Tachyon Magic after "Player's Option: Spells & Magic"

After publishing the "Player's Option: Spells & Magic" tome (which, by the way, includes some well know rules from the net), the world of spellpoints has changed slightly. Now, there is an official rule to assign spellpoints to the esablished spellcasting system without multiplying the level with a given factor. Even more, priests may now pay a diffrent amount of spellpoints ('Tachyon Points', TSPs, in my interpretation) for spells of the same level, depending on the access to the sphere it comes from (minor or major). I am not sure if I like that, but what I certainly like is the rule to pay more for spells which are not memorized and *which are nevertheless now possible to be cast.* Looking back to the old Tachyon system you may ask: what did I get new? Well, priests don't get anything really new – beside they now have to memorize spells again, they still have the chance (for a slightly higher price) to cast any spell of their spheres of influence. For mages there is a greater change, this time. In the new system, they may cast any spell they have learned and written down in their books (again, for a higher price). This softens the differences between the two major spellcaster classes, but they are still far from being the same.

The Spellcasting System

As you perhaps remember from the 'original' Tachyon spellcasting system, mages and priests have a greater access to their spells due to the fact, that they are able to cast any spell they have memorized as often as they want (or better: they have points to do so). The number of spells memorized stays the same as published in the "Player Handbook", but a spellcaster does not need to memorize the same spell twice (it still takes 1 turn for each spell level to memorize). If he has enough points, he may cast a once memorized spell over and over again. But that's not all: a priest or mage can actually cast *any* spell he knows (has access to the sphere/has written down in one of his books)... for a quite high price. Another new feature is the Cantrips and Orisons. A mage or priests don't need to memorize them – they just can cast them on the run for 1 TSP. They are minor effects of no real impact, but great for *role*playing.
First, here is a table which gives the minumum needed level of experience for each class to cast a given spell level.

Needed Levels of Experience

Spell Level	Paladin	Ranger	Priest	Mage	Bard
1	9	8	1	1	2
2	11	10	3	3	4
3	13	12	5	5	7
4	15	-	7	7	10
5	-	-	9	9	13
6	-	-	11	12	16
7	-	-	14	14	-
8	-	-	-	16	-
9	-	-	-	18	-

There is an optional rule which allows mages to learn and cast spells of a higher spell level then allowed. The chance to learn a spell one level higher is then reduced to half his normal chance, casting this spell will cost him twice the normal cost. Learning a spell two levels higher has only a tenth of his original chance to learn it, the cost is doubled too. Bards may use this rule, too, but only a bard of 20th or higher level can attemp to learn spells of

the 7th spell level. Then, a spellcaster has to memorize this spell – I think it should use one spell slot of the highest spell level available. This would give the mage the advantage of a (theoretically) extra spell level, but he has to give up another of his most powerfull spells instead and the cost is high. Sure, the mage can cast this spell without memorizing it, but the cost would then be double the already high cost for not memorized spells...
In the new published rules, there is nothing said about priests and higher spell levels. I suggest they can do the same as mages, but they have to make a WIS check or a spell failure check according to $1/2 \cdot$ WIS.
I would recommand to use this optional system only with the 'Spell Fatigue' system.

Talking about learning spells, it is time to define how long would it take a mage to learn. I rule, that mages (and bards) need 2d4 hours per spell level to learn a spell and fill up (1d6 − 1 + spell level) pages in the spell book. The check if they really learned the spell is done after this time and the pages are always written – either with a new spell or with gibbish stuff. There is the possibility to learn a spell without actually copying it word for word into a new book, but the chance to do so is $1/2$ the normal one. This second method is quite fast (due to the lack of writing), the mage only needs 1d6 hours per spell level.
Obviously, high level spells need more than a full day to learn. After 12 hours of continously learning, the mage has to rest for another 12 hours (8 if he does not continue learning). If he interrupts his learning for more than 16 hours, he has to make a spell learning check to continue or looses the thread and has to start all over again.

Now the spellcasters knew their spells, how many TSPs do they have to spend? The following table gives the number of TSPs at a given level of experience for mages, priests and other spellcasters.

