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## Al-Qabisi's Thoughts about Curriculum in Islamic Education

**ABSTRACT:** This research is a literary study discussing the thoughts of an Islamic scientist from Tunisia, named Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad Khalaf al-Mu'afiri al-Qabisi, 935-1014 AD (Anno Domini) / 324-403 AH (Anno Hijriah) about curriculum in the Islamic education. The objective of this research is to discuss some basic thoughts of education that had ever been used in the classic era, especially about curriculum. The result of this research are hoped to be positive inputs for educational organizer lately. All studies of this research were discussed with historical method; those were the efforts to reconstruct the past time of the study object. Meanwhile, in collecting the data, the researcher used the library research to explore and study the relevant resources, books and any supporting writings. The results that the researcher found from the book mentioned above were that the orientation of curriculum created by Al-Qabisi was applied through the lessons that had to be mastered by students, those included obligatory and optional lessons. The obligatory one consisted of Al-Qur'an and "Al-Hadist" (words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad), "fiqh" (Islamic law pertaining to ritual obligation), moral, and Arabic writing, spelling, and reading. The optional one were that the intensification of Arabic and its procedures/grammars ("nahwu", "sharaf", "syair", and rhetoric), arithmetic, and history.

**KEY WORDS:** Education thought, curriculum, Al-Qabisi, Al-Qur'an and "Al-Hadist", Islamic education, young generation, and good character.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential part in the process of social-transformation. Beside economic and health, education is a very valuable indicator whether a country is being included a forward or under-development country. Thus, a prestigious country is always point out their good-will to accelerate the education. In addition, education is always the single problem-solving in every part of life.

A country's achievement is indicated by the quality of the education itself. It's becoming the reason to develop the education should be a priority. Yet, when a country ignores their will to run education, as a consequence, that country is leaving their own development (Mulyasa, 2005).

The meaning of education is defined in a variety of explanation by educator expert. In the UU SISDIKNAS (*Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* or Law of National

Education System) No.20 Year 2003 in Indonesia, education is defined as a numbers of well-organized and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning process so that the learners are actively developing his/her own potentials: spiritual power of religion, self-control, personality, intelligence, good-behavior, and any other skills that useful not only for him/herself but also for wider society and a whole nation (cited in Suparyo, 2005:6).

In addition, W.S. Winkel said that education is given-assistance by people who are growing mature to people who are not mature yet (adult to children), in order to reach their maturity (Winkel, 1996:24). On other hand, Ainurrofiq Dawam defined education as a process of developing toward good attitudes (manner) and behavior (matter) of individual or groups in an attempt to mature the man/ woman through the efforts of teaching, training, processing, deeds, actions, and

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educated-ways (cited in Dawam, 2005:6). Meanwhile, Azyumardi Azra concluded that education is a process of preparing the young generation to run their lives and fulfill their own lives goals more effectively and efficiently (Azra, 2001:3).

The core vision of Islamic education is to increase the quality of the learners to be able to participate in every part of his/her life. In another word, the education leads the people to be able to create and maintains a harmonic, egalitarian, and democratic. Education is not a tool or media to teach a doctrine and ideology of certain people; yet education is a valuable media to create and develop people who have good-intellectual, emotional, and spiritual abilities. Furthermore, the essential humankind is able to achieve the peak-moral value, in order to change the attitude, manner, and matter.

Islamic education is the recognition and acknowledgment of a place in accordance with the order of creation is progressively implanted into man/woman that led him/her to the recognition and acknowledgment of the existence of Allah Almighty. Islamic education is also an important part to build human resources and teach the values of humanity (Wan Daud, 2003:255). Furthermore, Ahmad Fuad al-Ahwani argued that Islamic education is an integrated-education values: soul education, spirit strengthen, intelligence smart, and strengthening the physical sense (Fuad al-Ahwani, 1980:168).

