This lecture explores the travels of Mir 'Abd al-Latif Khan, an itinerant scholar and merchant from Iran, across the Indian Ocean from Basra in the Persian Gulf to Calcutta in the Bay of Bengal in 1788 during the waning of the Mughal Empire and the onset of East India Company rule in India. In his book of travels Tuhfat al-'Alam (Rarity of the World), written in Hyderabad in 1802, 'Abd al-Latif draws upon longstanding Mughal views of the wondrous nature of Southeast Asia, tinged by colonial notions of the sublime, to cast the Burmese Empire and its forest landscapes as the edges of the Mughal world. Through the narrative of a journey to the realm of a universal sovereign and ideal Persianate king, a padishah and a rajah, reigning over the city and the wilderness, 'Abd al-Latif surveyed the Burmese Empire as a vast forest kingdom, a land of dense jungles of teak, herds of wild elephants, and rich mines of precious stones, a mythical littoral region of exotics and strange customs, a distant half-unknown world on the frontiers of Islam.