Hagai Diamandi: Synergizing Tradition and Excellence

For much of his 24 years, Hagai Diamandi has sought to mesh tradition with excellence. As a youngster, he participated in BIU science activities for gifted youth; as a teen, he attended a demanding Torah-and-Technology high school in Jerusalem. Later, he combined Hesder Yeshiva studies in the southern development town of Yerucham with Israeli military service. As an IDF tank commander charged with training new recruits, he provided an exemplary model of dedication to the State of Israel and concern for the individual, with his officers commending his “leadership qualities, self-discipline, dedication, diligence, values, and high potential.” Many of those same attributes he also demonstrated while volunteering in the Civil Guard, assisting Gush Katif families re-acclimate during the Gaza Disengagement and tutoring youngsters from a distressed neighborhood.

More recently, in Fall 2011, Diamandi commenced undergraduate studies in Electrical Engineering, within the framework of BIU’s prestigious Program for Honors Scholars, which provides special benefits to the most outstanding students on campus.

“I wanted to study something practical and be able to contribute to the State,” notes the gifted freshman, whose wife is studying medicine in Tel Aviv. “I have always been interested in new developments in high tech,” he says, relaying that during his IDF service, he became enamored with the tank’s electronic devices. Although accepted into other esteemed institutions, he chose BIU “because of its high academic standards, top-notch Engineering faculty members, its reputation for catering to student needs, and, of course, the University’s unique combination of tradition and excellence,” he says, adding that he enjoys “dropping by” at the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies to learn with a chevruta and “catching” afternoon prayer services in the Engineering Complex.

At the outset of his academic studies, Diamandi is already thinking ahead. “I hope to continue on toward my PhD and contribute to R & D in my area of expertise.” In the meantime, he is enjoying the Program for Honors Scholars with its challenging curriculum, his inspiring mentor Prof. Zeev Zalevsky – an award-winning expert in optical super resolution and its use in biomedical applications – and the enriching seminars which explore Judaism’s encounter with different cultures.

“My goal is to be a person who embodies Torah and science,” says Hagai, who is pursuing this agenda at Bar-Ilan University. (He’s certainly on solid ground as his Brazilian-born father was the civil engineer who built the foundations of several campus facilities, including the Faculty of Engineering Complex.) “I want to thank Bar-Ilan for giving me this special learning opportunity.”