Dja'far Siddik, in his book entitled *Konsep Dasar Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* [the Basic Concepts of Islamic Education], stated about Islamic education as well as decided in the Islamic Education Seminar organized by the Board of Islamic Private College Affiliations on 13-16 May 1979 in Jakarta, defined the Islamic education is a number of effort based on Islamic teaching in order to assist the learners in developing and mature human personality, both physically and spiritually, in order to be able stand for their lives in the future (Siddik, 2006:23). Beside, Syed Ali Ashraf gave his definition about Islamic Education, as quoted by Dja'far Siddik (2006:25), that Islamic education is an education that trains student's sensibility with organized-ways, so that their

attitude, manners, and matters, especially in making decisions is guided by ethical values of Islam. Above all of the various definitions expressed by experts, it can be taken a general conclusion that education is a maturing process to become an ideal human.

Indeed, Islamic education will be meaningful if the basic goals of education is actualized and realized equally with the guidance of Islamic teachings. A very essential device that determines Islamic education is the curriculum. In wider-interpretation as defined by Hasan Langgulung, which then picked by Haidar Putra Daulay, curriculum is a number of educational experiences, cultural, social, sports, and arts that are provided by the school and educational institution for their students both inside and outside the school in order to help students to grow up till whole aspects of life and to change their behavior towards the goals of education (Daulay, 2004:94).

Unfortunately, the fact opposes of the expected-goals, the contemporary curriculum implementation has not been proven to be able to answer and provide solutions to the problems of education as in the Islamic teaching ideally (*cf* Saleh, 2001). Perhaps the references that developed by Muslim scholars/experts are not from our own Islamic experts, yet referring to the Western world/experts; as a consequences, the curriculum is not equal to the realities of Islamic society life.

There is an alternative solution to overcome these problems, especially regarding to exact children educational curriculum, that is by reviewing the thoughts of one of the Muslim thinkers and intellectuals from Qairawan, Tunisia. He was one of Muslim intellectual who was very famous on the tenth (X) century AD (*Anno Domini*). His name is Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad Khalaf al-Mu'afiri al-Qabisi (935-1014 AD / 324-403 AH, *Anno Hijriah*), who was very well-known with his nick-name, Al-Qabisi. He has contributed greatly to the development of Islamic education, especially in children's education in his days.

In Al-Qabisi's perspective, the curriculum should point out to reforming of children's morals. He believed that children's education is the most essential principle for the

establishment of a state or country. In other words, educating children is a strategic effort to maintain the sustainability of the nation and state (cited in Nata, 2001:26). In general, the key point of his thought is about educational objectives: developing moral strength of children, growing sense of love to religion, and keep believing to Islamic manuscript.

Al-Qabisi believes that children are the future generation (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:81). Their future is determined by their current efforts. In order to make sure that they can grow and develop as supposed to, in this case, great attention and careful in educating them is absolutely required.

### A GLANCE OF AL-QABISI'S BACKGROUND

Al-Qabisi is known as one of *'ulama* (expert or scholar of Islam) related to *Hadith*,<sup>1</sup> excellent-educator, and a very loyal follower of Maliki. In term of his full name, there are some differences among the experts. Ibn 'Imad al-Hambali, in his book entitled *Syazarat az-Zahab*, said that Al-Qabisi's full name is Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Qabisi Khalaf al-Mu'afiri al-Qairawani (al-Hambali, n.y.:188). Meanwhile, in the book of *Ma'alim al-Iman fi al-Ma'rifati Ahli al-Qairawani*, Abdurrahman Muhammad al-Dibagh said that Qabisi's full name is Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Khalaf al-Mu'afiri (Muhammad al-Dibagh, 1968:158).

Although there was a debate about the true full name of Al-Qabisi, but the majority of reviewers/experts agreed that Al-Qabisi's full name is Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Khalaf al-Mu'afiri al-Qairawani, who was very well-known by his nick name as "Al-Qabisi". He was born in the month of *Rajab* in 324 AH or *Anno Hijriah*, coincided with the May 31, 935 AD or *Anno Domini* (Fuad al-Ahwani, 1980:25).

