Journal of Inequalities in Pure and Applied Mathematics

http://jipam.vu.edu.au/

Volume 7, Issue 1, Article 35, 2006

AROUND APÉRY'S CONSTANT

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Received 04 January, 2006; accepted 18 January, 2006
Communicated by A. Lupaş

Dedicated to Professor Gerd Baron on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

ABSTRACT. In this note we deal with some aspects of Apéry's constant $\zeta(3)$.

Key words and phrases: Apéry's constant, Harmonic numbers, Infinite sums, Integrals.

2000 *Mathematics Subject Classification.* 49J40, 90C33, 47H10.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since Apéry's miraculous proof (1979) that the value $\zeta(3)$ of Rieman's ζ-function is irrational, *Apéry's constant* $\zeta(3)$ has been the focus of attention for many mathematicians. (An extensive list of results and references are found in Section 1.6 of the highly recommended encyclopedic book [2].)

It is the purpose of this note to extend some of these results. Thereby we will also obtain a new infinite sum rapidly converging to $\zeta(3)$.

At the end of this note we raise two questions for further investigation.

ISSN (electronic): 1443-5756

This research is partially supported by grant 04-39-3265-2/03 (11.XII.2003) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Sciences, Bosnia and Herzegowina.

020-06

2. TWO MULTISUMS

Recently in [1] the proof of

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{ij(i+j)}=2\zeta(3), \tag{2.1}$$

where $\zeta(3)=1.202056903...$, was posed as a problem. Although this result was published earlier (see [2, p. 43]) it is worthwhile reconsidering in the following more general way.

Theorem 2.1. *For* $r\geq 1$ *the multisum*

$$S_r=\sum_{k_1=1}^{\infty}\cdots\sum_{k_r=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{k_1\cdots k_r(k_1+\cdots+k_r)}$$

attains the value $r!\zeta(r+1)$.

Proof. Firstly we rewrite the multisum as an integral as follows

$$S_r=\sum_{k_1=1}^{\infty}\cdots\sum_{k_r=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{k_1\cdots k_r}\int_0^1 x^{k_1+\cdots+k_r-1}dx$$

that is (upon interchanging of summation and integration),

$$S_r=\int_0^1\frac{1}{x}\sum_{k_1=1}^{\infty}\frac{x^{k_1}}{k_1}\cdots\sum_{k_r=1}^{\infty}\frac{x^{k_r}}{k_r}dx.$$

Due to

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{x^j}{j}=-\ln(1-x),$$

we get

$$S_r=(-1)^r\int_0^1\frac{\ln(1-x)^r}{x}dx.$$

Substituting $x=1-t$ yields

$$S_r=(-1)^r\int_0^1\frac{\ln(t)^r}{1-t}dt.$$

This and the known result ([2, p. 47])

$$\int_0^1\frac{\ln(t)^r}{1-t}dt=(-1)^r r!\zeta(r+1)$$

readily yield the claim. □

Subsequently we will deal with a 'relative' of S_r, namely the multisum

$$T_r=\sum_{k_1=1}^{\infty}\cdots\sum_{k_r=1}^{\infty}\frac{(-1)^{k_1+\cdots+k_r}}{k_1\cdots k_r(k_1+\cdots+k_r)}.$$

As it will turn out, matters are here more involved. Indeed, we will prove now

Theorem 2.2. *For $r \geq 1$,*

$$T_r = (-1)^r \left(r!\zeta(r+1) - \frac{r}{r+1}(\ln 2)^{r+1} - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \sum_{m=1}^{r} \frac{r(r-1)...(r-m+1)}{2^k k^{m+1}} (\ln 2)^{r-m} \right) \tag{2.2}$$

holds.

Proof. Proceeding as in the previous proof we get

$$T_r = (-1)^r \int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1+x)^r}{x} dx.$$

Substitution of $x = e^{-t} - 1$ yields

$$T_r = (-1)^r \int_0^{\ln(1/2)} \frac{(-t)^r}{e^{-t} - 1} (-e^{-t}) dt,$$

that is,

$$T_r = \int_{\ln(1/2)}^0 \frac{t^r}{1 - e^t} dt.$$

Upon expanding $\frac{1}{1-e^t}$ as a geometric series we arrive at

$$T_r = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \int_{-\ln 2}^0 t^r e^{kt} dt.$$

Integration by parts leads to the identity (we suppress integration constants)

$$\int t^r e^{kt} dt = e^{kt} \left(\frac{t^r}{k} + \sum_{m=1}^{r} (-1)^m \frac{r(r-1)...(r-m+1)}{k^{m+1}} t^{r-m} \right),$$

where $k > 0$.

