Spain’s Atonement for the Inquisition

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In 2015, a law in Spain was passed that grants dual citizenship to Jews who can trace their ancestry to Spain. Jews who trace their ancestry to Spain are known as Sephardic Jews. The Spanish government passed the law as atonement to the Sephardim on account of their expulsion by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492. Approximately 200,000 Jews were forced to leave the country. Others were forced to convert to Catholicism or suffer the consequences of being caught practicing Judaism. It should be noted that the new law has received criticism on account of its overly restrictive nature. Critics claim that, in the end, very few Sephardic Jews will succeed in gaining dual citizenship. Nevertheless, no such law whatsoever has been proposed offering dual citizenship to Muslims, who were expelled from Spain in 1609. The purpose of this study is to consider the apparent contradiction between granting dual citizenship to Sephardic Jews, however limited, but not to the Muslim descendants of Spain. The research is conducted through examination of scholarly articles, newspapers articles, and the text of the law itself. This paper is expected to demonstrate that both Muslims of Spanish descent and Sephardic Jews should be offered the right to Spanish citizenship.