In addition, regarding to his epithet was also has difference of opinion among the history-experts. Al-Qadhi 'Iyadh said that Abu Hasan did not originate from Al-Qabisi's tribe, because his uncle wore a *surban* (a

head protector) on his head tightly, and this was contrast to the habits of people in Qabis community ('Iyadh, n.y.). But Abdullah al-Amin al-Na'miy stated that the name "Al-Qabisi" was taken from the word *Qabis* (one of an airport in Tunisia). He was identified by that name in science and literature (al-Na'miy, 1994:177-178). Previously, also Ibn al-Khalikan pointed out that *Qabisi* revealed from a name of town in Qairawan, Northern Africa, namely *Qabis* city in which closer with Mahdiyah district (cited in 'Iyadh, n.y.).

Above all, most of experts agreed that Al-Qabisi was known as one of Islamic scholars who dedicated his life in Qairawan. Most of Al-Qabisi's observers and analysis agreed that he was a great *Hadith* scholar and educator. His ideas were accepted easily by the public. About the time of his death, there was not any different argument among the experts of his history. Al-Qadhi 'Iyadh (n.y.) did not mention the date and month of his death. Meanwhile, Abdurrahman Muhammad al-Dibagh stated that Al-Qabisi died in Qairawan, on Wednesday night, 3<sup>rd</sup> *Rabiul Akhir* 403 AH (*Anno Hijriah*) and was buried on Thursday, coincide on October 23, 1012 AD (*Anno Domini*). He passed way at 80 years-old (Muhammad al-Dibagh, 1968:76).

### THE CURRICULUM CLASSIFICATION FOR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Regarding to the usage of "curriculum" term in Al-Qabisi thought, certainly, was not fond because the term of "curriculum" is only well-known in the recent period. However, to know the curriculum designed by Al-Qabisi was implied inside the subjects studied by the children. The essence of the curriculum leads to the empowerment of young generation to be able to study and understand about the importance of religion. Therefore, Al-Qabisi considered that religion is able to makes children to gain for a better life.

After reviewing and studying Al-Qabisi's book (*risalah*), then, the writer fond that Al-Qabisi classified children education curriculum into two matters. *First*, compulsory curriculum; in this curriculum, there are some basic subjects that must be learned by children as a base for forward-subjects. *Second*, the

<sup>1</sup>*Hadith*, according to John M. Echols & Hassan Shadily (2003:200), is Islamic traditional collection of stories relating words or deeds of Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), the chief source of guidance for understanding religious questions.

selected-curriculum; it's a number of subjects consist of sciences and technology to support the compulsory curriculum.

Indeed, implicitly, Al-Qabisi did not strictly classify curriculum into two kinds, yet explicitly shown that within his book, there are some compulsory subjects that must be learned by the children and there are also some subjects to be learned as a supportive subject to compulsory subjects. Comparing to today's curriculum, yet the curriculum created by Al-Qabisi was not well-organized and systematically. In this case, the writer did great attempts to classify those separated-sheets of Al-Qabisi's thoughts in order to be equal as well as today's curriculum.

**About the Compulsory Curriculum.** There is couple of subjects classified as compulsory subjects that must be learnt by the children, they are: Al-Qur'an, *fiqh* (Islamic law), moral, Arabic language, writing, and reading.

**First, Al-Qur'an lesson.** Al-Qur'an is not only used as a most fundamental resource of knowledge but also used as a single key guidance for all of Muslims. Therefore, Al-Qabisi always argued the people who underestimate the Al-Qur'an. Al-Qabisi believed that if someone considers Al-Qur'an as a priceless guidance; as a consequence, Allah SWT (*Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*) Almighty will take out the light of Al-Qur'an in his/her heart. Thus, Al-Qabisi is always asking Allah SWT to guide every Muslim to be a religious by believing Al-Qur'an.