Tachyon Points

Level	Paladin	Ranger	Priest	Mage	(Specialist)	Bard
1	-	-	4	4	+4	-
2	-	-	8	8	+4	4
3	-	-	15	15	+10	8
4	-	-	25	25	+10	15
5	-	-	40	40	+20	25
6	-	-	55	55	+20	35
7	-	-	70	70	+35	45
8	-	4	90	95	+35	55
9	4	8	125	120	+60	65
10	8	15	160	150	+60	75
11	15	22	200	200	+60	85
12	22	29	240	250	+90	100
13	30	36	290	300	+90	120
14	40	43	340	350	+130	140
15	50	50	400	400	+130	160
16	60	60	460	475	+180	190
17	70	60	530	550	+180	220
18	80	60	600	625	+240	250
19	90	60	675	700	+240	285
20	105	60	750	800	+240	320
21+	-	-	+75	+100	+0	+35

The last row reads, that the given TSPs are gained at each level beyond 20.

This values are modified by the INT of the mage or the WIS of the priest. Note that only these two classes get extra TSPs from high primary attributes, neither bards nor paladins or rangers do so. Priests gain their extra points only when they are of sufficient level (like bonus spells granted in the original rules), mages at the beginningg of their career.

Bonus TSPs

Ability Score	Mage	Priest of Level 1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
9-11	2	-	-	-	-
12	3	-	-	-	-
13	3	4	4	4	4
14	4	8	8	8	8
15	4	8	15	15	15
16	5	8	20	20	20
17	6	8	20	30	30
18	7	8	20	30	45
19	8	15	25	45	60
20	9	calculate from			
21+	9	Bonus Spells			

Finally, the most important question is how much TSPs are needed to cast a spell of a given spell level. I checked through the tables and changed the original rules, because it should be easier for priests to gain a spell 'on the fly' than for mages (due to their divine help). Also, I excluded the 'Minor spheres are more expensive' rule and the 'Priest can cast *any* spell for a given price' rule, which I think are nonsense. Why should the god of the seas and oceanes grant his priests a 'Flame Strike'? Another priest only problem are the Quest Spells. The original rules say, they should cost as much as a spell two spell levels higher that the highest possible spell level. I think, one level higher is enough and the priest still has to memorize it into the slot of one of his highest spell level spells. This table shows what I came up with.

Spell Cost

Spell Level	Memorized	not Memorized Priest	Mage
Cantrip, Orison	-	1	1
1	4	6	8
2	6	10	12
3	10	15	20
4	15	22	30
5	22	30	44
6	30	40	60
7	40	50	80
8	50	-	100
9	60	-	120
(10)	72	-	-

Now the spellcasters have memorized their spells, they know how much to pay, but how do they get back their TSPs? First possibility: the mage or priest gets back all his points at once after a restfull night (8 hours). Another system is presented for 'Channellers' (which come close to the TSP system spellcasters), which get back their TSPs according to the following table (I put in the PSP recovery of psionics for comparison). The values are given per hour each. A spellcaster gets back his TSPs either with fixed rate (which gives a lower limit), or variable according to the total maximum, whatever rate is better.

TSP/PSP Recovery

Physical Activity	TSPs Recovered fixed	TSPs Recovered variable	PSPs Recovered
Hard exertion	none	none	none
Walking, riding	2	2% of maximum	3
Sitting, resting, reading	4	5% of maximum	6
Sleeping, meditating	8	10% of maximum	12

In this table, 'hard exertion' includes fighting, running, digging ditches, walking while encumbered, climbing a rope, scaling a mountain, exploring a dungeon, swimming, and any other activity the DM wants to include; 'walking, riding' stands for any light exertion like walking unencumbered, riding, debating with friends, being on nightwatch, memorizing a spell, and again any other activity the DM wants to include; 'meditating' includes praying (for priests) and rejuvinating (for Psionics) as well. 'Meditating' and 'Rejuvinating' are non-weapon proficiences.

Optional Spellcasting

Now we are at the point where we are finished. Or not? Spellcasters are still fixed with their amount of spells they can cast at a given level (beside the already mentioned optional rule of casting spells of exceeding spell level), so you don't expect a second or third 'Magic Missle' from this low level mage, right? Wrong! Here are the rules to give even the low level once the chance to reduce their spell cost or produce 'Magic Missles' with more than one missle at once.