Therefore a straightforward simplification yields

$$T_r = (-1)^r \left(\frac{(\ln 2)^{r+1}}{r+1} + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{r!}{k^{r+1}} - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^k} \left(\frac{(\ln 2)^r}{k} + \sum_{m=1}^{r} \frac{r(r-1)...(r-m+1)}{k^{m+1}} (\ln 2)^{r-m} \right) \right).$$

Since

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k 2^k} = \ln 2,$$

we finally get the claimed identity (2.2). □

3. A NEW FORMULA FOR APÉRY'S CONSTANT

Theorem 2.2 enables us to obtain a new way to express $\zeta(3)$ by a fast converging series. Indeed, letting $r = 2$ we get

$$T_2 = 2\left(\zeta(3) - \frac{(\ln 2)^3}{3} - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^k}\left(\frac{\ln 2}{k^2} + \frac{1}{k^3}\right)\right).$$

Furthermore [2, p. 43], reports

$$T_2 = \frac{1}{4}\zeta(3).$$

Therefore the following holds.

Theorem 3.1.

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{8}{7}\left(\frac{(\ln 2)^3}{3} + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^k}\left(\frac{\ln 2}{k^2} + \frac{1}{k^3}\right)\right). \tag{3.1}$$

This formula should be compared with the following one (see [5])

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{2}{3}(\ln 2)^3 + 4\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^{k+1}}{k^3 2^k \binom{2k}{k}}.$$

4. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

- From $S_2 + T_2 = \frac{9}{4}\zeta(3)$ we infer

$$2\sum_{\substack{i,j\geq 1\\ i+j \text{ even}}} \frac{1}{ij(i+j)} = \frac{9}{4}\zeta(3)$$

that is (we put $i + j = 2k$),

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{2k-1} \frac{1}{2(2k-j)jk} = \frac{9}{8}\zeta(3),$$

i.e.

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2k}\sum_{j=1}^{2k-1} \frac{1}{2k}\left(\frac{1}{j} + \frac{1}{2k-j}\right) = \frac{9}{8}\zeta(3).$$

This can be summarized as

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k^2} H_{2k-1} = \frac{9}{4}\zeta(3),$$

where

$$H_n = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \frac{1}{j}$$

denotes the n-th harmonic number.

In a similar way $S_2 - T_2 = \frac{7}{4}\zeta(3)$ implies the formula

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2k+1)^2} H_{2k} = \frac{7}{16}\zeta(3).$$

From these two formulae we get easily

Theorem 4.1.

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2k-1)^2} H_{2k-1} = \frac{21}{16}\zeta(3) \tag{4.1}$$

and

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2k)^2} H_{2k} = \frac{11}{16}\zeta(3). \tag{4.2}$$

Adding these two identities yields

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k^2} H_k = 2\zeta(3), \tag{4.3}$$

a result already known to L. Euler.

- [4, p. 499, item 2.6.9.14] reads

$$T_2 = \int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1+x)^2}{x} dx = 2\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^k \psi(k)}{k^2} - \frac{\pi^2 \gamma}{6},$$

where $\psi(z) = (\ln \Gamma(z))'$ and γ denote the digamma function and the Euler-Mascheroni constant, resp.
Therefore there holds the curious identity

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^k \psi(k)}{k^2} = \frac{1}{8}\zeta(3) + \frac{\pi^2 \gamma}{12}.$$

Because of $\psi(k) = -\gamma + H_{k-1}$ it reads in equivalent form

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^k}{k^2} H_k = \frac{5}{8}\zeta(3) \tag{4.4}$$

- Recently [3] posed the problem of proving the identity

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2n+1)^3} = 7 \int_0^{\pi/4} \frac{\ln(\cos x)\ln(\sin x)}{\cos x \sin x} dx.$$

We show that it implies a remarkable result for two doublesums.
Indeed, we firstly note

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2n+1)^3} = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k^3} - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2k)^3},$$

that is

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2n+1)^3} = \frac{7}{8}\zeta(3).$$

Therefore, the identity under consideration in fact means

$$\zeta(3) = 8\int_0^{\pi/4} \frac{\ln(\cos x)}{\cos x}\cdot\frac{\ln(\sin x)}{\sin x}dx.$$