The writer noted that the above condition made Al-Qabisi to put the lessons of the Al-Qur'an as main resource for the sciences and other field of study. Therefore, Al-Qur'an must be as an earliest lesson taught to children, because the ability to read and understand the Al-Qur'an is becoming as a very essential ability to know the religion and worship.

Muhammad Munir Mursi said that there was also another reason for Al-Qabisi to consider the subject of Al-Qur'an as the basic lesson and must be the main reference for other subjects. In his opinion, for example, a person who prays to Allah SWT, it's not perfect without reading the Al-Qur'an. In fact, performing prayer (*shalat*) is one of the pillars of Islam that must be done by every Muslim.

For this reason, Al-Qabisi and scholars at his ages agreed that the first purpose, that must be achieved in the children learning process, is mastering *ma'rifatu al-din* (recognition to the religion) both in theory or practice (Mursi, 1982:121).

In addition, Al-Qabisi believes that studying Al-Qur'an, the children will gain advantages both material and non-material aspects. Therefore, memorizing Al-Qur'an is not only to eternalize the God's guidance for children but also to eternalize the light of science. Allah SWT said in the Al-Qur'an, *surah* Al-Isra (17:9), "Surely this Al-Qur'an guides to that which is most right, and gives good tidings to the believers who do deeds of righteousness that theirs will be a great reward" (Depag RI, 1989).

On the other hand, Al-Qur'an also contains the priceless-source of science and knowledge. Therefore, the reader of Al-Qur'an is not only gaining the uncountable-advantages but also receiving the reward from Allah SWT. This thing is promised by Allah SWT in the Al-Qur'an, *surah* Al-Fathir (35:29-30), as follows:

Surely those who read the scripture of Allah, and establish worship, and spend of that which we have bestowed on them secretly and openly, they look forward to imperishable gain. That He will pay them their wages and increase them of His grace. Truly He is forgiving, responsive (Depag RI, 1989).

Thus, within his/her ages, most of Muslims was fond of teaching their children to read the Al-Qur'an. They educate and grow their children by guiding to Al-Qur'an. Above of all, they always putting the Al-Qur'an in a head as a priority subject compared to other subjects.

**Second, Fiqh (Islamic Law) lesson.** The ways to practice daily worship are summed up in *fiqh* subject. It's implied from Al-Qabisi's thought to teach children how to do a perfect *thaharah* (purify), *shalat* (prayer), *wudhu* (things done or ritual ablution before prayer). In addition, they are also taught about *syahadat* (confession), compulsory prayers, numbers of *ruku'* (deep bow from the waist during prayer ritual in Islam) and *sujud* (bow from kneeling position so that forehead touches floor, a part of prayer ritual in Islam), what they recite within a prayer, and *takbir*

(recitation of laudation “God is great”, usually at opening of prayers).

Furthermore, in *fiqh* is also taught the way to *ruku'*, sitting, *takbiratul ihram*, and *salam* (a greeting in Islam) perfectly. Then, it's also taught each part that is included *as-sunnah* (optional, but meritorious if performed of pious deeds, prayers, etc.) matters in a prayer, such as the way to perform a *tasyahud* and *qunut* (prayer said at certain point, e.g. early morning). On the other side, the children also learn to know the *sunnah* prayers, for example *fajar* (prayer ritual in the morning), *witir* (prayer ritual before and after the main prayer), *l'ed* (prayer ritual celebrating end of fasting month), *istisqa'* (prayer ritual asking the rain), and *khusuf* (prayer ritual asking the specific matters).

Furthermore, in Al-Qabisi's curriculum also encourages the children to learn the ways to perform a good prayer for a died-body. Those matters and manners are taught to children in order to put in their mind the sense of love to religion. So that, as they are growing adults, they will truly understand and acknowledge it as the most essential parts in Islam.

