

A light spring AB has natural length a and modulus of elasticity $5mg$. The end A of the spring is attached to a fixed point on a smooth horizontal surface. A particle P of mass m is attached to the end B of the spring. The spring and particle P are at rest on the surface.

Another particle Q of mass km is moving with speed $\sqrt{4ga}$ along the horizontal surface towards P in the direction BA . The particles P and Q collide directly and coalesce. In the subsequent motion the greatest amount by which the spring is compressed is $\frac{1}{5}a$.

Find the value of k .

[6]