- Greater Spell Effect
  It is possible to overcharge a spell (which has to be memorized) to achive results as being of higher level. The cost will be $1/2$ of the base cost for every exceeding level. A second level mage would have to pay $(4 + 1/2 \cdot 4) = 6$ TSPs to produce two missles (calculated as being third level) and $(4+3\cdot 1/2\cdot 4) = 10$ TSPs to produce three (calculated as being fifth level).

- Reducing Spell Power
  If it is possible to overcharge a spell, it is also possible to reduce the energy to cast a spell. This is only true for spells with level depending effects (of course), and the points saved are $1/4$ of the base cost. Thus, the level of the spellcaster is reduced by 4 for calculating the level depending effects (like range, duration, damage, etc) and the spell is easier to dispel. Obvious, only spellcasters of fifth level or higher may choose to do so.

- Prolonged Casting Time
  Another possibility to save some TSPs is drawing them from the enviroment. This results in a lengthly period of gathering energy and thus in a longer casting time. Spells of a casting time below one round need an equal number of rounds as segments given, spells of a casting time of one round need a full turn, and spells with a longer casting time cannot be casted this way. The TSPs saved are again $1/4$ of the base cost.

- Special Casting Condition
  A spellcaster may reduce the amount of energy to complete a spell by narrowing the

focus of the spell effect. This condition may range from 'can only be cast in the light of the moon' to 'can only effect Elves' or 'can only be cast by touching the target' for a spell which usually has a range of more than 10 yards. These conditions have to be implemented when memorizing the spell and this particular spell cannot be cast without the proper condition. These conditions should be fixed for a spellcaster, so he cannot change them and I would rule to start at 1st level with only one condition and define a new condition only upon reaching the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, and so on level. Any spell may be memorized using the condition (reducing the spellcost by $^1\!/_4$ or, for a real restricting condition like 'can only effect members of a particular Elven tribe', by $^1\!/_2$) or normally, without any condition.

By no way, the cost of a spell can be reduced below $^1\!/_2$ the base cost.
For reason of game balance, the DM should have an eye on spellcasters who make excessive use of the cost reducing rules.

Finally, I would like to introduce a possibility to cast magic without any TSPs left. Actually, this situation is not that uncommon, so what to do if the spellcaster throws his last fireball, but after clearing the smoke, the oger puts itself back on its boots and charges again? Well, this poor spellcaster has one final option (before dying at the hands of a well cooked oger): he may sacrifice some of his hitpoints for TSPs. At a rate of 1 HP per 1 TSP, he may opt to cast a 'magic missle' which would cost him 4 HP but may save his life because the oger would quite able to rend him to pieces (althought it has only a few HPs left). This 'live insurance' is not without risk: the spellcaster has to roll 1d20 against his sacrified hitpoints. If he rolls more, (1d6 $\times$ 10%) of the wounds are serious (and need a 'cure serious wounds' or equal magic to heal and will not heal naturally before any other 'light' wounds), the rest is normal (or 'light'). If he failed, he has to roll again 1d20 against his serious wounds. If he rolls more again, any serious wound is critical (and need a 'cure critical wounds' or equal magic to heal and will not heal naturally before any 'serious' wounds are healed) and the 'light' wounds become 'serious'. Obviousely, spells above 4th level will result in dire consequences when they are casted while sacrifying HPs, and spells which are not memorized are even more dangerous for health. Example: a mage tries to cast a not memorized 4th level spell, sacrifying nearly all his HPs for the 30 needed TSPs. Rolling 1d20 is obsolent, so he rolls for serious wounds and ends up with 40% = 12 HPs serious damage. When trying to roll 1d20 against this value, he ends up with a 9. After spellcasting, he finds himself with 18 serious and 12 critical wounds. He has survived (perhaps), but he will remember this spell for a while, because only few priests will be able to cure his critical wounds.
The DM may feel free to assign any permanent HP lost if he feels this rule might be abused (e.g. 'critical wounds' are substracted from the permanent HPs, roll vs. CON or loose $^1\!/_2$ the sacrified HPs permanent, make a system shock or loose some HPs, etc).