Clearly, Al-Qabisi explained that a teacher should tell the children to perform compulsory prayer when they are growing up 7 years old; and when they are reaching at 10 years old, a teacher is allowed to give them punishment if the children ignore the instruction. It's equally to Prophet Muhammad's statement through his *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad) which means, “*Instruct your children to establish prayers when they are growing up seven years old; and at ten years old, punish them if they refuse to pray*” (cited in Hambal, n.y.:404).

In this case, Imam Malik is also consistently said that a child is deserve punishments if he/she refuses to perform a prayer at 10 years old; and, as a consequence, that child must be separated between male and female in the learning process (cited in Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:112). In another text on the same book, Al-Qabisi even added *fara'idh* (law of inheritance) matter as a subject that must be learned by children. But this lesson is also included in *fiqh* (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:110).

*Third, Moral lesson.* Undeniable, in Al-

Qabisi's curriculum, the moral value for children is extremely required. Within Al-Qabisi academic statements, speeches, and suggestions, he always pointed out about the importance of actualizing a moral value in a child real live, because they are the young generation who will lead, change, and replace the current Islamic generations in the future. Among his statements, there was a particular instruction to teacher to give a good model and example moral matter for children to be imitated by children during the learning process (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994).

On the other hand, there are also suggestions to children to rely on moral values in the practice of every day's life as a witness of obedience to Allah and His Messenger (Prophet Muhammad). In this case, the children's environment, where they grow and live, is really effected to their moral attitude. For example, where the learning process is taken place, if a child getting along and hanging with the children who have good moral attitude, it's will be an indirect-educative way for the children to learn and strengthen their morality as well. In addition, another thought is also implied in Al-Qabisi taught; he considered that teaching morality to the children is teacher's responsible as well both in terms of providing advice and in terms of keeping them (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:175).

In fact, the essential of moral education can be seen inside a teacher's direction and treatment in forming and building the sense of *istiqamah* (consistent) for children, so that the children can apply that moral value in their daily interaction and communication with each other. During the process, a teacher is deserved to remind and advise the children if they cross the line of moral value (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:98).

In this case, it's clearly shown that a teacher plays a very important role in forming and maintaining the moral value for children. If they make mistakes, or act something that does not based on moral manners, an educator has to give them advice and make them understand. In term of giving advice, or reminding them, a teacher must be gently and carefully. Fortunately, such treatment will made an impression and give a huge influence

inside the children's heart until they have reached adulthood. Shortly, Al-Qabisi believed that moral value is a thing that gives lights for the people so that they won't lose in their own paths and they can reach their destination safely (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:99).

**Fourth, Arabic Language, Writing, Spelling, and Reading lessons.** Al-Qabisi didn't event underestimate Arabic subjects compared to other subject in his curriculum; eventually, he considered, it's an essential and useful field of study for the children, that's why it's reasonable subject to include into the compulsory curriculum. The purpose of this subject is to give the children a chance to learn and master the terms or rules around *nahwu* field (a grammatical lesson in Arabic language) even not in-depth.

However, Al-Qabisi recommended that a child should be able to understand and differ what is right and wrong in reading Al-Qur'an (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:113). It was shown in his dialogue with Yahya bin 'Atiq. At once, Yahya bin 'Atiq asked Al-qabisi's view about the purposes of a man who learns Arabic to fluent his Al-Qur'an-reading skill, then, Al-Qabisi replied that the man should study it, otherwise, a man who lack of skill in reading the Al-Qur'an, he deserves lot of risks surely.

Based on the writer study, Al-Qabisi believed that a child who is skillful in Arabic language, it will make him/her easier to understand the Al-Qur'an and he/she could read Al-Qur'an well. Actually, both Arabic language and *nahwu* are able to influent children's ability in pronouncing the word for word and to know the structure as well. As a result, we can overcome doubt and mistake in reading the Al-Qur'an.

