Many years ago, I was on a student train crossing Western Europe en-route to Eretz Yisrael. After searching unsuccessfully for a deserted spot on the train where I could put on T'fillin and daven, I decided to daven in the small compartment which accommodated 6 people. Before I began, I explained to my compatriots in the berth that I was about to pray, and that they should not be startled at the sight of my phylacteries. I donned the T'fillin on my arm and head, and in due time began to recite the Shmoneh Esrei. Just then the conductor entered asking to see our tickets. With my back towards him, I continued to pray ignoring his attempts to get my attention. Understandably, he was angered by my apathy, and started shaking me in order to get me to respond. At this point one of my seatmates, a non-Jew who had seemed somewhat in awe of my T'fillin, confronted the conductor saying: "Can't you see this Jew is praying? Leave him be! When he finishes, he will find you and give you his ticket." This, in deed, is what happened.

I always remember this episode whenever I try to imagine the Torah's promise from this week's parasha that: "The world's nations will see the name of G-d upon you and fear you" (D'varim 28:10). The connection to the verse is based on Rabbi Eliezer HaGadol's explanation (B'rachot 6a) that this pasuk refers to the T'filin worn on the head. [T'Tosafot suggests that the 'name of G-d' mentioned in the verse is the name SHIN-DALET-YUD which is outwardly visible on the phylacteries. The letter SHIN is clearly embossed on the side of the Bayit, the letter DALET is situated on the strap circling one's head (at the back of the head where the straps are bound together), and these two letters, together with the letter YUD found in the knot of the T'filin Shel-Yad, spell out G-d's name]. What exactly will the nations fear when they see this? Why would the T'filin constitute a 'frightening' sight? Perhaps what the Torah means, is that they will be in awe of our devotion and respect us as representatives of Hashem. The HaEmek Davar says: "When the nations see the high spiritual level of the Jew they will realize that they are not on the same level." Similarly, the S'forno
suggests that this is why Alexander the Great, upon seeing Shimon HaTzadik dressed in the Kohon Gadol's garments, prostrated himself in awe.

Baruch Hashem, there have been additional moments in my life when I have felt that wearing T'filin affords one protection. And yet this is not a guarantee we can rely on blindly. Too many times throughout our history, the T'filin did not safeguard us from our enemies. Tragically, Jews have even been murdered while wearing their T'filin.

Similarly, although the Mezuza may be SHOMER DALTOT YISRAEL - with the same three letters of the Divine name providing protection for our doors - this does not obviate the need for a good security plan, and 24/7 Shemira...

[Here too, I have a personal story to share from many years ago: One day I was called in to help with an unusual occurrence in the Merkaz Klita in Be'er Sheva. The main office had received repeated complaints from the residents of a specific apartment which was located across the street from an Arab cemetery. For several nights in a row, the residents were startled by their lights blinking on and off, cabinet doors opening and closing, and the shutters sliding up and down. They had reached the conclusion that the room was haunted and the Olim refused to remain in it. As the Rabbi of the Absorption Center, I was asked to come and check the Mezuza, which the inhabitants claimed was obviously not 'doing its job' "protecting" the room. Studying the writing, I quickly ascertained that there were no omissions or spelling mistakes in the words of the mezuza. However, upon turning the Klaf over, I noticed that there was a problem with the SHIN-DALET-YUD written on the outside of the Klaf. The letter YUD was missing, and thus, the two remaining letters spelled the word SHEID, or demon. After a Sofer added the missing letter, and the Mezuza was returned to its former place, there were no more reports of any untoward incidents...]

Returning once again to the T'filin, and the question of the nature of the fear it instills in the eyes of the nations, we may suggest a more concrete - and important - type of fear.

We are all moved by the pictures of religious soldiers standing next to their tanks while donning their Talit and T'filin. This feeling seems to suggest that there may be a connection between T'filin and military
victory. Chazal teach us that the YAREI V'RACH HALEIVAV who is to return from the battlefield is one who talks between donning the T'filin shel yad and shel rosh. Rabbeinu Asher, (Hilchot Ketanot, Tefillin, 15) makes this same connection - between T'filin and military success - in the opposite direction as well. He writes that that it is the merit of our soldiers wearing the T'filin on their hands and heads properly, which will lead them to emerge victorious over our enemies. V'TARAF Z'RO'A AF KODKOD - like a lion tearing the arm and head of his prey (from the bracha to the tribe of Gad - D'varim 33:20). As Rabbeinu B'chayei writes V'TARAF Z'RO'A - BIZCHUT, in the merit of T'FILIN SHEBAZRO'A; AF KODKOD - in the merit of T'filin Shebarosh.