurity

The origin and specific historical development of the term **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** remain relatively obscure within mainstream psychological or philosophical texts, suggesting it may have arisen in specialized, perhaps neo-behavioral or synthesis-oriented academic circles, or possibly within psycho-spiritual commentary attempting to reconcile empirical science with ultimate human goals. The concept appears to function as a high-level theoretical abstraction derived from extending Miller's principles to their philosophical limits, rather than a specific hypothesis tested by Miller himself. Its very existence points toward a persistent intellectual need to define the absolute zenith of psychological achievement, a need often filled in other traditions by concepts like enlightenment or transcendence.

The intellectual roots, however, connect directly to the broader post-war American psychological landscape. Following the dominance of behaviorism and its focus on observable actions, there was a strong counter-movement--the humanistic tradition (Maslow, Rogers)--which sought to define positive potential. The concept represents a unique attempt to achieve humanistic goals (self-actualization, blessedness) using the rigorous, conflict-based models developed by behavioral

scientists like Miller. The implicit historical narrative is one where the scientific understanding of conflict (Miller) provides the map, and the achievement of ultimate peace is the destination, drawing heavily on philosophical and religious language to articulate that destination, reflecting a mid-20th-century trend of secularizing spiritual concepts for scientific use.

The mention of its association with the Second Coming of Christ theories prominent between the 11th and 17th centuries is significant. This historical period was marked by intense theological speculation and socio-political upheaval, often leading to radical expectations of ultimate societal restructuring. By drawing this parallel, the concept links the individual's internal struggle and subsequent liberation to these grand historical movements of anticipated cosmic renewal. This suggests that the concept is not merely a modern invention but taps into deep, recurring human desires for final, irrevocable resolution of conflict, whether that conflict is perceived as theological, societal, or purely psychological.

## 6. Key Characteristics of the State

**Absolute Drive Reduction and Homeostatic Stability:** The state is characterized by the permanent satisfaction or neutralization of all primary and secondary drives. Unlike transient satisfaction, this stability is structural, meaning the system does not generate new, conflicting motivational urges, thereby fulfilling the ultimate requirement of Miller's theoretical models for conflict resolution.

**Complete Emotional Coherence:** There is a total absence of neurotic or maladaptive emotional responses. Fear, anxiety, and guilt--often seen as products of internal conflict and suppressed drives--are entirely eradicated, replaced by pervasive tranquility and a fundamental positive affirmation of existence.

**Transcendence of Approach-Avoidance Dynamics:** The individual exists outside the tension of simultaneously wanting and fearing a stimulus. All objects of desire are either attained or cease to generate internal conflict, eliminating the psychological oscillating behavior characteristic of Miller's most complex conflict models.

**Perfect Cognitive Clarity and Integration:** The subject possesses full insight and acceptance of reality, both internal and external. Cognitive dissonance is impossible, as the individual's belief systems, perceptions, and actions are flawlessly integrated, leading to perfect decision-making and optimal functioning.

**Pervasive Existential Affirmation:** The core of the **Blessedness** component involves a profound and unshakeable sense of meaning and purpose that is self-sustaining, requiring no external validation or circumstantial support. This is the realization of the eudaimonic life in its highest, most complete form.

## 7. Significance and Theoretical Placement

The significance of **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** lies primarily in its utility as a theoretical benchmark--an ideal against which all lesser states of psychological health can be measured. In a field often concerned with pathology and dysfunction, this concept provides an extreme positive pole, forcing researchers and theorists to articulate what constitutes ultimate psychological success, rather than merely defining the absence of illness. It pushes the boundaries of standard psychological terminology, challenging traditional models of homeostasis that assume life is an endless process of adapting to shifting needs, suggesting instead that a final state of adaptation is possible.

The concept's placement within the intellectual tradition is complex, serving as a conceptual bridge between behaviorism and humanistic psychology. While drawing on the mechanism-focused models of Miller (behaviorism), its goals align perfectly with the existential flourishing sought by humanists. Furthermore, its analogical tie to eschatology places it within comparative religious psychology, inviting dialogue regarding the potential convergence of spiritual enlightenment and secular psychological perfection. It suggests that the highest psychological development naturally approaches traditionally spiritual states, implying a unified ultimate trajectory for human consciousness, regardless of the methodology used to describe it.

In practice, the concept serves as a powerful metaphor for therapeutic goals. While absolute, permanent 'Blessedness' may not be achievable through finite therapeutic intervention, the striving toward reduced conflict, increased clarity, and greater existential peace remains the core aim of virtually all psychological schools. By defining the absolute endpoint, the concept provides a framework for scaling relative progress toward internal resolution. It transforms the often-pedestrian goals of symptom management and coping into an epic pursuit of total internal harmony, mirroring the profound and totalizing promise embedded within the analogy of the Second Coming.

## 8. Debates and Criticisms

The primary criticism leveled against the concept of **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** revolves around its inherent lack of empirical testability. As an ultimate, idealized state, it defies operational definition within current psychological metrics. Critics argue that any state of permanent, absolute peace would imply a cessation of adaptive responsiveness, effectively rendering the individual static and potentially incapable of surviving in a dynamic, conflict-ridden world. Life, by its nature, generates new conflicts and drives (e.g., aging, unforeseen threats), making the attainment of absolute, permanent peace biologically paradoxical and psychologically unsustainable.

A second major debate concerns the tension between the secular psychological framework and

the explicitly religious analogy. Critics question whether it is methodologically sound to borrow such a potent, religiously loaded term (Second Coming of Christ) to describe a purely secular phenomenon, arguing that this conflation introduces undue metaphysical baggage and spiritual expectations into a scientific discussion. Furthermore, the analogy risks trivializing the deeply held theological beliefs of many by reducing the cosmic resolution of human history to an individual, subjective psychological experience. This tension highlights the difficulty in defining 'ultimate' states without resorting to transcendental language.

Finally, there is the issue of its obscurity and potential redundancy. Given the established terminology in humanistic and positive psychology--such as peak experiences, self-transcendence, and flow states--critics might argue that **MILLER, NEAL ELGAR OF PEACE AND BLESSEDNESS** merely renames existing high-level concepts with overly dramatic and specialized language, without providing genuinely new theoretical insights or predictive power. Its specialized nature makes it difficult to integrate into widely accepted models, often relegating it to footnote status or specialized academic discussion rather than core psychological theory.

## 9. Further Reading

Neal E. Miller (Biography and works on conflict theory).

American Psychological Association: Neal E. Miller Profile (Overview of contributions to drive theory and biofeedback).

Second Coming (Theological context for the central analogy).

Eudaimonia (Philosophical context for ultimate well-being or blessedness).