In addition, learn to write, spell, and read is also the responsibility of a Al-Qur'an-teacher to teach their students. In this case, to make student studying it seriously, a teacher should ask the students to write in their note-books (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:118). In term of taking note, it requires the writing skill. Above all, at first step to master writing skill, a student supposes to be able to spell letter by letter, then, learn to read is becoming the last phase within the process. In term of reading, teachers who teach Al-Qur'an should

make sure the students read the Al-Qur'an by following the grammatical rules, such as *waqaf* (pause in reading the Al-Qur'an), *makhariju al-huruf* (well-versed in reading the Al-Qur'an), and *tajwid* (proper pronunciation for correct recitation of the Al-Qur'an).

The integrity between the children's compulsory to learn Al-Qur'an and perform prayer means to integrate the ability of thinking (*cognitive*), feeling (*affective*), applying (*psychomotor*). In other words, according to Al-Qabisi, aspects of thinking, *zikir* (remembering God), and deeds are integrated in children's curriculum such as a mixing of hot water, coffee, and sugar inside a cup (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:119).

The reasons that made Al-Qabisi created such curriculum was suitable with the condition of environment and social-culture's life at that ages (al-Jumbulati & at-Tuwanisi, 2002:83). Indeed, an excellent-curriculum can be indicated and evaluated from its principles. Perhaps, the principles do not contrast with the social-culture around that environment. In addition, at that age, most of parent had goodwill, had their children to learn Al-Qur'an, and a number of lessons related to Al-Qur'an.

Likewise, the statements of Ibn Sina, as quoted by Ali al-Jumbulati & Al-Futuh at-Tuwanisi, a child who is already has an analytical-thinking, able to produce the words well, and probably ready to be taught, ideally that child should be taught to learn how to read Al-Qur'an. In this case, a teacher could begin with an early-step that is to make them understand *hija'iyah* letters (Arabic alphabetic). After finishing his study about memorizing *ushul fiqh* (Islamic study of laws pertaining to ritual obligation), then, observes the development; after that, then, provide them any skills according to their ability, and, finally, direct and guide them to lead their life the right line (al-Jumbulati & at-Tuwanisi, 2002:91).

**About the Selected Curriculum.** The core objective of the selected curriculum is to support and strengthen the compulsory curriculum through a number of subjects that are included in selected curriculum, such as arithmetic, poetry, history (including stories of Arabic country), *nahwu-saraf* (grammatical

lessons), and pure Arabic language. In short, this curriculum may be learned by the children themselves, or taught by the teacher initiative or ignore either. In other words, there is no suggestion and no restrictions for whom want to study.

Al-Qabisi did not forbid children to study the arithmetic (math), yet with one condition, the learner should be able to stand for its responsibility. It means, the advantages of the math must be put a head before the learners study it. For example, math can support and make the people easier in dividing inheritance (riches) to the heir. In sum, Al-Qabisi believes that teaching math is not a must, yet the teacher requires (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:113).

Just as math, in poetry, Al-Qabisi recommended to study it merely to make soft the spoken-words, strengthen the verbal (reading), and also to smooth the sense/feeling (behaviors). Furthermore, he said that every line in the poetry contains the wisdom inside. It was once spoken by Prophet (Muhammad) – then narrated by Bukhari – that the poem is the words (sentences), it sounds nice when someone pronounces it in the right way; in contrast, it become bad if the speaker pronounces it in bad way (cited in Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:115-116).

In this case, it's implied that Al-Qabisi allowed the children to study the poetry, as long as the content and purpose of studying the poetry does not lead to a nasty and dirty words, because it will destroy moral and religious value. It's equally with Al-Ghazali's opinion, who said that children event should be busy with studying Al-Qur'an and *Hadith* (words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) in which contain stories and tales of the righteous people (Moslem) and excellent-examples of their behavior, so the children will grow the spirit and sense of love to the good matters automatically (cited in Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:111).

On the contrary, Al-Ghazali forbidden the people to teach the children the poetry contains the sense of longing or missing and revenge or *isyaq* (cited in al-Jumbulati & at-Tuwanisi, 2002:151). In term of learning poetry, children are also allowed to study rhetoric skill. It's a sub-lesson on how

someone could make a speech with a polite language; and as a result, it does not hurt any listener as well (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:112).