Letting $f(x) = \frac{\ln(\cos x)}{\cos x}$ and setting $z = \pi/2 - x$ we obtain

$$\int_0^{\pi/4} f(x) f\left(\frac{\pi}{2} - x\right) dx = \int_{\pi/4}^{\pi/2} f\left(\frac{\pi}{2} - z\right) f(z) dz$$

whence

$$\zeta(3) = 4\int_0^{\pi/2} \frac{\ln(\cos x)}{\cos x}\cdot\frac{\ln(\sin x)}{\sin x}dx.$$

Next, we substitute $\sin x = \sqrt{w}$.
From $\cos x dx = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{w}}dw$ and $\cos x = \sqrt{1-w}$ we get $dx = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{w}\sqrt{1-w}}dw$.
This in turn yields

$$\zeta(3) = 4\int_0^1 \frac{\ln(\sqrt{1-w})}{\sqrt{1-w}}\cdot\frac{\ln(\sqrt{w})}{\sqrt{w}}\cdot\frac{1}{2\sqrt{w}\sqrt{1-w}}dw,$$

that is

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}\int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1-w)}{1-w}\cdot\frac{\ln w}{w}dw.$$

Upon rewriting this as

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}\int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1-w)}{w}\cdot\frac{\ln w}{1-w}dw$$

and developing the two factors of the integrand we get

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}\int_0^1 \left(-\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\frac{w^{i-1}}{i}\right)\left(-\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{(1-w)^{j-1}}{j}\right)dw,$$

that is

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{ij}\int_0^1 w^{i-1}(1-w)^{j-1}dw.$$

Keeping in mind that

$$\int_0^1 w^{i-1}(1-w)^{j-1}dw = \frac{(i-1)!(j-1)!}{(i+j-1)!},$$

we arrive at the formula

$$\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{ij^2\binom{i+j-1}{j}}. \tag{4.5}$$

Equation (4.5) and $\zeta(3) = \frac{1}{2}S_2$ give the two noteworthy identities

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{ij^2\binom{i+j-1}{j}} = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{ij(i+j)} \tag{4.6}$$

and

$$\int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1-z)}{z}\cdot\frac{\ln z}{1-z}dz = \int_0^1 \frac{\ln(1-z)}{z}\ln(1-z)dz. \tag{4.7}$$

- Finally, Theorem 4.1 enables us to prove the following finite analogon of the initial formula (2.1) of the present note, namely

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{i}\frac{1}{ij(i+j)}=\frac{5}{4}\zeta(3). \tag{4.8}$$

Indeed, (4.2) and (4.3) imply

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{k^2}\left(\frac{1}{k+1}+\cdots+\frac{1}{2k}\right)=\frac{3}{4}\zeta(3).$$

However,

$$\frac{1}{k^2}\left(\frac{1}{k+1}+\cdots+\frac{1}{2k}\right)=\frac{1}{k}\sum_{j=1}^{k}\frac{1}{k(k+j)}$$

and

$$\frac{1}{k}\sum_{j=1}^{k}\frac{1}{k(k+j)}=\frac{1}{k}\sum_{j=1}^{k}\frac{1}{j}\left(\frac{1}{k}-\frac{1}{k+j}\right)=\frac{1}{k^2}H_k-\sum_{j=1}^{k}\frac{1}{kj(k+j)}$$

readily lead to

$$2\zeta(3)-\sum_{k=1}^{\infty}\sum_{j=1}^{k}\frac{1}{kj(k+j)}=\frac{3}{4}\zeta(3)$$

as claimed.

5. TWO QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The results of Theorem 4.1 may be regarded as special cases of the more general sums

$$S_{a,b}=\sum_{k=1}^{\infty}\frac{1}{(ak-b)^2}H_{ak-b},$$

where $0\le b<a$ are entire numbers.

Problem 5.1. Determine $S_{a,b}$ for $a\ge 3$ in terms of 'familiar' expressions.

- Let, in analogy to S_r and T_r, $U_{r,s}$ denote the multisum

$$U_{r,s}=\sum_{k_1=1}^{\infty}\cdots\sum_{k_r=1}^{\infty}\frac{(-1)^{k_1+\cdots+k_s}}{k_1\cdots k_r(k_1+\cdots+k_r)},$$

where $r\ge 1$ and $0\le s\le r$.

Problem 5.2. Determine $U_{r,s}$ in the spirit of Theorem 2.2.

In other words evaluate the integrals

$$I_{r,s}=\int_0^1\frac{\ln(1-x)^s\ln(1+x)^{r-s}}{x}dx$$

for $r\ge 1$ and $0\le s\le r$.

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