

Sugar

The journey from Frankfurt to Afghanistan is exhausting. There are no direct flights. You practically don't sleep for a night and sit around for hours in Dubai or in Istanbul. Finally, there is the crowding at the Kabul airport. When you finally have your luggage, you have to walk a long distance until you reach the place where they pick you up. The driver Hamidullah had come with our Toyota Corolla (year of construction 92).

Actually, he wanted to pick me up with the Foronar, he reported. This is our state car, a gasoline engine with six cylinders. Strictly speaking, Foronar means "4-Runner". But the Afghan version had made it into our accounting journal. So, Hamidullah wanted to pick me up in the Foronar. But it had only started with difficulty and had just made it to the entrance to the main road. Then it stopped and would not start again. He ran back, Hamidullah reported, and picked up the Corolla. At a workshop he passed, he ordered mechanics to tow the Foronar to the workshop. There it would now be examined.



When I arrived at the office, I lay down. When I came to after two hours, Hamidullah was standing in front of the door. He came out of the workshop and showed me the tray that is normally screwed on under the engine of the Foronar. Transparent crystals were floating in a pool of machine oil. Someone had poured sugar into the engine.

"How could sugar have gotten into the engine?"

"Only Yama could have done that. On Thursday, Taher was still driving the car. There was no problem then. On Friday, only Yama was here. On Saturday I came to pick you up. So, it could only have been Yama."

Hamidullah recited all this hastily. He had known the solution for some time. Had he overlooked the fact that he himself was also a possible culprit?

Yama found the accusation absurd. He was not a driver and did not know what sugar did to an engine. He also didn't know at all how to get sugar into the engine. Besides, he wants to get married soon. He needed money and would not risk his permanent job by such manipulations. That was plausible. Yama simply had no motive.

The repair cost several hundred euros. Hamidullah had probably dumped the sugar into the engine to blame Yama. He assumed that I would then throw Yama out. I didn't. A few months later, Hamidullah was fired for a different reason.