In the classification of non-compulsory curriculum of Al-Qabisi, the existence of history and stories of the Arab nation (including stories of the Prophets) is to enrich a good model for children. And at the same time, either to train them to behave as taught in these lessons. Actually, there are received-advantages by teaching history to the children that is to assist and maintain their behaviors and characters, especially through teaching the story of the Prophets and previous leaders. This was reflected in the statement of Ibn Habib, then approved by Al-Qabisi, that it's allowed to take wages (costs) from teaching poetry, *nahwu* (grammar), Arab histories, and other related stories, for instance, the information about background of Islamic figures and the people who has respected-personality (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:115).

Furthermore, about the selected-curriculum, there is a subject included into it: a completely-language learning. To learn Arabic language is a pre-learning subject for every child. It doesn't mean to learn it through details by avoiding the compulsory subjects, because it's not ought to learn Arabic language till every parts of it. It depends on the wishes of children and the teachers.

In conclusion of Al-Qabisi thoughts, the compulsory subject consists of the Al-Qur'an, the principles of *fiqh* (study of laws pertaining to ritual obligation), moral, writing and reading, the basic principles of Arabic language and the basic rules of *qira'at* (proper recite the Al-Qur'an). While the subjects classified into the selected-curriculum are the deepening and strengthening of the Arabic language and its grammatical rules (*nahwu*, *saraf*, poetry, and rhetoric), arithmetic, and history (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994).

### THE CRITICAL STUDIES OF AL-QABISI'S CURRICULUM

The material subjects, summarized in children's education curriculum of Al-Qabisi version, tend to be static and out of date. Perhaps it was caused by the atmosphere of intellectual life at the time. The reliance of

the scholars/experts of *Qairawan* to the texts (both texts of the Al-Qur'an and *Al-Sunnah* or *Al-Hadith*, as words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) and the arguments of Medina's expert looks so strong and noticeable. This was caused by the majority of the people of North Africa, who were becoming as Maliki's follower, was taboo and rare in reforming their thought the usage of *ra'yu* and *qiyas* (criticize and comparison) as a method of thinking.

There are some elements in a subjects that are considered important and should be included in a curriculum, yet instead they were ignored by Al-Qabisi, even though many *syar'i* (accordance with the Islamic law) arguments/reasons (Al-Qur'an and *Al-Hadith*) related to the subjects. For instance, natural science even could increase the child's faith and obedience, but it's not taught.

In fact, Allah SWT (*Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*) instructs us to observe and study from the nature, so we can encourage ourselves to admit the power of Allah SWT. Based on the following chapter, we are supposed to acknowledge that still much of His blessing and salutations that have not been dig up and finally lead us to getting closer to Him. Allah SWT said in the Al-Qur'an, *surah* Ali Imran (3) verses 190-191, which means:

In the creation of the heaven and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for men of understanding. Those that remember Allah in standing, sitting, and lying down, and meditate upon the creation of the heaven and the earth. "Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory be to you! Protect us from punishment of the fire" (Depag RI, 1989).

In addition, Al-Qabisi did not only ignore about natural science but also he never discusses about the physical education inside his curriculum. Furthermore, it's proven by his books that he never mentioned, or wrote, about the concepts, materials, and the benefits of this lesson (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994). In fact, to increase the psychometric skill for children, till the children are not only own the spiritual and minds' health but also the physical health, it's required an education system to train the physical skill. The equality between spiritual and physical health is an instruction in Islam,

and it cannot be denied. In this case, many health-experts voiced the word health in an Arabic-proverb "*Al-'Aql as-Salim fi al-Jismi as-Salim*" (a healthy mind is found in a healthy body).

The balance between great-knowledge and strong-body are two gifts from Allah SWT that must be kept and maintained equally. In other words, neither increasing knowledge nor maintaining physic should be treated equal and balance. The equality and balance among the materials inside a curriculum determine the quality and output as well.

The interesting thing is the criticism of Ali al-Jumbulati & Al-Futuh at-Tuwanisi (2002) about the curriculum of Al-Qabisi, who emphasizes the psychology of children. In their opinion, paying attention to psychological aspects of children means noticed the tendency of children and levels of development. This matter deals with the modern education concept in which forward the psychology value (al-Jumbulati & at-Tuwanisi, 2002:90).

The writer evaluates that opinion was true. Al-Qabisi did not express clearly about the psychology within his curriculum. But, if we review and recheck more deeply, Al-Qabisi actually also very concerned about children's psychology. This matter is seen from his statement in educating the children. He said that a people should consider the suitability of the material with the children's age level. More clearly, the material of Al-Qur'an that is being taught to children must be appropriate to children's ability in memorization. Children who are weaker in memorizing should not treat as well as the children who are stronger in memorizing (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994:147).

Even though, the children who have weaker-skill in memorizing should not put in the same group with a strong children's memory, based on this explanation, it was unreasonable if most of people judge Al-Qabisi curriculum did not include psychology of children, one of them was claimed by Ali al-Jumbulati & Al-Futuh at-Tuwanisi (2002).

The accuracy of Al-Qabisi in selecting the learning materials in accordance with the intellectual capacity and readiness of children to accept knowledge, implicitly, it became as



a proof that he was very careful and smart in creating and applying the curriculum. Since he was a follower of *Sunnah* (Islamic orthodox law based on teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad), he agreed that a curriculum must be fit with the conditions of children, so that will make them easier to achieve their goals, that is to develop the children's power of moral, to build a sense of love of religion, to follow all of its teachings, and behave as well as the values of the religion (Ali al-Qabisi, 1994).

Beside, Al-Qabisi wish if teaching and learning process must be able to grow and develop the children's personalities in accordance with true Islamic values. In this case, the implementation of appropriate curriculum with the ability of children from time to time is determined the success of education at that time. The curriculum is consisted of the compulsory curriculum and the selected-curriculum. Once the children already master the curriculum and completely done for their studies, the children will be trained to be skillful to work, so they can feed and take care to their own life.

## CONCLUSION

At glance, the curriculum was released by Al-Qabisi seems so simple and not spectacular. However, if we review and recheck more deeply, there was a deep one strength value stored neatly in a curriculum. The strength is the ethical values which refer to create behavior of children as future generations of Islam in order to become mature and intelligent.

Ethical education built in the curriculum not merely inspired by Al-Qabisi's authentic-experience in searching his intellectual when he was young, such as his introduction to the educational system developed by Abu al-Abbas al-Abyani, or Ibn Sahnun, who played his intellectual skill through his super-fantastic book, *Risalah Adab al-Mu'allimin* (though Al-Qabisi never met physically with these figure, because of different period of life) and other religious figures that became significant-person for Al-Qabisi, but also his experience as the leader in his educational-institution, *Malikiyah* (which was very well-known and

famous), became the priceless experience and valuable resources in developing and applying his curriculum; and as a result, his curriculum has a very strong sense of God.

The core curriculum of Al-Qabisi is the integrality of moral strength for children, building a sense of love of religion, keep following to his (Prophet Muhammad) teachings and behave in accordance with the values of a religion. These were clearly illustrated from the material presented to students through the classification of curriculum materials, either compulsory curriculum or selected curriculum.

Finally, the priceless value inside Al-Qabisi's curriculum implied in each part of the subjects, to teach every Muslim who has good personality either in *Al-Qur'anism* or *akhlaqism* (have a certain character). On the other hand, Al-Qabisi suggested that potentiality and actuality of the knowledge's development of children running parallel and equally with developments of their moral. So that, the generated-output by this curriculum are able to take part and play great roles in their daily lives that always following the guidance of religion.

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